

INTRODUCTION:

The lifestyle of believers is to be characterized by three basic priorities, three commitment areas of relationship. We see these in Jesus' "high priestly" prayer in John 17.

- (1) Commitment to Christ
 "Keep them in thy name" (vs. 3)
 "That they may also be in us" (vs. 21)
- (2) Commitment to the Body of Christ
 "That they may become perfectly one" (cf. Vs. 21-23)
- (3) Commitment to the work of Christ in the world
 "So I have sent them into the world" (vs. 18)

Our responsibility and commitment to other believers in the Body of Christ (i.e. priority #2) is to be marked by the "ONE ANOTHER" commands. These commands give us a depth and breadth and height of vision for how God wants his people to relate to each other.

COMMANDS:

I. PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER

A. James 5:15

B. Related Passages

1. Eph. 6:18-19
2. I Tim. 2:1-4
3. Acts 13:1-3
 - a. Who prays for you in your ministry?
 - b. How can the local church act as a sending, praying base from which its members are sent out?

C. The example of Paul's prayers

How does Paul pray for other believers?

What is the content of his prayers for other believers i.e. what does he pray for?

1. Eph 1:15-23
2. Eph. 3:14-19
3. Phil. 1:3-11
4. Col. 1:9-12; 2:1-3
5. I Thes. 3:10-13
6. II Thes. 1:11-12

When you pray for other believers, what do you pray for? (See Col. 4:12)

II. SHARING TRUTH WITH ONE ANOTHER:

A. Edify one another

(Definition) Vine's Expository Dictionary, Vol. II, p. 18, literally means to build a house, used figuratively in the New Testament in the sense of promoting the spiritual growth and development of character of believers, by teaching and example, suggesting that such spiritual progress (growth) is the result of patient labor in the building process i.e. the action of believers toward each other.

1. I Thes. 5:11 – Therefore...edify one another.
2. I Cor. 14:26 -- ...When you come together... let all things be done for edification. Edification is the theme of I Cor. 14:3,4,5,12,17, & 26.
3. Eph. 4:12-13 --...for the equipment of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for building up (edification) of the Body of Christ...
4. Romans 14:19 -- Let us then pursue the things, which make for peace and the building up of one another.
5. Romans 15:2 – Let each of us please his neighbor for his good to edify Him. The process of edification brings us back to the source of truth, God Himself. We cannot build up one another based on human ideas, thoughts or feelings. It is by the sharing of God’s truth as found in His Word that we are able to edify each other.
6. Acts 20:32 – And now I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace which is able to build you up...

B. Exhort, encourage one another

(Definition) Many ideas are included in the New Testament word “exhort” (also translated encourage). It is the verb form of the word that Jesus uses to describe the Holy Spirit in John 14:16, 16:7 (Paraclete). Ideas include: to entreat; to admonish or urge a person to pursue some prospective, future course of conduct; to help, give aid or assistance; to strengthen; to comfort; to counsel, instruct and teach; a friend who does whatever is necessary to promote the welfare of the one he loves.

1. Hebrews 3:13 – But exhort one another everyday, as long as it is called “today” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
2. Hebrews 10:24-25 – Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and Good deeds ... encouraging one another.
3. I Thes. 4:18 – Therefore comfort (exhort) one another with these words.
4. I Thes. 5:11 -- ...encourage one another, and build up one another.

C. Teach one another

(Definition) To give instruction, clarify truth; to give instruction and application in the doctrines of God’s truth; A. Wetherall Johnson says that the aim of all teaching is “to make God Himself and what He says in the Bible so real that those who listen will do something about it.” She continues that a teacher is “ineffective unless the message is so interesting, encouraging, instructive, convicting and revealing of the whole character of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, that the hearer cannot listen without changing in his attitudes and daily action.” Teaching imparts knowledge that affects attitudes and behavior.

1. Col. 3:16 – Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom...
2. Hebrews 5:11-14 – For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of God’s Word.
3. Deut. 6:4-9 – The Old Testament ideal: all teachers of God’s law.

D. Warn, admonish (NOUTHETEO) one another

(Definition) Literally a putting in mind. It is “the training by word” whether of encouragement, or if necessary by reproof or remonstrance (protest, complaint). It is distinguished from PAIDEUO which means to correct by discipline, to train by act. (cf. Hebrews 12:6, Eph. 6:4).

Nouthetic counseling has in view correcting something that is wrong in contrast to teaching which is the impartation of positive truth.

1. Col. 3:16 -- ...As you teach and admonish one another
2. Romans 15:14 – I myself am satisfied about you...that you yourselves are Full of goodness filled with all knowledge and able to admonish one another.
3. I Thes. 5:12 --...Respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you.
4. I Thes. 5:14 – We exhort you brothers, admonish the idle.
5. II Thes. 3:15 – Do not look on him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.
6. I Cor. 10:11 --...They (O.T. scriptures) were written down for our Instruction (admonition).
7. Eph. 6:4 – Fathers are to raise their children “in the discipline and instruction (admonition) of the Lord.”
8. Titus 3:10 – Reject a factious man after first and second warning.
9. Col. 1:28 – Him we proclaim, warning every man in all wisdom, that we may Present every man mature in Christ.
10. Acts 20:31 – For three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every One with tears.

Note: The edifying, exhorting, teaching and admonishing ministries in the Body are not confined to the pastor-teacher, but all believers have responsibility in these areas toward one another.

Questions:

- a) What can the leadership of the church do to train and develop these ministries among all of the local Body?
- b) How can members of the local church be encouraged to practice these ministries with one another?
- c) How can the church program provide opportunities for these ministries to function between members of the local Body?

E. Admonishing one another, outline of related ideas

(cf. Jay Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, Presbyterian and Reformed publishing Co., 1972, chapter IV and V, pp. 41-78.) Nouthetic = Greek, “to warn, admonish.”

1. The command to nouthetic counseling
 - a. Romans 15:4
 - b. Col. 3:16
The priesthood of all believers involves nouthetic counsel to one another.
2. Definition:
 - a. It implies a problem, the need for personality or behavioral change in the one admonished.
 - b. It is training by word of mouth toward bringing about change in the direction of greater conformity to Biblical principles and practices, e.g. the prophet Nathan with David.
 - c. The purpose of nouthetic counseling.

I Cor. 4:14, cf. I Thes. 2:7,8,11,12

The benefit and removal of harmful things ultimately that God will be glorified.

3. Nouthetic counseling accords with the purpose and use of Scripture
 - a. II Timothy 3:16 – The Scriptures are useful to perfect the man of God by what could be called nouthetic means (teaching, reproof, correcting, training).
 - b. In II Timothy 4:2, Paul urges Timothy to use the scriptures in accordance with their nouthetic purposes. “Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience and instruction.”

Adams, page 51 – “so nouthetic confrontation must be scriptural confrontation. Nouthetic confrontation is, in short, confrontation with the principles and practices of the scriptures.”

4. Nouthetic counseling embodies deep involvement
 - a. Acts 20:31 – “with tears”
 - b. II Cor. 11:29 – “Who is weak without my being weak; who is led into sin without my intense concern.”
 - c. III John 4 – “I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my own children walk in the truth.”

5. The goal of nouthetic counseling

I Timothy 1:5 – But the goal of our (authoritative) instruction is love which issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

God’s instruction in the Word is the Holy Spirit’s means of producing love in the believer. Sin, which leads to hypocrisy, a guilty conscience, and doubt makes love impossible. (A simple Biblical definition of love is the fulfilling of God’s commands i.e. having responsible relationships to God and man). Teaching and counseling the Word when blessed by the Holy Spirit, enables a man to become pure in heart, gain a peaceful conscience and trust God sincerely. Thus a person is able to fulfill the goal of Nouthetic Counseling which is love or conformity to God’s law.

6. Qualifications for Nouthetic counseling

- a. Romans 15:14 – full of goodness, filled with all knowledge...
- b. Col. 3:16 – “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another...”

- 1) KNOWLEDGE – being able to impart information. “The Holy Spirit uses counselors to right wrongs by the application of God’s Word to human problems” (Adams p.61)

- 2) GOODNESS – empathetic concern for the welfare of the other person which communicates hope in Christ

- 3) WISDOM – Proverbs 1:1-7 = wisdom includes

- a) learning and knowledge (vs. 5)
- b) practical application of principles to concrete situations i.e. wise dealing, righteousness, justice equity (vs. 3) the acquisition of skill (vs. 5)
- c) Behavior in accord with relationship with God and his nature (vss.3, 7)

Wisdom – Proverbs 15:23 – To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is.

Wisdom – Proverbs 25:11-12 – A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver. Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold is a wise reprover to a listening ear.

F. Counseling one another in the Proverbs

1. Proverbs 9:7-9 – He who corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse, and he who reproves a wicked man, incurs injury. Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man and he will increase in learning.
2. Proverbs 11:14 – Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.
3. Proverbs. 12:15 – The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to counsel (RSV advice)
4. Proverbs 15:22 – Without counsel plans go wrong, but with many advisers they succeed
5. Proverbs 19:20 – Listen to counsel (RSV advice) and accept instruction that you may gain wisdom for the future.
6. Proverbs 20:1 – Plans are established by counsel
7. Proverbs 27:6 – Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are treacherous.
8. Proverbs 27:9 – Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so does the sweetness of a man’s friend by hearty counsel.

III. PRACTICING THE TRUTH WITH ONE ANOTHER: DEMONSTRATING LOVE AND CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

A. Love one another

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| 1. John 13:34-35, John 15:12 | 6. I John 3:11 |
| 2. I Thes. 3:12 – abound in love | 7. I John 3:23 |
| 3. I Thes. 4:9-10 | 8. I John 4:7 |
| 4. I Peter 1:22 – love one another earnestly from the heart | 9. I John 4:11 |
| 5. I Peter 4:8 – hold unfailing your love | 10. II John :5 |

(Definition) agape – self-giving love for the unworthy. God’s love to men proceeds from God’s own inner nature, and is not based on anything worthy of or meriting this love in man. God loves men despite their unworthiness. We see the cost of God’s love in the Cross.

“Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all (Romans 15:2), and wills no ill to any (Romans 13:8-10), love seeks opportunity to do good to all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith (Gal. 6:10). See further (I Cor. 13 and Col. 3:12-14).”

“Christian love is the fruit of His Spirit in the Christian.”
(Vine’s Expository Dictionary, Vol. III, p. 21).

B. Serve one another

1. John 13:14 – wash one another’s feet
2. Gal. 5:13 – through love be servants of one another
3. II Cor. 4:5 – For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus sake.
4. Phil. 2:3-8 – We’re to have the servant attitude toward each other in the Body that Christ demonstrated toward us in his Incarnation.

(Definition) Literally the word is “slave”, to be in bondage to practicing the truth.

C. Have the attitude of service toward one another

1. Romans 12:10 – Out do one another in showing honor. Give preference to one another in honor (NASV). HONOR – to value, to esteem, to respect greatly and regard highly. Believers are to honor one another rather than claim honor for self.
2. Eph. 5:21 – Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.
SUBJECT – a military term, to rank under, to rank oneself under in submission, obedience and service to another.
3. I Peter 5:5 – Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes arrogant men, but gives grace to humble men.”

D. Be affectionate to one another

1. Romans 12:10 – love one another with brotherly affection
2. I Cor. 16:20
3. II Cor. 13:12 – greet one another with a holy kiss
4. Romans 16:16
5. I Peter 5:14 – greet one another with the kiss of love

E. Show hospitality to one another

1. Romans 15:7 – welcome one another as Christ has welcome you
2. I Peter 4:9 – practice hospitality ungrudgingly to one another

F. Care for the needs of one another

1. Gal. 6:2 – Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ
2. I Cor. 12:25 – that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another ... If one member suffers, all suffer together...

G. Honesty, openness with one another

Eph. 4:25-26 – therefore, putting away falsehood, let everyone speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry, but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger.

H. Share spiritual gifts with one another

I Peter 4:10 – As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: Whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God; whoever renders service, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies.

IV. HANDLING FAILURE WITH ONE ANOTHER

“Even failure and sin witness to Christ; not the failure and sin themselves, obviously, but the way the Christian – and the Christian community – handle failure and sin. If they are covered and hid, if we pretend failure and sin are not, if we make excuses rather than acknowledge and confess, we not only deprive ourselves of forgiving, renewing grace (“the blood of Christ cannot cleanse excuses, only sin”), we suspend fellowship with God. And we fail to demonstrate to the world the practical remedy for human inadequacy available in the Gospel. Admission of sin and confession open the door to forgiveness, renewal and fellowship with God, and witness to the absolutely unique and life-changing dynamic of the atonement.” Richard C. Harlerson “Community: Key to Evangelism.” Address given at U.S. Congress on Evangelism.

A. James 5:16 Confess your sins to one another

CONFESS: lit. “to speak out the same thing, to assent, accord, agree with, to confess forth, to declare freely and openly admit oneself as guilty of what one is accused of.”

B. Eph. 4:2 -- with patience forbearing one another

C. Eph. 4:32 – And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

D. Col. 3:13 – Forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

FORBEAR: lit. means to “hold up”, signifies to bear with, endure, be patient with, to excuse or spare. The noun, used of God’s forbearance with men in Romans 2:4; 3:5 denotes a delay of punishment.

KIND: To be good, gracious, sympathetic

TENDERHEARTED: lit. “well-hearted”, i.e. full of compassion, understanding, sympathy

FORGIVE: lit. “to give grace, or bestow a favor unconditionally, to pardon”

V. THE NEGATIVE ONE ANOTHER COMMANDS

A. Romans 14:13 – Let us no more pass judgment on one another

The context is judging in issues of conscience, where the Bible is silent. Believers are to exercise judgment based upon the Scripture’s clear teaching of right and wrong. (Proverbs 17:15; Is. 7:15; Matt. 7:15-20; John 7:24; I Cor. 5:1-5, 9-13; 6:1-6; II Thes. 5:14-15; Hebrews 5:14; James 5:19-20.)

B. Gal. 5:15, 26 – But if you bite and devour one another take heed that you are not consumed by one another... Let us have no self-conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another.

BITE: used as metaphor for wounding the soul

DEVOUR: to exploit or prey on

CONSUME: to use up, to destroy another person

PROVOKE: to call another person to battle, to start a fight

ENVYING: the feeling of displeasure produced by seeing or learning of the advantage or property of others.

C. Col. 3:9 – Do not lie to one another.

LIE: verb PSEUDO, to deceive by lies, English derived from the Greek root = pseudonym

D. James 4:11: 5:9 – Do not speak evil against one another, brethren... do not grumble, brethren, against one another.

SPEAK EVIL: lit. to speak against, cf. II Cor. 12:20, I Peter 2:1, where the same word is translated SLANDER: (RSV) = speaking against or detracting from another person.

GRUMBLE: to murmur discontent, to express disapproval, or ridicule by groaning.