

Lesson 5: Family

Lesson Focus

“Family of God”

Base Scripture

Romans 12:1-8; Ephesians 4:1-5.

Aim

This week you will study the importance of the church (the Body of Christ, the family of God) and the relationships you will have in the church.

Memory Verses:	Romans 12:3-8 3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
	Ephesians 4:1-5 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.
Goals: Student will learn:	Over the next week, who is in the family of God, what new relationships look like, forming bonds of unity, staying pure and encouraging one another through tough times and resolving conflict.

DAILY ACTIVITIES: For the Week

Introduction

This week, we'll study the importance of the church (the Body of Christ, the family of God) and the relationships you will have in the church. This is what the Kingdom of God is all about - **Relationships**. In this Kingdom, relationships get started first in Christ, then new relationships are built with others in Christ, we then learn to belong and have unity in the family. All while remaining pure and encouraging to each other so that when conflict arise, we deal with it according to scripture in the bonds of peace. In this family, God is our loving Father, and we are his children. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we dare" (1 John 3:1). Since we are God's children, we are brothers and sisters, and we love each other as such. For "we know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14). We became God's children through the suffering and death of our older brother Jesus the Christ. "For it became him (God), for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation (Jesus) perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifies (Jesus) and they that are sanctified (God's children) are all of one: for which cause he (Jesus) is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2:10,11). God is our Father; we are his children; Jesus is our brother, and we are all brothers and sisters through love. This is God's family. We don't get to choose our physical family, but our spiritual family is our choice. When we choose Christ, we are choosing to be part of God's family of believers. This family dynamic is nurtured through the word of God, this family learns to look like, act like, think like, talk like and love like Christ. The one who guides the family is the head of the family (Christ) equipping each family member through the Holy Spirit to add to the family through discipleship making us One Body with many members in Jesus Christ.

Wednesday Jesus' Church

1. Jesus Christ, who has all authority, taught us that the church is crucial in his plan. In Matthew 16:16-18, Jesus heard Peter confess to him to be the Christ, the Son of God; and immediately Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it."
2. Jesus saw the church as the center of his plan. He wanted to build it and he intended to make it so strong that the forces of Satan could not stand against it. What Jesus counted as so important; we too must count as so important. What statements have you made, or heard religious people make that discount (lessen) the importance of the church? What would Jesus say?
3. For a true picture of what the church should be striving to become every day, look at Acts 2:40-47. What impresses you the most?
4. What can you do today and the rest of this week to contribute to this kind of life among God's people (the church)?

Thursday New Relationships

1. As you read each of the following passages, write down something the passage teaches that must be in our relationships in the Body of Christ.
a.) John 13:34-35 b.) Ephesians 5:1-2 c.) I Corinthians 13:1-3
d.) Colossians 3:14 e.) Galatians 5:6,13,14 f.) I Peter 4:8-9
2. What does it mean to love another person?
3. What does 1 John 3:16 say it means to love another person? How does this apply to our relationships?
4. What is so good and so right about loving like this? What are the results?
5. Surprise someone today with a special act of love.

Friday**Belonging**

1. Paul describes the church as the "Body of Christ." Read Romans 12:1-8. How does giving yourself first to God need to lead to giving yourself to other people in the Body of Christ?
2. Notice particularly v. 5 which says, "each member belongs to all the others," or "we are all members of one another." How does this fit with or conflict with the often popular ideal of individualism?
3. List three things that you already know you can do for other members of the body of Christ. Share these with someone who is close to you and get their reaction.
4. List at least three things that you know you need from the Body of Christ in order to grow in Christ.

Saturday**Unity**

1. Read Ephesians 4:1-5. Why does it seem to you that God is so very concerned about the body of Christ having unity and peace? This unity is not mere talk but daily action. While God desires (spiritual) that we be unified in the bond of peace, Satan desires (fleshly) nothing more than that we be fake and not seek true unity in Christ.
2. Turn to Romans 14:13-15:3 and read how far we should go and how much we should bend to keep the Body of Christ together. Can you think of a practical application of this passage?
3. Is there anything in your life that is so important to you that you would not give it up even if it was keeping people from coming to Jesus Christ or growing in him? If there is, look back to v. 21 and get help in dealing with this area of your life. What most competes against Christ in your life and why?

Sunday **Purity**

1. God is greatly concerned about the unity of the church. He is also greatly concerned about the purity of the Body of Christ. We are called to a holy life and pure life, and sin in the body that is being hidden or ignored will destroy the power of the church.
2. Read Ephesians 4: 17-5:14. List those things which are described here as improper for God's holy people.
3. How would living as "children of light" be totally different from those things you have just listed? What is the basic difference?
4. Are you an older Christian? Even if you are a young Christian the doctrine of Christ applies to you as well. What should you do if you see brothers or sisters falling into some sin?
Read Galatians 6:1-2 and write out the principles you learned about who should help others with their sin and how it should be done. Using your answer in question 5, now write out the following: "God's grace is sufficient to enable me to say 'no' to _____."

Monday **Encouragement**

1. One of our greatest responsibilities is to encourage each other in the Body of Christ. Read an important statement about this in Hebrews 3:12-14.
2. According to this passage, why is encouragement so needed? Judging from this passage, what kind of encouragement do you think would prove most helpful?
3. Look at Hebrews 10:24-25. What do we need to do to make our meeting times even more encouraging? Why is it discouraging for someone to miss meetings without communicating why they are not there or without getting advice?
4. Write down the names of three people you want to encourage and how you plan to do this.
5. Explain why different people are encouraged by different means. Write down the two results of walking out in the light as described in vs 7. Why is this passage comforting? What does it teach you about relationships in Christ?
6. Remember this: Satan's only ground is darkness. When we confess our sins and bring them out into the light, we take away from him his only base of operation, and we enjoy the power of God's grace, and the blood of Christ continually cleanses us from all sin.
7. Have you been open about your sins? Have you asked God's forgiveness?

Tuesday **Conflict Resolution**

1. The Body of Christ will not be a "**perfect place**" immune from relationship problems. Why will problems even arise in relationships that are in the church?
2. Read two important passages that tell us how to resolve problems that arise in the church.
 - a.) Matthew 5:23-24 (Remember Jesus is teaching Jews here who still went into the temple to offer sacrifices; but what is the principle for us?)
 - b.) Matthew 18:15-20
 - (1) How is this different from the way people often handle a problem of sin? Why will step one work most of the time?
 - (2) Why is step two sometimes going to be needed?
 - (3) Why would the church have to sever fellowship with the person who will not repent and confess his or his sin?
3. Determine early in your Christian life that you will not complain or grumble behind someone's back. Determine that you will go to them and seek to resolve the problem with God's help.
4. How long have you been a Christian? Has it been more than a month now since we began this journey? How would you evaluate the way you have handled your relationships in the body?
5. Read 2 Corinthians 1:12. What are you appreciating about relationships that are based on God's grace and not worldly wisdom?
6. Ask someone close to you for some feedback on the conduct of your relationships so far.
7. Praise God for relationships based on Jesus and the grace of God.