
THE CHURCH THAT JESUS BUILT

ROMANS 12

Lesson 15 – Daily Church Life (part 4)

Romans 12:15-21

Introduction

We have responsibilities as members of Christ's body, the local church of which we are members. Some of those responsibilities are inward. What is the will of God regarding how we function, how we behave, how we talk, how we interact, how we care about one another, with regard to each other? Your physical body and the various organs and parts of your body have interaction with each other. When one part is infected, injured, or failing, it affects the other parts of your body. You have to eat healthy, nutritious food; get your proper amount and kind of exercise; drink the proper amount of fluids; and you have to focus on the right things and not become overly concerned or consumed by thinking in the wrong way and about the wrong things. The same is true of your functioning in the church body. Your behavior and speech and living as a member of this church also has an outward aspect and responsibility. Your physical body shouldn't be bumping into others, knocking them down, tripping them, causing them injury. You shouldn't be so careless in your care of your physical body that you are actually causing others to have to go to unnecessary expense on your account if you can avoid it. As a functioning part of this church, you are to watch over your words and deeds and all that you do so that your life is representative of Christ and the gospel, and does not cause others to stumble spiritually. **I Cor. 10:23-33**

Shared Responsibilities of Every Member

“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.” Much of what is wrong with our speech and our behavior starts with what is wrong in our hearts and minds, because we are wise in our own eyes. If Jesus had sympathy with and took compassion upon us, may we not do likewise toward one another? What if someone does not have what you have, or cannot do what you do, and lives in low estate in comparison to you? Are you not in low estate compared to the Son of God? And yet, He gave His life to redeem you from all evil, and make you a joint-heir of God alongside of Himself. Why are you not happy alongside your brother or sister in Christ when God blesses them? Why are you not sorrowful alongside your brother or sister in Christ when God allows weeping to come into their life? Don't be the same sort of friend as Job's three friends, but be more like the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother to your brothers and sisters in Christ. Put yourself in their

place, which is the place in which God has put them, and is the place in which God wants you to put yourself.

Now this does not mean sympathize or be on friendly terms with sin. None of these responsibilities are in conflict with each other, but indeed they are all harmonious and in perfect unity. Jesus was never in conflict with Himself. God is never in conflict with Himself. The Bible is never in conflict with itself. The Holy Spirit never leads you to do that which is contrary to God's Word and God's will. Some of you like to sympathize with your ungodly, worldly acquaintances in their disobedience toward God, instead of sympathizing with the fact that they are lost and on the road to hell and need the Savior. Remember, you are to ***“abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good;”*** and that was mentioned right along with ***“let love be without dissimulation.”*** It isn't love when you take part with sin and sinning. Love is involved in forgiving sin, but not in sympathizing, condoning, encouraging, or embracing sin. It wouldn't be love if you went along with someone in their self-destructive behavior as a drug addict, a spouse abuser, a child abuser, an unfaithful spouse, or a dishonest employee. Jesus did not sympathize with us in that He was okay if we just kept on sinning. He died that we might be freed from sin to sin no more.

Much of what we are being taught here is that we are to look beyond, or not even consider, a person's worldly situation. In the flesh, we despise those who are poorer than ourselves, less intelligent than ourselves, less well-off in the things of this world than ourselves, or at least whom we think to be so. That is worldly, carnal, and devilish thinking. It is unworthy of the name of Christ, who though He was rich, yet He became poor for your sakes, that ye through His poverty might be made rich with the eternal riches of His grace. It is contrary to the will and the thoughts of God. We waste a great deal of mental energy and time as we look at others and say within ourselves, “They are not better than me.” In fact, Christ teaches us and demands of us that we think quite the opposite. We are to look upon them and say within ourselves, “They are better than me, as far as I am concerned; and I am going to look out for every opportunity by which I may serve and spiritually benefit them, for Christ's sake.” ***“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.” James 3:13-18***

Vs. 17-21 – Much of what we read in these verses has to do with our behavior to those both inside, but especially outside, of the church body. Remember, the church body has both inward and outward responsibilities. That means you as a member of the church have both inward and outward responsibilities. These things apply to every one of us.

We like to fight fire with fire. We probably should almost always fight fire with water. Do not try to take God's place and sit on the judgment seat, ready to deal out wrath and judgment against any person. If you put yourself in God's seat, you are

going to have a big problem when God shows up and wants to know why you are sitting in His seat.

Our concern, once again, is that others might be saved. ***“Provide things honest in the sight of all men.”*** Matt. 5:13-18 I Pet. 2:11,12; 3:13-16 ***“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”*** We are called to be overcomers, victors, and the victory in Christ is one of righteousness and goodness and truth overcoming evil, sin, falsehood, wickedness, dishonesty, and devilish deceit.

What should you do if someone lies about you? Get mad, call everyone you know on the telephone and announce to everyone you meet on the street and in the shopping market, informing them about what a big fat liar that other person is? Should you do everything you can to ruin their reputation because you think they have done harm to yours? God says no. God says tell the truth, and the truth is that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. When you burn down the forest because someone who lives in some part of the forest made you angry, you may just burn down your own house or the house of someone you care about in the process. And remember, once a fire is started, it may burn beyond your ability to control. The fire may overcome you. God’s will is that you not be overcome, but that you be the overcomer, the victor, in His Son Jesus Christ. Wouldn’t it be something if that person who lied was, through your refusal to respond in kind, one day converted from the error of their lying way to trust in the True and Faithful Savior of the world? **James 5:19,20 Jude :22,23**

The best thing you can do to an enemy is treat them like a friend for Jesus’ sake. If you have to avoid someone because of how dangerous they are, leave them in the hands of the Lord – none are too dangerous for Him to handle. **II Tim. 4:14-18**

Conclusion

Regardless of your place in the body, all of these behaviors should be evidenced in your daily life for Jesus’ sake. These are your responsibilities and mine. These require us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. These are God’s will for us to be doing every day until Jesus comes again. All of these behaviors support and are worthy of the gospel by which you claim you are saved. If these behaviors do not describe your daily life, then your life is not pleasing to God, not useful for the work of the gospel, and not edifying of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

Amen. May the Lord bless you.