



## Life in the Local Church, Part 2

### Selected Scriptures

June 21, 2015

We are currently going through, we want to continue what we started last week, looking at the, one another's, of the New Testament. We're taking a break from our series in the Gospel of Luke, our exposition of that wonderful Gospel, so that we can look at the, one another's, of the New Testament. And by, one another's, we're referring to those reciprocal commands that promote the body life of the local church, commands like Love one another, or Clothes yourselves with humility toward one another. There are about 60 other commands just like those that have that statement, others or one another's in them. So the, one another, commands, what they do in the New Testament as you start to look at all these commands, they really are bringing the body together. They're really pushing all of us into contact with one another, forcing us together, if you will and they are useful, those commands are useful, to the Lord by the Spirit in forging us into a healthy, vital, growing church: Harmonious and



considerate, loving, united. As Paul told the Philippians, we're to be "of the same mind," we're to have "the same love," we're to "be in full accord and of one mind." That's, that's how we live consistently with the Gospel of Jesus Christ that we've come to believe. Philippians 1:27, Paul says, "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you, that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, striving side by side," there it is, that proximity issue, "side by side for the faith of the gospel." For the faith of the gospel.

Now, all of that, those one another's, they start on the inside, not on the outside. They start with the attitude in the heart and in the mind, and then they come out. When God saves somebody, he transforms that person from the inside out. The Spirit regenerates, he causes someone to be born again to new spiritual life, and that's as deep as you can go on the inside, totally regenerating the life, totally giving brand new spiritual life. That's as deep as you can go. God justifies, declaring that person to be in a right relationship with himself through Jesus Christ and then the Spirit continues the work that has begun by sanctifying. He takes that internal transformation,

that internal change, and brings it to the outside, so that everybody can see it. He makes the positional reality a practical reality.

And all that starts with the triad of virtues that we learn to grow in, we learn to embrace, that drive the entirety of the Christians life, a triad of virtues or attitudes in the local church. We've talked about them several times: love, humility, and the pursuit of unity. Love, humility, and the pursuit of unity. And all of that starts with the most foundational of them all, love, right? Love. Jesus said, John 13:35, "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." Love is the badge that marks us out as Christians. Love is the badge; it's the, the card that we carry that says, yes, I am truly a Christian, because that kind of *agape* love, that sacrificial giving to others for the, wholly for the sake of that person, wholly for the sake of their good, wholly for the sake of their growth, wholly for the sake of their purity, their sanctification, their holiness, that kind of love that has nothing to do with self-interest. That's not generated by man. That doesn't come from us; it comes from God. God was the first, God was the only Person to introduce that love to the world. And

he provided us with a clear, profound example, most significant example of *agapé* love, what is that? His son, right? He sacrificed his beloved son on the cross for the sins of an indifferent people, to tell you the truth. The sins of a people who didn't acknowledge him, the sins of a people who were even rebellious enemies before God introduced himself to them.

So that what's love is, right? Sacrificial giving, wholly and completely for our good. God did it first. We follow suit. God dealt with our true need as he defined it when he punished Christ for our sins. That's our deepest need is to be forgiven of our sins, to have righteousness from God, that's our deepest need. Only God has shown that kind of love, and it's only God who gives that kind of love to his people. Romans 5:5, "The love of God" and that's the word *agapé* again, the *agapé* of God, "has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who's been given to us." That's the only way that you have that kind of love. That's the only way you can show that kind of love, is if you're a Christian. And it's as if the Holy Spirit has been poured into your heart; he's poured that kind of love into your heart and out of you comes that kind of love. That's how God loves the world is through you as well.

That's why John wrote in his epistle, 1 John 4:7, "Love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God." That's regeneration. "Whoever loves has been born of God and knows God." That's justification, bringing you into a right relationship with him through declaring you righteous and it leads to sanctification, continually knowing God.

Well, we also saw last time how that love, which is to be at the heart, the foundation, the most profound level the heart of all we do, how that love translates into an attitude of humility toward one another. Of humility. We're to "do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit," Philippians 2:3, "nothing from selfish ambition or conceit but in humility," we're, "to count others as more important," more significant, "than ourselves." Right? Armed with an attitude of humility and gentleness and patience, we're to "bear with one another in love." We're to be "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." These attitudes, so important, so vital to our life here because love and humility, they enable us to do what God has called us to do, which is to strive, Philippians 2:2, "to be of the same mind, having the same love, being in

full accord and of one mind." You only do that if you're saturated with the love of God, and the love of God is compelling you and driving you. You only do that if you're humble, if you're humble before God and man.

Now, love, humility, unity, those one another attitudes, they lead to one another actions. Actions, that's what we want to talk about today, action. We want to see how the one another commands manifest among us. We want to see how they produce real effects. We want to see how they move from the inside to the outside, from attitude to action. You can see in your bulletin there's an outline there. I've changed it slightly from last week, modified it, I wasn't able get all the way through my outline so I've kind of reworked it a bit, you'll see it there. But the first main point there, which we covered last week, it's called the internal one another attitudes; we've already gone through that. When your mind, when your internal life is governed by those three attitudes, love, humility, unity, that's inevitably going to lead to this second point: The external one another actions. The external one another actions.

Godly attitudes lead to godly actions. Godly attitudes lead to godly actions. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are learning, all of us, to be doers of the Word not hearers only. We don't want to be self-deceived, believing it's enough to merely hear sermons from the Bible, all the while failing to put God's Word into practice. You know why? God demands change. God didn't enter into your life to leave it the same. God entered your life to radically transform you, to forgive you of every sin you've ever committed, to cover you with a righteousness that is not your own. And you know what? He loves you enough not to leave you where you are. He loves you enough to help you to grow, to change. It's called living a life of repentance. Repentance, that is the essence of the Christian life. Those who want to entertain a notion of faith that allows them to just sit and be merely hearers of the Word, just listening to preaching every week, coming and having some coffee and donuts and things like that and then going on home, never really obeying the Scripture, never really taking it seriously, you know what? James, the Apostle James, wrote a book in the Bible, he describes that kind of faith as a dead faith. He calls it a demonic faith. He calls that kind of faith absolutely useless and ineffectual.

We don't want to be like that. We need to be doers of the Word, right? Listen, we don't want to be just doers of the Word because we're commanded to even though that is enough. We want to be doers of the Word because it is the greatest joy. Freedom is found in doing what God commands. That's freedom. We are in this country very fond of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, right? You know what true life is? Jesus Christ. You know what true freedom or liberty is? Doing what God commands. You know what true happiness is? The joy of obedience; the joy of obedience to God. Here in this country, we honor those virtues of life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness. You know, the Bible describes it a little bit differently, actually, radically differently than our culture describes it. We are completely counter-cultural here. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, it's God's idea, it's not the US Constitution. It's God's idea.

So we want to talk about the one another actions today, and after each point, we're gonna make some practical applications for our church, okay? We're gonna get this, get real practical and I don't want you to misunderstand me, here, as we talk about the one another's. I, I'm going to describe, another, a, a



number of actions that we want to characterize our church, okay? We want to grow in these things. What I'm *not* saying is that these are the *only* actions or attitudes or behaviors we're going to find prescribed in Scripture. They're not. There's a lot to hear in Scripture, obviously, you've read it. There's a lot here. All we want to do today, though, is to talk about the actions that are prescribed in the one another commands. Okay? So we're just looking at that, we're just looking at all of this attitudes and actions, through the lens of one another commands, okay? Other commands as well and we'll get to those in God's good time, but right now we're going to talk about this. These commands, these one another commands, they are a really good starting place for us to pursue healthy, productive life in the local church.

So, that little qualification out of the way, just so you don't think that's all we're doing, there is more here, but let's just consider the first of several one another actions commanded in the New Testament. First, you can see in your outline there, we're commanded to reinforce the truth with one another. Reinforce the truth with one another. A lot of one another commands fall under this heading, a lot of them. Local

church is literally to be saturated with the truth, saturated, and that is not just the responsibility of the preacher. It's not just the responsibility of the pastor up front, the paid professional. It's not just the purview of the elders or nerdy Bible people to be saturated with truth. All of us are to be saturated with truth. It's not a professional issue. This is a responsibility of every single Christian. In fact, there are so many one another's in this category, what I'd like you to do just so you're looking at your Bible here, is look at 1 Corinthians 14. Just turn there and then wait for me there, okay? I'm going to have a lot to say, in fact, I'm actually going to have you hold your finger there and go somewhere else. I'm gonna confuse you, okay? So just be prepared. But I'm gonna, I'm gonna go through a number of ways, here, that we're to reinforce the truth with one another, and you're going to want to right these down. So find 1 Corinthians 14, stick, stick there. Stick a pin in there. I'm gonna give you a category. I'm gonna read the verse. I'm gonna give you another category, read the verse, and so on then we're gonna wind up in 1 Corinthians 14 at the end of it, okay?

So reinforcing the truth, if you're writing these down, I guess we could call this sub-point letter A, or if you prefer ones, fine, but I'm going to go A, B, C, okay? Sub-point letter A, just generally in reinforcing the truth, we are to talk with one another about the truth. Just to talk with one another about the truth. Pretty simple. We're to speak truthfully and what I want to say here is we're to speak truthfully, not just telling the truth and not telling lies. We're to speak truthfully, we're to speak to one another from a biblical worldview. That is, we're not to think like worldlings. We're not to think like all those people out there. Doesn't matter, we don't want to be thinking like Republicans or Democrats or Libertarians or whatever your flavor is. We don't want to be thinking like sports people or IT people or jocks or nerds or whatever. We don't wanna, we don't wanna be thinking from those perspectives. We want to be transcending all of those categories and thinking like Christians.

When as we think like Christians, we want to talk like Christians. You know what Christians talk about? Truth. They talk about the truth. We're to speak truthfully, talking to one another from a biblical worldview. You know what, we went over

this in our Ephesians Sunday school not long ago, Ephesians 4:25, "Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another." That phrase, put away falsehood there in Ephesians 4:25, is literally, put off the lie. Put off the lie. Definite article: *the* lie, which in context refers to the unbelieving worldview. We're to put that off, that idolatrous approach to life that excludes God and defines everything according to self and self-happiness, put *that* off and speak truth to one another. Speak through the lens of the Christian worldview.

When we speak like that, it demonstrates how much we love hearing what God has to say. Do we love his Word? Are we grateful that he has revealed truth that we could've never gotten on our own? Let's talk about it, then. Our words and our thoughts, our expressions, our feelings, all of the stuff that comes from us that's generated from human, the human heart, all that pales in comparison, really, doesn't it, to what the eternal God has to say about life, about the universe. When we love divine truth, when we love listening to what God has to say, his truth becomes buried deep within our hearts. It becomes a passion to us, and "out of the overflow of the heart," what?

"the mouth speaks," right? His truth is gonna permeate our speech. In fact, truth becomes so dominant in our thinking that we even devote our creative energies to expressing it.

That's what we're doing up here in music, right? Our creative energies are invested, working hard, so that we express those truths in just beautiful ways. Music, poetry, song, our most elevated forms of language, our most elevated forms of artistic creativity, they become the means of expressing the truth to each other. And by the way, that's a by-product of being filled by the Holy Spirit, being saturated by the truth. In that truth-filled, truth-saturated condition, we start addressing one another, Ephesians 5:19, "in psalms, in hymns, and spiritual songs," right? Because we're "singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord." Our highest creative talents should serve to reinforce the truth with one another.

Alright, sub-point letter B, 2, sub-point Letter B: We're to encourage one another with the truth. We're to encourage one another with the truth. Encouragement is so vital, beloved. So vital. When negativity and pessimism dominate any atmosphere, it

kills life, doesn't it? You see it in your workplace, you see it in your home, you see it in the church. You see it when negativity enters in, when someone's pessimistic and negative, it just is a kill, kills all the joy, takes all the fun out of it. But when positive words of encouragement permeate our assembly, they create such a pleasant, such a joyful, optimistic environment of hope and joy, don't they? Words of encouragement, they ring hollow when they don't spring forward from the truth, right? When you know, I don't know, ladies, you're wearing something that you just don't particularly like, and someone comes up and overly flatters you about the really ugly dress you're wearing or whatever, you know it's a lie. You know. We call those kinda, all that kind of puffed-up language that's meant to try to encourage and you can tell they're overdoing it, you know, that's what we call flattery. We see right through it. It's not according to truth. Some forms of encouragement are so superficial, so meaningless, they tend toward flattery and that's actually sinful speech. That's not what we're talking about there. This is very far from encouragement.

Words of encouragement are grounded in God's truth; they're grounded in what his Word says, principles of truth in his Word,

so that your expressions of encouragement come out of and correspond to what God says is good, what God says is right, what God says is beautiful. So you can legitimately, when you see somebody quietly serving over in a corner, never saying anything, they're just dusting or pick up trash or they're, they're children's room or whatever and nobody every pays attention to them, you can legitimately walk up to that person and say, you know what? God sees that service and that's an investment into eternity. I'm so grateful for you. Thank you for what you're doing for the Lord. That's encouraging. That's true. That's grounded in the truth. That's what we need to be doing, don't we? Is to be recognizing people who are serving in our midst and thanking them for their service. Don't, don't worry about them getting puffed up or a big head. It's God's job to take care of their pride, not yours. You encourage; let God take care of their pride in a different way, all right?

Truly uplifting, truly edifying, life-giving edifying, Paul says in Romans 14:19, "Let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding." Another way to translate that, what makes for peace and the edification of one another. That's another one another command. Let's pursue the edification of one

another; pursue it, strive after it. Paul says, after teaching on the doctrine of the Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4, he says in 1 Thessalonians 4:18, "Encourage one another with these words." You know what? Eschatology is not for you getting everything right in predicting the future. It's not so you can read the headlines better. It's so that you can encourage one another with those words. We have a God who drew Christ into heaven bodily, and he's going to send that Christ back to us bodily, just as he left. And he's gonna rule the world. Is that encouraging to you? You read the headlines, you read the headlines and you see, boy, there's a lot to be discouraged about. Someone else is shooting somebody else, and somebody else is rioting, and the finances are going to tank, and we're all going, oh, no, it's all going to fall apart! You know what? In the midst of that, we have a sovereign God. None of this is outside of his plan; he's using it all and he's driving it all to his ends. What's the end? The Rapture's going to happen; the church is going to go to heaven. Is *that* good news?

Again, in 1 Thessalonians 5:11, after teaching on the doctrine of the second coming, our future hope, the consummation of all things in Christ, Paul says, "Therefore, encourage one



another and build one another up, just as you are doing." Just keep doing it more. We need to hear that so much. The writer to the Hebrews, Hebrews 10:25, he exhorts us "not to neglect meeting together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day draw near." You know what? I think that's a good passage for why we ought to be in the regular fellowship of the church. Why? So we come and receive encouragement, "all the more as we see the day drawing near." You know what? Every breath we take, every step we take, every day that goes by, we're closer to Christ's coming. Closer. Let's encourage one another with that. Coming together in this corporate assembly of believers is so vital because we reinforce the truth to one another, and that is so encouraging, so edifying. We need that one another ministry desperately, don't we? We need it.

So speak the truth with one another; encourage one another. Let me give three more, I'm gonna give you these in rapid succession. They all have to do with our individual teaching ministry as Christians. We're to instruct one another, we're to exhort one another, and we're to admonish one another. Okay? Those could be sub-points C, D, and E: instruct, exhort, and

admonish. You say, well, those one's aren't for me, I'm not really a teacher. It's not my gift. Listen, if you're a Christian, at some level you're a teacher of the truth; you're a teacher of the truth. Let's go through those one by one: instruct, exhort, and admonish.

Sub-point letter C: We're to instruct one another with the truth. Paul says, Romans 15:14, "I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to," get this, "instruct one another." Instruct one another. He says, "I'm satisfied about you, my brothers, that you are able to instruct one another." Paul wrote Romans, the Epistle to the Romans to the whole church, not just the pastors, not just the elders. He wrote it to the whole church. It says in Romans 1:7, "to all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints." It's pretty comprehensive, right? Christians. Implication: Get busy instructing one another, all right?

Sub-point letter D: We're to exhort one another with the truth. We're to exhort one another with the truth. Hebrews 3:13

says, "But exhort one another every day as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." Sin's deceit, does it harden us? Yeah, it does, doesn't it? Do you ever get into a rut when you're kinda pursuing self-centered thinking and all that kind of stuff? You can get hardened in that condition. That's bad, okay? We need to stop that, and the only way we're going to stop that is when someone comes up to you and says, Hey, stop that! You can't be like that anymore. You're being hardened in the deceitfulness of sin. Sin isn't going to pay good dividends; it's going to pay bad dividends, so quit investing in it. You can't do that to me. I don't want you to get into my kitchen. I don't want you to get into my business. I'm sorry. Is it today? Yes, it's today. So as long as it's called today, I'm to exhort you. I'm going to get into your kitchen. I'm going to get into your business. Exhortation is what you might call, getting pushy in your teaching, prodding someone forward to actually do what the Bible prescribes us to do.

Some people, they say that that's their spiritual gift, right? Getting into everybody's business. That is *not* a spiritual gift. That's called being a busybody, all right? Quit

being a busybody; that's another exhortation to you. Stop that! But we are to patiently exhort one another in the truth, patiently do that. Hebrews 10:24, "Consider how we are to stir one another up to love and good works." Stir one another up to love and good works. We need to consider how to do that. We need to be faithful to do that every single day as long as it is called today. We're to exhort with the truth.

Sub-point letter E: We're to admonish one another with the truth. admonish one another with the truth. Admonish is a little bit stronger word than exhortation. Exhortation is getting pushy; admonishment is getting corrective. All right? It's almost like a little bit of a spanking, alright?

So keep your finger there in 1 Corinthians, I told you I was going to do this to you. Turn quickly to Colossians 3:16 because I want to show you something, here; so just stick something there as a place-marker in your Bible, in 1 Corinthians 14. Go to Colossians 3:16. This verse kind of combines the last three points into a single verse. Colossians 3:16 says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching

and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

There it is: We're to instruct one another, exhort one another, and even admonish one another with the truth. As I said, admonish has a corrective element to it. Admonishing someone means loving them enough to identify biblically where they're wrong, identify biblically how to help them to see that corrective, and then walking alongside them to learn what's right, walking alongside them to help to, to understand the process of repentance, what repentance looks like in this case, what it means to put off that bad behavior and put on a righteous behavior. You need to walk alongside them to do that. That is not the special role of the pastor. That's not strictly the purview of the elders. In a healthy, growing church, you know what? That's the job of every church member. Every single one of us.

Paul's not here to unleash a critical spirit of the church in Colossians 3:16. Quite the contrary. He's unleashing the Holy

Spirit into the church. That's what this is about. It says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly," and then notice the results of that, "teaching and admonishing one another, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." Does that sound familiar? Turn over to Ephesians chapter 5, Ephesians chapter 5 in verse 18, it's going to seem very familiar. In Ephesians 5:18, you've read this before, Ephesians 5:18, and following, Paul says, "Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery," or dissipation, "but be filled with the Spirit." Now notice the effects, verse 19, "addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." You see that, there? "Being filled with the Spirit," Ephesians 5:18 and "letting the Word of Christ dwell richly with in you," Colossians 3:16, the two of those are one. They produce the same results. To be Spirit-saturated is to be Word-saturated and vice versa. To be Word-saturated is to be Spirit-saturated.

Why is that? Because the Spirit authored this, didn't he? The Spirit wrote this down. If his words are saturating you, he's saturating you. When the Spirit is operative in his church

through the saturation of his Word, Christians will be instructing, they'll be exhorting, they'll be admonishing one another with the truth. That's healthy, beloved. That is healthy. You may not have the role of office of pastor. You may not have the role of elder or teacher, official teacher in the church, but that is okay. That's okay. Christ has commanded you to make disciples, you're along with the rest of us. We're all making disciples. Find someone who knows less than you do and teach them. If everyone around you knows more than you do, then you'd better get busy. Learn something that they *don't* know and teach that. Better yet, go out, talk to an unbeliever and evangelize him. If you know the gospel, you know what? You possess in your mind, in your head, in your heart, you possess in your Bible an eternal knowledge. That guy's still walking in darkness. That guy's bumping around, bumping into stuff, tripping over stuff. He has no idea how to live life. It doesn't matter how erudite, wise, it doesn't matter how many degrees he has, how many letters behind his name, it doesn't matter what he's done in his experience, if he's not saved, he's in darkness. You have the light of the gospel. So if you don't know much, you know *that*. Teach him. Teach *that* guy. And when God saves him, you know what? You've got a disciple to teach and to

instruct. You've got a disciple to exhort, to admonish. So go and get started. Let's do it.

One more sub-point letter F: We're to practice the truth with one another. We're to practice the truth with one another. If you're still looking at Ephesians 5, let's read that again, and this time reading through verse 21, "do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ."

"Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ." That last phrase there, in verse 21, it's grammatically connected to the next verse about wives submitting to their husbands, and it forms a link to Paul's entire teaching in the rest of chapter 5 and on into chapter 6. He's talking about practicing the truth with one another in the local church, and practicing the truth in that way means submitting to one



another. Now, it *doesn't* mean children submit to parents and parents submit to children, okay? These categories remain intact. God is telling us through the Apostle Paul, here, how to work out mutual submission. There are certain roles of submission, certain roles of authority, and those stay intact. Parents are still parents; children are still children. He goes through, here, the filling of the Spirit, the saturation of the Word in the congregation. You know what it leads to? It leads to a sanctified life in one word, sanctified living; living out the truth with respect to our God-ordained roles: wives submitting to their husbands, husbands loving their wives, children obeying parents, parents raising their children in the Lord, slaves submitting to their masters, masters treating their slaves with dignity and respect. So out of the filling of the Spirit, out of the filling of the Word comes God-honoring marriages, healthy families, useful productive members of society. All of that just flows out of a church that reinforces the truth with each other.

Okay, now go to 1 Corinthians 14. I want you to look at that passage that I told you to bookmark earlier. Look at 1 Corinthians 14 in verse 23. I want you to see the effects, just one of the effects, here, of this one another behavior,

reinforcing the truth with one another here in the life of the local church. Look at 1 Corinthians 14:23, "If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds?" Can you imagine that? Some and your not we don't, this isn't ongoing today, people knowing languages they've never studied before, being able to speak in those things, those languages. But it is was going on in Corinth, was going on in the early church in the apostolic era. And some uninitiated believer walks into the First Church of Corinth, find out what's going on here with all these Christians, with all these Jesus people, this Jesus disciples and he comes in and finds everyone speaking in all kinds of languages he cannot understand. What is this? Total chaos. For him it's just a din of noise and confusion. Nothing is making sense. That unbeliever is gonna quickly size up that situation: These people are nuts! These people are crazy! I'm outta here! We don't blame him.

Look, that's not just a terrible testimony to the order of God, to the clarity of God, to the perspicuity of God, and his, his clarity and his ability to make himself known and understood. This is an absolute fail when it comes to the

purpose of the church. The church exists to make disciples, starting with *that guy*. Look at verse 24, "But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, and the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you." When a church is saturated by the revealed Word of God, which is what prophecy was in their church in their day. When a church is saturated by the truth, unbelievers fall under conviction. Everyone's truth-saturated speech leaves the unbeliever with nowhere to run, nowhere to hide. The secrets of his heart are exposed because God's Word "cuts like a two-edged sword," Hebrews 4:12-13, "and it pierces to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow," it goes deep "and it discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart." It ferrets all that out. "And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him with whom we have," to do "to the one we got to give an account to." He sees it all. And if you've got something to hide, you don't want that kind of exposure. It's uncomfortable.

Some unbelievers, granted, are not going to fall on their face at that point and declare that God is among you, worship God. Some are going to flee from that kind of conviction, aren't they? Some are going to try to argue against it. Some are going to suppress the truth in unrighteousness, but you know what? No one can prevail against it. No argument can stand before the truth of God's Word. And when an unbeliever, though he flee, one day "every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the father." And you know what's going to happen on that day? If he doesn't bow in your midst, he will bow on that day and he will declare, yep, when I was there, God was really among them. He'll acknowledge the truth.

Look, here's the point, whether it's unbelievers who need to be evangelized or whether its believers who need to be disciplined and edified, when we reinforce the truth with each other, we're putting into practice one of the most essential categories of the one another commands in the New Testament. It pleases God when we honor his Word, loving the truth, reinforcing Scripture among ourselves, humbling ourselves before it, uniting our minds around it, one mind, one heart.

Well, how do we do that, how do we do that, reinforce the truth with one another, in this church? Well, I got a lot to say about that. In fact, I got a whole sermon to preach on reinforcing the truth, how we reinforce the truth with one another, so we're going to do that in a couple of weeks, okay? We're not going to do that now, and yes, that means that I'm extending this series just a wee bit longer than originally intended. I keep kicking the can down the road, don't I? I know you'll forgive me. You're Christians; you've got to forgive. But there's so much I want to share with you, and I just can't fit it in in this timeframe. So even though I'm a little anxious to get back into our exposition of Luke, we're going to postpone that a couple of weeks so I can say more. Alright? So let's keep moving.

Here's the second one another action there in your bulletin, we've got the move through these pretty quickly here. Second one another action, not only are we to reinforce the truth, second, we're to honor one another. We're to honor one another, in fact, Paul says, Romans 12:10, "Outdo one another in showing honor." Wouldn't that be a great competition to have?

Instead, of hey, I want the trophy! Hey, I want the ribbon! Say, how can I honor this person? Let's have a competition on honoring people. A very important one another command. There are others like it. I'm putting them all into this category honoring others; I'm shoving a number of the other one another commands into this because that's the main idea that undergirds all these one another commands I'm about to share, is honor. Honor, Paul says in Romans 15:7, "Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you for the glory of God." That doesn't mean just, hey, good to have you here with us, shake a hand. That's not what he means by welcome. You could translate this accept one another. You could translate it receive one another. This is a heart thing that manifests itself in an outward action thing. We're to be a welcoming people. Why? Because we honor people, because we honor those whom God loves.

There are four one another commands that have to do with this principle of honor, and these four commands have to do with holy kissing. All the teenage girls just woke up. Holy kissing. And now the teenage boys are awake, too, feeling a tad uncomfortable. But here they are holy kissing in Scripture. Here you go, four commands. Romans 16:16, "Greet one another with a

holy kiss." I'm glad it's called a holy kiss; we need to qualify, holy. "All the churches of Christ greet you." 1 Corinthians 16:20, "All the brothers send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss." 2 Corinthians 13:12, "Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you." 1 Peter 5:14, again, "Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ." Now don't worry, we're not going to enforce a hyper-literal application of those verses here in this church. This is not a weird cult, okay? That would be a case of inaccurate application. Some might call it sloppy agapé. I told you any scripted joke, that was scripted, really bad. And you're like, yeah, no need to prove it to us, okay?

This Middle Eastern greeting, coming close to someone, kissing them on the cheek, you know what? There's a tenderness involved in that. I always think of Isaiah 6, when Isaiah is before the throne of God, and the, the seraphim are flying around pronouncing, "Holy, holy, holy!" And Isaiah is undone in the presence of holiness. And he says, "I'm a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips." He's like, what am I going to do? I'm undone! And a seraph picks up a, takes the tongs, picks up a fire from the altar, and he touches

it to his lips. Can you imagine a hot coal from a fire burning before the throne of God, touching the most sensitive part of your body? It would immediately cauterize those lips, probably burst into a huge blister. Pain, such pain! But the lips are the tender, one of the tenderest spots on the body, and there's a tenderness involved in greeting one another Middle Eastern style, greeting one another with a holy kiss. This nearness, this closeness, it signals reception. The guard comes down, the tendency toward self-protection is dropped, all in favor of showing full acceptance, full reception, unqualified welcome, bringing someone in underneath the armor. That's the idea, here. All those actions, welcoming, receiving, greeting with a kiss, those actions are based on this fundamental idea of honor, honor. So foreign in American society, isn't it? Where people are taught not to honor anybody but self.

The Old Testament word for honor is the word *kabod*. *Kabod*. It's sometimes translated glory. A literal translation of *kabod* is weighty, heavy. That's the core idea. When you honor someone, that person is weighty in your estimation. That person is treated with importance, heaviness, respect, reverence and that's the idea that carries into the New Testament as well. The



verb is *timaó*, meaning honor, revere, show respect, show esteem for others. Paul commands Timothy to "honor the widows who are widows indeed." You know what? Widows fall in a special category worthy of honor; honor widows indeed. 1 Timothy 5:3, "Elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor." 1 Timothy 5:17, "Slaves are to honor their masters." Have you ever thought about that? You go to work every day, ever thought about, I need to honor my supervisor. I need to honor my employer. I need to honor the brand I work for? I need to honor them. Honor, we're to show respect. We're to esteem these people; we're to honor them.

So back to that opening command, Romans 12:10, "Outdo one another in showing honor." It's not merely about external demonstrations of honor, pomp and circumstance, red carpets, award ceremonies, that kind of thing. It's not even primarily about summing up whether a person deserves honor or not. It's not about that. We used to say in the military, "Salute the rank, not the man." Salute the rank. It's why Romans 15:17 is so important, "Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."

Look, honoring others in the fellowship, it's about recognizing the worth, the value that every Christian has in the sight of God. How precious each one is to Christ. Since Christ has welcomed each one of us, since he's received us, since he's purchased us with his own blood, would we dare shun anybody else? Would we dare disdain another Christian, hold that person at arm's length? Far be it from us, right? Far be it from us. Every Christian is to be honored by every other Christian. We honor one another for the sake of Christ, and not only that, but we recognize, we esteem, those whom Christ has placed in unique positions and special roles among us. We honor one another because we want to honor Christ. We honor one another because we want to submit our judgment to his. We want to subordinate our preferences to his manifest wisdom in choosing that person, uniting him to this body.

So let's get practical. How do we do that here at Grace Church? How do we do that here? Well, maybe we could start by building relationships with one another, right? Maybe we could start by preferring those relationships over other relationships. If God chose these people, gathered them here to belong to this assembly of blood-bought saints, well maybe we

could spend a little time to get to know them, just to spend some time to figure out God's wisdom is in drawing them into this fellowship. So try inviting, practically speaking, here it is, practice steps, practical applications, invite somebody over to your home. The people in this room are important to Christ. They should be important to you as well. Get out of your comfort zone. Be willing to break your routines. Be willing to invest your time in getting to know the saints and that may involve you reprioritizing your time a bit. It may involve you cutting out some time-consuming activities that clutter your schedule; got to make room in your schedule for honoring the saints. It's a command, here. You say, well, I've got a lot of family in the area. I'm pretty well connected already. I'm not really too needy, doing fine in the relationships department. Well, family relationships are important, that's true. But they're to be subordinated in importance, so you show a higher honor to the family of God. You say, where do you get that idea?

You know what? I get it from Jesus. Matthew chapter 12 verses 46 to 50 says, "While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him and he replied to the man who told him,

'Who is my mother and who are my brothers?'" That's kind of odd, isn't it? "Stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.'"

Is that how you think? If it's not, let's grow. I understand. I understand that people are hard. Bruce said it, right? Bruce came up here and said he didn't like any of you, you really are the... I'm just kidding, that's not what he said. I'm just like twisting it for my own advantage, a cheap laugh. I'm sorry, Bruce. But, but seriously, I mean we do cause, that we are the source of trial to one another sometimes. I know I'm the source of trial to a lot of people, starting with my wife. But she's so gracious, and we need to be gracious with one another. If Jesus considers his church family as more important than his birth parents, more important than his blood relatives, his siblings, shouldn't we? Shouldn't those who do the will of our father in heaven be more precious to us than those who don't, even though they're our own flesh and blood? Sometimes our misplaced sympathies blind us to the true significance of the saints around us. Beloved, we need to see that. We need to

see God's children are so important. And "What we are," 1 John 3:2, "What we are has not yet appeared, not yet been revealed, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is."

There is something special wrapped up in each one of us that God has yet to reveal. And it's not in us. It's not inherent in us. It's what he's done in us. So get to know the folks in this church now. Invite the saints into your home. Eat meals together. Go for walks. Spend time at the park. Talk about life and theology. Talk about family. Talk about evangelism, church, discipleship, parenting, growing old together. Talk about it all.

Young people, get to know the older people. Learn from their years of experience on the earth, from their mistakes as well as their triumph. There's a lot to be learned even from bad examples, right? I've got a pile of mistakes I could share with you, and you could learn from that. I don't want you to make the same ones. So ask older people questions. Learn what they count to be important now, at this end of their life, as they reflect

on the lives that they've lived. Honor them. Esteem them. Serve them with your youthful energy, with your strength.

Older people, consider the stewardship God has given you with the younger people in this church. God expects you to invest in the younger generation, to lead them, to guide them, to disciple them. Do not disdain them because they are young. Honor them. Esteem them as more important than yourself. The stewardship God has given you to disciple these young people means you need to be active and aggressive in reinforcing the truth with them. Speak the truth, encourage, instruct, exhort, admonish, all that. Practice the truth in, in front of them so they can see your life, the outcome of your faith. In fact, help them make the connections. Help them see and understand not only how you live, but why you live how you live. They need to understand that.

When it comes to ministry in the local church, you know what? You need to put young people in positions of responsibility, lower responsibility at first, and then raise it. You need to let them try, test their ideas, allow them to

even fail. Then be gracious when they do fail because you've failed. You know what it's like. Teach them through the responsibility because you're handing over the mantle of leadership to this next generation. You need to consider that you are the older people who have a stewardship of younger people in your midst. You need to hand it on to them as you set your eyes on heaven.

Look, we need to count these relationships here in the local church as the most important on earth. You know why? Because we're gonna go together into eternity, aren't we? Very important, "Honor one another for the sake of Christ."

Okay, third, very quick, external action: We need to serve one another. You know what? I'm looking at the time, and I'm out of time. So we're gonna serve one another, I'm going to serve you by letting you go, okay? Let's bow in pra, a word of prayer. I'm sorry to cut it off so short, here.

Heavenly Father, thank you for the time we've had together in your Word. We just pray that you would help us to do just the



things we've talked about, reinforce the truth with one another, honor one another. If we start there, a lot of things are going to flow out of that. And I just pray, Lord, that you'd give us encouragement in this, that you'd strengthen us by your Spirit, inform us by your Word. Help us to love and honor one another by reinforcing the truth and honoring your Word. In Jesus' name, amen.