

Growing in Love

With

One Another

Fall Quarter 2016

Jim Echols

Lesson #1

Growing In Love

Ephesian 4: 11-16

The Goal:

The goal of this study is to set forth principles from God's word to help us grow in love in Christ's church, and how we can build one another up in love as we pursue God's will in our lives.

Introduction

(1) We want to define what love is and what it is not. (2) How does this love grow in the church. (3) What hinders love in the church. (4) How does God set up the church to grow in love. (5) How do we know when we have love. (6) How does love keep the saved, saved?

The approach to Growing in Love will be centered around the "One Another" passages found in the scriptures.

To set the stage for this study: How does the scripture describe building up the church in love?

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READ: 2 Peter 1:5-7, 1 Cor. 12:12-31 and Eph. 4:15-16

We are not going to go into great detail on these passages but will try to set the frame work for this study on “Growing In Love”. As each member grows spiritually, the church grows. We see in 2 Peter 1:5-7 a spiritual and moral recipe for an individual member growth. In 2 Peter 1:3 tells us that “as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue”. Growth starts with effort. “For this very reason, giving all diligence” (make every effort). When we became Christians some level of faith existed. Hebrews 11:6 teaches, “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.” Jesus gave us a starting place in Mark 16:16, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned”. From the starting point of faith and obedience to the gospel, a Christian should make every effort to grow. Again, as Christians grow, the church grows. 2 Peter 1:(5) “For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and goodness, knowledge; (6) and to knowledge, self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; (7) and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.”

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Questions:

(1) Summarize in your own words 2 Peter 1:5-7.

(2) Why would 2 Peter 1:5-7 be a starting point for a Christian to grow?

(3) How would 2 Peter 1: 5-7 impact love in the church?

1 Cor. 12: 12-31 applies the idea of the human head and body metaphorically in great detail to Christ and the church. The passage teaches us by this analogy several important lessons:

V. 12: There is one body and one Christ.

V.13: The only way into the body is baptism.

V.14: It takes all the members not one.

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V.18 God has set the members in the body as it pleases Him.

V. 21 One member cannot say to the other, “I have no need of you.”

V. 22 Abundant honor is bestowed on all the members of the body.

V. 25 There is no division in the body.

V. 25 The members should have the same care for one another.

V. 26 If one member suffers, all the members suffer with him/her.

V. 26 If one member is honored, all the members rejoice with him/her.

V. 27 You are the body of Christ, and members individually.

(4) How would you summarize these verses?

(5) What is the role of each member?

(6) How does love show up in these verses?

As members of the Christ's church we are individually integrated into a unified whole, where we each work and worship the head- Christ as he directs us.

Read. Eph. 4:15-16

These passages apply the same head and body analogy to the church but emphasizes those characteristics that give a body(church) its strength.

(7) How is the body of Christ strengthened?

(8) From the Ephesians passages what roles do each member have in building up the church?

Lesson #2

What is Love

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (Study)

We go to this chapter in studying about marriage, but this chapter covers all aspects of our lives. (1Cor. 13: 1-3). If we don't strive to make the things in this chapter a part of our lives, we can all go home and not be His church. These are things we have to diligently work on in our daily walk with Christ.

Questions

1. What do you see as the importance of love?
2. How would you define love?
3. What are love's "positive" qualities ?

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4. What are love's "negative" qualities or things it's not?
5. What is necessary for any service that we may render to be of value in the sight of God? And Why?

Make It Real -What is Love- Small Group Discussion

1. Why is love so important?
2. How do you see "love" among each other in the church at Inver Grove? What part should I play?
3. What areas can we improve in loving individually and collectively?
4. What areas do you struggle with the most when it comes to "love"?

Lesson #3

Love One Another

Ephesian 4: 11-16, 1 John 4:11-12 (Study)

We find in the New Testament the words “one another” command 58 times in the context of a local assembly. (Greek word, allelon) This flies in the faces of the Christians “at large” who mistakenly believe he/she can serve God alone— I want to be a Christian without being tied to any church. I can watch TV and stay at home and be all right with God. But this is not the pattern we see in the New Testament. The “one another” commands make that impossible. In this study we want to explore some of the “one another” passages as we stimulate each other to grow in love in the local church, i.e. Inver Grove church of Christ. In John 13:34-35, “A new command I give you: love one another, as I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Questions:

1. Why is John 13:34-35 a new command? Why is it a new standard?
2. How is John 13:35 manifested in the church?
3. How does 1 John 3:18-19 reflected in a Christian's life?
4. Is loving "one another" exclusive to brethren in the church?
5. Is it possible to be right on a point of truth, yet wrong in our attitude toward those with whom we disagree? What steps can we take to make sure that we please God in both action and attitude?

Make It Real -Love One another- Small Group

1. Further discuss question #5 from the morning class.
2. Why do you think love goes lacking in a congregation?
3. How can we love those we may not like (when personalities clash)?
4. How important is our love in response to guests who visit our assembly? Do you think they notice? Give scripture(s)?

Application: Remember that love is a two-way street. Don't be just a "user." Be a giver. Even when others don't act like they should, continue to love them. Don't forget that God loved us while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8) and sent His Son to die in our place.

Lesson #4

Members of One Another

Romans 12:4-5, I Cor. 12:12-27 (Study)

Over thirty times Paul uses the term “body” to describe the church (Eph. 1:22-23; 2:16; 4:4, 12; 5:23, 29-30; Col. 1:18, 24). Do you think the apostle Paul wanted to make sure we got this message? Is there a better word picture of how a local church should function together than to compare it to the way God designed our physical bodies. With multiple parts, the body works together in amazing unity and with a singular goal.

Questions:

1. What does Romans 14: 7-8 mean?

2. What do you see as the significant of 1 Cor. 12:12-17 to the church?

3. How do you define unity in the church? (1 Cor. 1:10)

4. What do you see as the biggest hindrance of being members of one another?

Make It Real -Members of One Another- Small Group

1. As a follow up on question #4— How can we make each member of Inver Grove church feel needed and significant?

2. Do you think there are cliques in the church?

3. What happens when one cell in our body rebels (cancer) and decides to do its own thing without

consideration as to the good of the body? How does the same occur in a local church?

4. How is the church a place “to belong”? (Eph. 4:15-16)
How do we make it a place “to belong”?

If Everyone were Like Me

If everyone else attended services just like I do, what would the attendance be? Would we have Sunday evening/afternoon services or a mid-week Bible study or prayer meeting/song service?

If everyone else gave like I do, what would the contribution be, not in the amount given, but in the amount of sacrifice shown by the offering?

If everyone else practiced hospitality just like me, how often would others be served and shown love?

If everyone else tried to help restore those who have left the church to the same degree as I do, how much

effort would be expended on trying to bring them back to God?

If everyone else demonstrated the same willingness I show to teach Bible classes, what kind of teaching program would this church have?

If everyone else reached out with the gospel to the lost at the level I do, how many souls would be saved?

How much food would be taken to the sick? How often would the lonely be visited? How many prayers would be offered for those who ask?

Lesson #5

Serve One Another

“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another” (Galatians 5:13)

Everything about the life of Jesus was aimed at serving others. “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45) One of the clearest examples of service in the life of Christ is found in John 13: 1-17. The washing of the disciples feet. Jesus was not teaching them how to wash dirty feet—they knew how to do that. He was teaching them to be humble and, in that humility to serve others.

Characteristics of a Servant

1. Put others' needs first.

The key question should not be “what’s in it for me?”, “but what do they need?” “ Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” (Philippians 2: 3-4) To be servants of the Lord we must serve one another. Someone said it this way “Service is love made visible”

2. Prepare to be inconvenienced.

Helping others takes time and effort. Look at Luke 10:30-35. Do you suppose the Samaritan could really spare the time? or the effort? or the money? Our attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus “ (5) Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, (7) but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. (8) And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. (Philippians 2:5-8) We must never forget, Christ didn't have to do this, but He loved us and wanted to serve us. He lived a perfect life and died the perfect death. **How inconvenient!** That's the way it is with service.

It takes time to visit the sick, study the bible with someone, and be a friend to the lonely and distressed. For anything that is truly worth while usually does. But it is worth it and that is just a part of what service really is.

John Wesley is reported to have said—

“Do all the good you can
By all the means you can
In all the ways you can
In all the places you can
At all the times you can
To all the people you can
As long as ever you can”

I wish I lived it out better than I do, how about you?

3. Serve in unnoticed ways.

Be careful not to do your “acts of righteousness” before men, to be seen by them. Matthew 6:1-4

There are many people who love God and others who don't receive much praise. Bible class teachers, moms who cook the meals and wash the dirty clothes, those who clean the building, prepare the communion, mow the grass. People who invite their neighbors to study the bible or who are trying to set a good example at work to influence others for God. People don't do these things to be praised by others and would be embarrassed to have their names brought up in a public way. Their goal is to

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glorify God in all that they do. As Jesus said “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven”. (Mathew 5:16)
To God be the glory for each and every faithful disciple.
Listen to Whit Sasser’s lesson on “Living For Glory” .

Questions:

1. What was Jesus teaching His disciples in John 13: 1-17, and how does this apply to us today.
2. How does James 2:17 apply to being a servant?
3. Why don't we want to be inconvenienced in serving the Lord and others?

4. Why is it important to be unnoticed in our service?

5. How can we be of service to those that have fallen away from the Lord? What obligation do we have to serve those who have fallen away? Follow up in the small group discussion.

Make It Real - Serve One Another- Small Group

1. How can we be better servants? Many Christians do not understand what is really involved in being a servant. Discuss some ways we can be of service.

2. What do you think about these examples of serving?
Add to the list—

- * Buying groceries for a family in need.
- * Inviting some less fortunate to your home for a evening meal and socializing.
- * Buying clothing or a pair of shoes for someone who cannot afford them.
- * Paying for medicine for a sick child or adult
- * Giving someone who cannot drive or who doesn't have a car or ride to services or to the grocery store.
- * Sharing some vegetables from your garden with those who cannot grow their own.
- * Buy a meal at a restaurant for someone who cannot afford to do so for you in return.
- * Sharing some extra canned goods with a family that needs them much more than you.

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- * Serving a neighbor by mowing their yard or babysitting so they can have a date.
- * Serving a senior citizen who needs chores done around their home.
- * Being there to help or maybe just to listen.

3. Make a list of those that you know that have fallen away and share this list with your group. Now what can you do about this list as a group/individual? What scripture would cover this?

Lesson #6

Accept One Another

Romans 17:5-7

We know when it comes to relationships in the church, everyone is to be included and accepted. There should not be insiders and outsiders, or haves and have-nots in the church. We are all one in Christ. Everyone is equal in the eyes of the Lord. When we have a new member, you hear the words, let's make them a part of us, or welcome to the family. Most churches including Inver Grove can bring people in the front door. But growing churches have learned some secrets about how to close the back door. Rennie use the words "how do you keep the saved, saved". The three keys to assimilate new people into the fellowship of the church are related to the "one another" command. Those keys are learning to **accept one another, considering one another and being devoted to each other**. We are going to consider these key commands in the lesson.

Romans chapter 15 teaches, we are to accept each other as our spiritual equals, even if they are different from us in some way. Paul said in Titus 2:11 "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men" God's grace is for everyone, not just a few. We know that God is "no respecter of persons" God created every person who ever lived/lives. People who are white are white because God made them white. People who are black are

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black because God made them black. The same thing is true of those who are brown, yellow, red or any other skin tone. He also made people short or tall, blue, brown, or green eyed, Jew or Gentile. God loves everybody, just as they are. (Acts 10:34-35; Romans 2:11)

Let's look at Hebrews 10:23-25

Questions:

1. What does "Hold fast without wavering" mean?
2. What does "consider one another in order to stir up love and good works" mean?
3. How does "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together" fit into this passage and why?

Make It Real - Accept One Another- Small Group

1. How is Romans 15:7 abused in the church? We can know of sin in individuals in the church but we justify/ tolerate under the idea of “accept one another”. How are we to address this individually as a church? Consider (1 Cor. 5; 2 Thess. 3:14; Titus 3:10-11)

2. We can push opinions too far. Is it a fair statement to say that most of us are opinionated? Where does the distinction between what is an “opinion” and what is “scripture” come to play in the church? How should we treat one another when we are expressing our opinion?

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3. How does James 2:1-4, 9 show up in hindering us from “accepting one another” in the church? How does growing in love help us in this?

4. How does favoritism/ cliques impact the idea of “accept one another” in the church?

5. What should our attitude be towards greeting one another as we see each other on Sunday and Wednesday services?

Lesson #7

Admonish One Another

Romans 15:14

“Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another” (NKJV)

Admonishment – What is it?

The word could be translated “counsel” “correct” or “instruct.” Webster defines it as: “to caution, warn, reprove mildly, to urge and exhort.” In 1Thessalonians 5:14: “admonish the unruly.” The word “unruly” was a military term denoting one out of step. So what is the role of fellow Christian? Caution them, warn them, urge/exhort them to do better. Admonish one another....

Questions:

1. There are two qualifications for admonishing in Romans 15:14, what are they?

2. We must have the proper motive and attitude to admonish one another, consider 1 Thess. 2:7. What are the main points made in this passage?

3. One key thought for admonishment: never do in public what can be accomplished in private (Matt. 18:15; 2 Tim 2:24-26) What can we learn from these passages?

4. We must maintain the proper goal when admonishing : salvation of souls. Consider Col. 1:28, what can we learn?

Make It Real - Admonish One Another- Small Group

1. Define the word “admonish.”
2. Are Christians competent to counsel? One area of admonishment involves “instructing or advising”. Certainly there are areas of life requiring highly skilled counsel (e.g., medical, financial or legal advice), but in most instances a wise Christian can offer good counsel. Why do you think some hesitate to turn to their brethren more than they do?
3. According to Acts 20:31, how emotional was Paul’s admonition to the Ephesians? What does that say about how we “admonish one another?”
4. “A person doesn’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” What does that mean?

Lesson #8

Forgive One Another

“ And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:32)

Mistakes and misunderstandings with each other are inevitable. People are going to say and do some things wrong that will hurt and offend us. We must be prepared to forgive others so that we might be forgiven by them when we do wrong ourselves. As Christians, we must have a spirit or attitude of forgiveness.

Questions:

1. Name some examples of forgiveness in the Bible and think about the lessons we should learn from them.

2. We must forgive others, how do Matthew 6:14-15; Colossians 3:13 and Mark 11:25-26 impact our lives in Christ?

3. There are two passages that teach us some important principles about our dealings with others and our need to work our problems out. (Matthew 18:15-17 and Matthew 5:23-24)

Lesson #9**Be Hospitable To One Another****“Be hospitable to one another without grumbling”****1 Peter 4:9**

Hospitality is one of those things that seems to be lacking in our society today. In our political landscape today you wonder if this word even exist. We have to understand from the start that hospitality is a commandment of the Lord. Some Christians have decided this does not apply to them. In Romans 12:13, “distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality”. Showing hospitality should be something we enjoy, an activity we look forward to. There should be no one we would rather spend time with than our brothers and sisters in Christ. Having others into our home is not the only way to do that, but it is a good way.

Read some Bible examples of hospitality:

Abraham: Genesis 18:1-8

The Shunammite Woman: 2 Kings 4:8-11

Lydia : Acts 16:14-15

Onesiphorus: 2 Timothy 1:16-18

What can we learn from these examples?

This tells us that we should be hospitable to those we know and to those we don't know. We should spend a significant amount of time with people we know. Read Acts 2:44-47. The first century disciples obviously spent much time together, both in public worship settings and in homes. We should pray together and play together. We should go on gatherings together, eat together, play games together, maybe even travel together. We should evangelize in groups(meetups), we should go to good, clean movies together, visit the shut-ins and nursing homes together. The Christians we worship with ought to be our dearest friends.

We have small groups in an effort to encourage better hospitality, better communication with each other, a setting where we can talk about issues that we wouldn't normal bring up in a church setting. I believe as we get to know each other better, an out grow of that is hospitality and will be easy and natural.

There are always going to be those who feel disenfranchised by the church. In other words, they feel like outsiders, rather than a real part of what is going on. Hospitality is one of the best ways we can reach out to those who need to be loved and show them that we care about them and want to help them and spend time with them getting to know them. Hospitality is one of the greatest blessings of the Christian life, whether given or received. It is a win-win situation for everybody.

Questions:

1. How would you define hospitality? What does it literally mean? What is biblical hospitality?
2. How did Abraham, Shunammite woman, and Lydia show hospitality? Is there any commonality ?

3. Here are 10 practical examples of hospitality add to this list in your small group discussion?

(1) having a social gathering at your house so teens will have some wholesome entertainment.

(2) inviting visitors to your home or out for a snack after services.

(3) hosting the evangelist or teacher in your home during a gospel meeting or special series of meetings.

(4) having a hotdog roast/corn roast in your back yard.

(5) opening your home to friends who are just passing through town.

(6) making your home available for a night of gospel singing.

(7) having out-of-town Christians who visit services on Sunday into your home or out for lunch.

(8) inviting Christians and non-Christians over to your house for a Bible study.

(9) hosting some people for a meal in your home who could never return the favor (Luke 14:12-14)

(10) doing “good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” (Galatians 6:10)

Lesson #10

Encourage One Another

1 Thessalonians 5:11

“Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.”

It is very easy to get discouraged in the work of the Lord when you are being challenged on every front. Many Christians and Evangelist I've used this scripture “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” (Galatians 6:9). We all need encouragement in life's daily walk, because there are so many things that can discourage us. God set up the local church to accomplish just that. “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling or ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but encouraging(exhorting) one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

In the church we are the “called out” of the world and “called in” to Christ and into one another. It's so sad

that some see the church only as something to put up with rather than as God's see her—the beautiful bride of His Son. The church is depicted as Christ's body and God's family—a special group of believers, a holy priesthood, who love each other. If each local church practiced the “one another” admonitions, think of the growth experience we would see—both spiritually and numerically (Acts 16:5).

“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35) Love is the key to encouraging one another. To be complimented is to be encouraged and encouragement is something we all need. For some it's hard to accept compliments and it's even harder to give compliments.

Four Things You Need to Know About Encouragement:

- (1)** The author of encouragement is God. Read 2Corinthians 11:23-28, how was Paul able to endure. The answer is in Romans 15:5 “Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement....” The only real encouragement is in Christ.
- (2) The basis of encouragement is truth.** We must never encourage wrong nor promote error. (a) Titus 1:9 —“exhort in sound doctrine” is the same as encourage. (b) 2 Timothy 4:2 — exhortation is one of the keys to effective work as a gospel preacher.

(c) 2 Thessalonians 4:18— the comfort (encouragement) given the Thessalonians saints was based upon God’s revealed truth.

(3) The reason for encouragement : faithful

continuance. “No one after putting his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). (1) It is easy and tempting to fall back into old habits and ways. That’s why God surrounds us with brethren who encourage us to stick with it, to stay focused, and to “not grow weary in doing good.” (2) “Am I my brother’s keeper? **YES**

(4) The place of encouragement: the local church.

If the truth be known (and some like to hide it), each church is filled with hurting, discouraged people. So, let’s quit pretending. Instead, let’s get real and reach out to fellow strugglers. Let’s care about people —-really care—and more than the passing, “How are you doing?” and call me if you need anything.” That means little. If we are going to be followers of Jesus, we must reach down and reach out in response to people who are needy.

Let us embrace encouragement and help each other along the journey.

Make It Real - Be Hospitable One Another- Small Group

- (1) One mark of a great church is the length of time brethren stay, visit, and talk after the worship has concluded. What does this say about a congregation?

- (2) Discuss the potential for good that can be accomplished before/after the assembly worship. Do you stay around long enough to offer encouragement?

- (3) How can small groups be more effective in encouragement?

- (4) Do you get tired of compliments? Compliments encourage us like nothing else. Think of someone in the congregation who could use a good compliment —and give it. **Be an encourager!**

Lesson #11

Submit To One Another

....and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. (Ephesians 5:15-21)

By this time you probably have studied this topic in Rennie Wednesday night class, but this is paramount in growing in love, the ability to submit to one another, not only in the church, in our marriages and in our daily walk. When you hear the word “subjection” or “submission” as Christians what is the first thing that pops in your mind? Wife’s attitude toward her husband’s headship (1 Peter 3:1; Eph. 5:22) Submission, however, reaches beyond the husband’s leadership in the family and God’s expectation of a wife response. The basic idea of submission is that of yielding to another, an attitude of humility, showing respect for others, giving way, etc. In that regard, submission is an attitude that reflects itself in action and involves every relationship a Christian has including the church.

Submission Affects Every Relationship

- (1) Members to elders (Heb. 13:17)
- (2) Elders to members (1 Pet.5:2-3)
- (3) Elders to elders, (1 Pet. 5:3)
- (4) Young men to older men, (1 Pet.5:5)
- (5) Husbands to wives. (1 Pet.5:5)
- (6) Wives to husbands. (1 Pet.3:1)
- (7) Children to parents (Eph.6:1)
- (8) Parents to children. (Col.3:21)
- (9) Employees to employers (Eph. 6:5)
- (10) Employers to employees (Col.4:1)
- (11) The Christian to Government (Rom. 13:1)

Questions:

- (1) Define biblical submission.

- (2) Why do you think the topic of “submission has such a strong negative reaction today among many?

(3) “In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands” (1 Pet.3:1) To what “same way” is he referring?

(4) What is the picture of Jesus in 1 Peter 2:23— and how does it relate to real-life situations when we are treated badly?

3. Our natural inclination is toward independence and selfishness. After all, we shy away from accountability and don't want anyone telling us what to do. Yet, how does that mindset square with Ephesians 5:21?