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# Disciplines of a Disciple

## Biblical Community

Jimmy Harris                      September 11, 2022

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### Introduction

**Biblical Community – Church is a Team Sport – We need to get in the game (getting into relationships).**

#### Acts 2:42-47 42

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

The two disciplines I will speak of today are like sunshine and water are to plants. They are necessary ingredients for us to grow. **They are like the two wings of an airplane...**

- Corporate Worship (Church)
- Fellowship (Small Groups)

#### INTRODUCTION

***What is the first crisis in the Bible?***

- NOT sin.
- It's not the creation of woman. 😊

**It is NOT good for man to be alone.**

*BEFORE the fall of man – the only thing that was NOT good in the entire universe was man being alone. Remember that everything is still perfect and sinless, but it was not enough.*

- **The deepest need in the soul of any man or woman is to belong, to be loved, to connect on a deep relational level.**
- We were designed for it! God made us that way.
- We were made in His image! God is relationship (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)

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### Four challenges to real community

1. **SELF-SUFFICIENCY.** (*don't need each other*): Just 100 years ago, everyone was a farmer or at least a friend of a farmer. Every community had to depend on one another. Ever heard of a barn raising? Now it would be tricky to even find someone to help you move.
  - a. Independence is a marker of immaturity. Toddler – I do it myself! 20's – I got this. 40's – can I get some help? If receiving help/guidance is a problem for you – it is a sign that

you are immature in your faith. We never outgrow our need for each other! *Independence is not a sign of maturity.* I've heard it said that Jesus would have died for just me. Or "I am complete in Christ," or "I don't need anyone but Jesus." I understand the sentiment here.

**b. The truth is that Jesus came for his Church. The bride. The body. The flock. He didn't just come to die for you. He came for us.**

2. **UNHEALTHY ATTACHMENTS/RELATIONSHIP TO TECHNOLOGY.** Pull out your phones, iPad, etc., and look at the symbol on the back of it. (*apple with a bite out of it* 😊)
  - a. Teens spend 5-7 hours a day on their phones. Desperate need for face-to-face relationships. Too much screen time has had a devastating effect on relationships. *Technology is not the problem. BUT **our unhealthy RELATIONSHIP with it is a big problem.***
3. **UNSUSTAINABLE PACE.** As technology has sped up – people have become increasingly busy and disconnected. *Even though we can talk to anyone anywhere, we have become more and more lonely and disconnected.* Why? Why are we so busy?
  - a. A word about pace. It's not about slow or fast. It's about the right speed.
  - b. What happened when our pace was interrupted? Remember the early weeks of the Pandemic? How isolating and lonely it was to be locked out? Zoom, empty streets. Everything was shut down. How things began to come apart? Grocery stores empty, no basic necessities. The Pandemic Exposed how fearful and fragile our communities are... The illusion of security has been shaken. The Pandemic has exposed that civilization is held together by a very thin thread.

**Since the Pandemic we may have started meeting again in buildings, but we aren't necessarily any closer to each other in our relationships.**

4. **GUIDANCE BY FEAR.** *Living in fear is not conducive to connection.* News and social media have learned to effectively manipulate our fears. I'm not talking about useful fear – like hitting the brakes when you see a red light. Living in fear.
  - a. Facebook, Twitter, news organizations, and others have been exposed as being engineered through algorithms and advertising to manipulate people's opinions, and profit through the propagating anger, distrust, and fear. They are designed to prey on our fears. What is the effect of this?
  - b. Did you know that when we are afraid, we cannot connect? *They call it brain for 1 or brain for 2.*
  - c. The recent pandemic has exposed a deep problem in our society. In a matter of weeks, the...shelves were empty – no toilet paper or bread; in many countries and states churches were completely shut down without a fight. The illusion of security had been shaken. The Pandemic exposed that civilization is held together by a very thin thread. So, should we live in fear? Should we obsess about outcomes we cannot control?

*You were created by God to be in relationship. You need it like air or water or food. But it seems like everything in our modern world is pulling us apart and isolating us from one another.*

**What is all this wealth, entertainment and technology doing to our relationships?**

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## Can the Church be Defeated?

**The enemy of our souls is doing his best to destroy our freedoms, our families, and the Church.** Every single institution of community.

***Why does Satan always attack the relationships in the Church?***

***Because he wants to destroy the witness of Christ.***

***The key evidence for the resurrection of Jesus is seen in our love for one another.***

**Take heart, Church.  
The Church cannot be destroyed.**

### **Matthew 16:18-19**

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

*In the end it is the “blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony” that overcomes the enemy.* If Satan can erode our love for one another, he can undermine our testimony to the world.

Satan cannot stop the Church. Jesus said THE GATES of HELL will not prevail against it.

*What can the devil do if he cannot destroy the Church?*

*He can attack our relationships. Marriages, families, and Churches. One at a time... because if he can destroy the process, he can destroy the purpose.*

Satan’s goal has always been to divide and destroy relationships.

*In watching wildlife shows, you see a herd of gazelles. When the herd stays together, there is protection. When one of the gazelles wanders off on its own — it becomes easy prey for a lion!*

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## Corporate Worship (Church)

**Why is the Church important to God?**

**WE ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST!**

**The purpose of all history is the preparation of the Bride of Christ to rule and reign with Him forever.** The world and everything in it. The law and all the prophets. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus is all consummated in the wedding feast of the lamb!

I’ve heard it said that some people love Jesus and want to be Christians, but they don’t want to have anything to do with the Church. I understand that feeling. The past year I have had thoughts like that. I get it. The church is flawed. *You have been hurt in relationship, but you also must be healed in relationship!* That would be the equivalent of you inviting me to dinner, but you hate my wife.

**The Bible is a Love Story of God with His People.  
If you don’t love the Bride you can’t love the Bridegroom.**

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## We Are Destined to Reign with Him

“From the very beginning it was God’s plan and purpose that out of the riven side of His son should come an Eternal companion to sit by His side upon the throne of the universe, to share with him His sovereign power and authority over his eternal kingdom.....” Therefore, from all eternity, all that precedes the supper of the Lamb is preliminary and preparatory.”<sup>1</sup>

~ Paul Billheimer *Destined for the Throne*

### Revelation 3:20-22

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in, to him and eat with him, and he with me. The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- The Church is the Bride of Christ.
- The Bride is being prepared to reign with Him!

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## We are kings and priests!

### 1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

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## We are one in Christ

### 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

**Discipleship is a word synonymous with relationship.** Discipleship is never a top-down pyramid scheme. *It is all of us arm in arm walking it out together.* We all need each other. We are all following Jesus together. Arm in arm. *We are all on level ground at the foot of the cross.*

Our witness depends not on our individual success — but by our collective LOVE for one another. *They will know we are Christians by our love for one another.*

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## We are the Body of Christ

***Each part of the body of Christ is needed.***

### 1 Cor 12:14-20

For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an

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<sup>1</sup> Paul E. Billheimer. *Destined for the Throne* (Bethany House Publishers, 1983)

eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

### **What happens when we go to church?**

1. **Easter Every Sunday!** When my kids first visited Grace Chapel they were amazed. They said, “Dad it’s like Easter every Sunday!” The early Church met on Sunday because we are the people of the dawn. We stand with Millions of other believers every Sunday because JESUS IS ALIVE!!! We are the people of the dawn because Jesus arose from the dead and we can face the week with courage because He has overcome the world.
2. **Worship is Warfare!** There is power in corporate worship. People get saved! People get healed! Strongholds are defeated, and the saints are strengthened.
3. **To Celebrate!** There is a party in heaven when one person repents. Why? — because what we celebrate reveals what we value. What is one way you can lead your children to God?
4. **To come with faith** that God is doing miracles and **to hear testimony** of God’s goodness.
5. **To hear the word of God** — *and learn to obey it together.*

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## **Building your house on the Rock**

Life Group fellowships are such a crucial part of the church. They are the heart of this church — why? Because you can listen and learn forever and NEVER learn to follow and obey. What if we hear but don’t do it?

**Jesus said whoever hears these words...and does them... is like a man who built his house upon a rock!** This is why we do what we do in the life groups. **Learn it—then Live it.** Want to simplify what it means to grow in Christ? Obedience. Obedience to Christ leads to transformation. What does that mean? *All the disciplines are just means to that end — training us to hear Gods voice and follow him.*

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## **Fellowship (small groups)**

***The Bible is made up of.... Law, Prophets, Wisdom books, and the New Testament Law – the whole Book is all about relationships.***

### **Deuteronomy 6:4-9**

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

***As you go about your normal life —***

***The family is the most important place of discipleship in the Church.***

***It is your first small group.***

***Start there.***

## ***The prophet asks God – how should we worship you?***

### **Micah 6:8**

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

## ***Jesus was praying before he went to the cross....***

### **John 17:20-23**

“I do not ask for these only, but also *for those who will believe in me through their word* [us], that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

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## **Early Church**

### ***Walk in the Spirit...***

Fruit of the Spirit is singular NOT plural — why? All these things will grow in you when you abide in Jesus together! Love for who? Patience with who? *It takes more than one person for these fruits to be exhibited.*

*I have heard people say that they love Jesus, but they could live without the Church.* That would be like you inviting me over but telling me to leave my wife home because you don't like her. Well, guess what? *We come together or not at all.* You can't hate my wife and love me.

### **1 John 4:19-21**

We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

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## **How often do we need encouragement?**

### **Hebrews 3:12-13**

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

### **1 John 1:7**

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. Deep abiding relationships where we are honest with one another, where we truly KNOW each other and still LOVE each other.

### **Hebrews 10:24-25**

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

## 1 John 1:5-7

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

**Don't settle for shallow relationships.**

**Two wings.**

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## Discussion Questions

1. What is the First Crisis in the Bible? *It's not sin.*
2. Do you take pride in being self-sufficient? What does that really mean?
3. How healthy is your attachment to technology? How long can you be parted from your phone without a "sense of panic"? How does your relationship to technology affect your relationships with others?
4. Discuss: "Living in fear is not conducive to connection. When we are afraid, we cannot connect."
5. The Bible tells us that the Church cannot be destroyed... *that the gates of hell will not prevail against it.* So, what does Satan attack instead? What is his goal?
6. Each part of the Body of Christ is needed. Do you know what your part is? Do you feel needed? What can you do to find your part?
7. Discuss: "The family is the most important place of discipleship in the Church."
8. Why is the Fruit of the Spirit NOT plural? *Love for who? Patience with who?*
9. How often do you need encouragement? How often do you encourage others?

## NOTES