

# Community: The Context and the Means for Growth

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Pray

### 1.2 Reflection:

What are your biggest takeaways from this class?

How will you put these things in?

How will these things impact your relationships in community?

### 1.3 Review

- Session 1: Beholding and Becoming
- Session 2: Idolatry and Desires
- Session 3: Growing in the Gospel: The Fruit of Justification, Adoption, Transformation in the True Vine
- Session 4&5: Tree Diagram: Heat and Thorns, Cross, and Fruit
- Session 6: Spiritual Disciplines
- Session 7: Suffering: The Refiner's Fire
- Session 8: Decision Making: Sowing and Reaping
- Session 9: Community: The Context and Means of Growth (Today)

### 1.4 Resources

- "Christ Formed in You" by Brian G. Hedges

## 2 Full Maturity in Christ: The Goal

### 2.1 John 17

- Read John 17:15-23
- Set Apart in Christ
- The Nature of God.
- The Mature Christian Reflects God's Character to the World

### 2.2 Why Not?

- Quotes from "Christ in You"

*The relationship between being Christ like and being in community "As believers, we hunger for both greater Christlikeness (to be less selfish) and for deeper relationships (to feel less isolated). That these two desires work in tandem shouldn't surprise us; God created us for relationships. (p. 236)"*

*The Essence of God is Community: "“God is a community and we as his creation reflect this quality. Moreover, he brings us into community and places the desire for community within us. Ultimately, we can never escape our essential nature, who and what God designed us to be. This relational characteristic is central to who we are . . . you cannot talk about human beings made in God’s image without talking about relationships. Yet it is often the first thing we overlook. Only when human beings live in community do we fully reflect the likeness of God. (p. 237)”*

*We Run from Relationships “At one level we want friendships. At another level we don’t want them! In creation, we were made to live in community, but because of the fall, we tend to run from the very friendships we need. Quite often, our longing for them is tainted by sin. We pursue them only as long as they satisfy our own desires and needs. We have a love-hate relationship with relationships!” (p. 237)*

*Being Renewed must include Renewed relationships: "“Of course, renewed relationships are not only the result of God’s transforming grace, they are also a means for transformation. God uses relationships as tools for changing our lives [C.S Lewis says] ‘The Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became Man for no other purpose. It is even doubtful, you know, whether the whole universe was created for any other purpose.’ The goal of redemption is to make you a “little Christ.” God wants to renew his image within you. But spiritual renewal doesn’t happen in isolation from others. It happens in relationships. “*

- Illustration: Ralph Breaks the Internet

### 3 The Modern Life: The Obstacles

#### 3.1 Individualism

- Cultural focus
- Flesh Focus
- World Focus
- Contrast this to Philippians 2: 3-4 which says "do nothing from selfish ambition but count others more significant than yourselves and then let each of you look not only for his own interests but also to the interests of others.

#### 3.2 Compartmentalization

- No Sacred vs. Secular
- Is Church just another ball to juggle?
- Or Is Church the Spoke that spins the wheel?

### 3.3 Busyness

- Always in a Hurry
- Distracted
- Burned Out
- Fleeing to comfort and entertainment
- There is not substitute for time. Both time together and time passing.

### 3.4 Misleading Expectations

- No Perfect People
- No Perfect Relationships
- No Perfect Churches
- “You’re in the Ocean”

## 4 A Vision for the Church

- Read Acts 2:42-47
  - Dedicated to the Apostles Teaching (42)
  - Worship (47)
  - Sacramental (42)
  - Sacrificial Love (42, 44-46)
  - Fruitful (47)

## 5 How Do We Get There?

### 5.1 Scriptural Summary from Ephesians 4

- 11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,
- 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,
- 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
- 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.
- 15 Rather, **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,
- 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

### 5.2 Speaking the Truth in Love

*As it turns out, however, “ ‘Speaking the truth in love’ is not the best rendering of his expression, for the Greek verb makes no reference to our speech. (p. 249).*

*This balance of truth-plus-love is crucial. As Tim Chester writes, “Love without truth is like doing heart surgery with a wet fish. But truth without love is like*

*doing heart surgery with a hammer.”<sup>21</sup> We must embody truth, not just express it. So, truth, fused with love, is incarnated in our lives as we live it out with one another. Paul David Tripp concurs: “God transforms people’s lives as people bring his Word to others . . . The combination of powerful truth wrapped in self-sacrificing love is what God uses to transform people.” (p. 249)*

- "I want to see you grow".

### 5.3 Transformed in Community: Get Together

- 1 Pet 4:8-10
- Rom 15:5-7:
- The Power for Getting Together (God, 5)
- The model for getting together (Christ, 5)
- The reason for getting together (to glorify God and Christ, 6-7)

### 5.4 Transformed in Community: Show Love

- Col 3:12-13
- Growing in Christ for the church
- Our decision making, conflict resolution, light and heat, cross and thorns, killing idols, etc.: For the Body of Christ

### 5.5 Transformed in Community: Share Truth

- 1 Thess 5:9-11

### 5.6 Transformed in Community: Confront Sin

- Heb 3:12-14:
- Audience?
- Works based salvation? NO
- , “Eternal security is a community project.”

## 6 Conclusion

- Revelation 7:9-12

*“**9** After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, **10** and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” **11** And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, **12** saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and*