

Growing Spiritually

Transforming Grace: the Joy of Gospel-driven Sanctification

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Christ's Pattern for His Church; Disciples making Disciples—Week **Life in the Body of Christ**

I. God has a specific plan or pattern for the Body of Christ.

- A. The church is a living organism with interdependent parts (1 Cor 12).
- B. The body of Christ is the corporate expression of the grace of Christ. The operation of the gifts of the body are each a facet of Christ's character reproduced and made visible.
- C. The fellowship of the members of the body is proof of the divine power of Jesus—"that they may be one" (Jn 17:21-23).

II. The members of the body are vitally connected to Christ and to one another.

- A. Justification by faith is the basis for true community (we have life in Christ in common).
- B. The purpose of the church in the cosmic realm is, "that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church. . ." (Eph 3:10).
- C. How should our philosophy of ministry be shaped fully by Christ's pattern for the church?

III. The corporate function of the body is gospel-driven and Christ-dependent.

- A. True fellowship involves translating vertical fellowship into horizontal fellowship.

- B. The body is lavishly supplied with all it needs for life, health, growth and unity as it holds fast to Christ, its Head (Eph 4:7-13; Col 2:19).

IV. Christ is building His church; He requires every member to build with Him.

- A. To edify is to build (Rom 15:2).
- B. Only a true disciple of Christ can build with Christ (Jn 15:1-12).
- C. True fellowship with the brethren is a vital means of grace (Eph 5:18-21; Heb 10:22-25).
- D. In order to build up the brethren, we must be deliberate (“consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds”—Hebrews 19:24).

V. The believer’s sanctification takes place within the context of the body of Christ.

- A. The Christian community is the context for change (Rom 15:14).
- B. We need the body of Christ to make us like Christ (1 Cor 12:7, 25; Eph 4:16).

VI. Each believer is a steward of grace for the purpose of building with Christ.

- A. We ‘steward’ God’s grace by using our spiritual gift (1 Pet 4:7-11).
- B. To better we understand the relation of the members of Christ’s body; consider the metaphors used to describe His church (*a temple of living stones, a bride, a family, a house, a functioning body, a vineyard, a kingdom of priests, a flock, etc.*).

VII. How does each genuine believer make the Great Commission his priority?

- A. Jesus commands us to make disciples (Mt 28:18-20).

B. A true and faithful disciple of Christ is a disciple-maker.

VIII. The gospel is the focal point of what God is doing in the world.

A. There is nothing more vital in the world than what God is doing through the gospel (Rom 1:16-17).

B. The Spirit is at work through the gospel in every stage of the believer's growth (Acts 20:32).

C. Who really does the 'vine work' (disciple-making) described in Colossians 1:28-29?

D. How is the Great Commission fulfilled by the functions set forth in Ephesians 4:11-16?

E. Does the normal Christian life involve disciple-making? How can we turn our gospel partnerships into discipleship friendships for the purpose of mutual spiritual growth (discipleship)?

F. Why can't discipleship be effectively pushed through a programmatic grid?

G. Explain how a faithful disciple of Christ makes disciple-making his or her lifestyle.

H. What has to happen for a believer to begin to see himself or herself as Christ's instrument?