

Relational Health, Wellness, Wholeness

ARE YOU WILLING TO 'BELONG?!'

SCRIPTURES OF THE DAY Monday, July 19, 2021
Romans 12:1-3; Romans 12:5

STUDY & REFLECTION

A deeper dive into Belonging!

So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. (KJV)

So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. (NIV)

As we continue our journey to Relational Health, Wellness and Wholeness, we must take a deeper dive, and have the courage to move beneath the surface.

You may recall an analogy we used in previous sessions that compared our lives and souls to an 'iceberg.' Remember that often, only 10% of an iceberg is seen above the surface. Of course that means that 90% is hidden, beneath the surface. So in actuality, what we are others are able to see is only the 'tip of the iceberg!'

In our walk with the Lord we do make progress, in worship, Bible study, fellowship, and other areas. These activities are real but often don't reveal the whole of what we are and how we are faring in living this Christian Life. While we should rejoice in the progress that we are making, we must open our eyes to the work that needs to be done, to become healthy, well, whole, mature Christians. We must become aware of and give attention to parts of our lives that are unknown, unrealized and often unexplored. Being aware of and developing mature, enriching Relationships is one of those areas that worship and traditional Bible study often don't impact or effect.

Here is one of those deeper principles, designed to chip away at our unexamined, unexposed parts that lie beneath the surface: Paul says, "In Christ we are many. However we form or constitute One Body. And each member of the Body BELONGS to all the others!"

Here to 'belong' means that in God's sight, we are in fact HIS and the 'property,' of each other.

ACTION ITEMS

After studying the scripture, and considering the understandings shown and demonstrated in the study and reflection section, ask yourself this question: **DO I 'BELONG TO GOD? TO OTHERS?'**

In the first few verses of Romans 12, we are commanded to 'present our entire selves to God,' and that this is only reasonable, as a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1-3). Real maturity will take place as we realize and embrace the fact that we Belong to HIM and to the Body. Verse 3 demands that to receive this, we must be humble and allow our thinking to be transformed.

INVOLVING OTHERS

The truths and principles that we have just identified from the Word of God are deep but essential. Share these principles in your small group. It will probably take some time, and multiple discussions to get your minds together regarding them and to begin to see how they apply to our Relational Health, Wellness and Wholeness.



STUDY & REFLECTION

Our aim is to identify, embrace, and manifest Relational health, wellness and wholeness, from the perspective of the scripture. Rich spiritual dynamics will form and be seen among us as we take a genuine step of faith to receive the 'meat' of the Word.

To Belong we must in real and identifiable ways, be connected, committed, and accountable to each other. **To Belong is to be Relational.** You cannot belong into and unto yourself. Belonging demands connection. Belonging requires commitment. Belonging creates accountability. Our devotional passages demonstrate clearly that to spiritually belong we must see and foster spiritual connection with others in the Body. Such connection will only come to pass as we surrender and commit to the teachings and tenets of the Body. This demonstrates genuine accountability. True commitment is a pledge, a vow, to act and to do in a manner proscribed by the Body. Lack of commitment has selfishness at its roots and a failure to recognize the wisdom of an Omniscient, Loving God whose ways are not ours. Being accountable means being readily open to being called to account by others. **It means being answerable.** It is a willingness to give a transparent explanation to others of your actions and behavior. Remember, even our sincere commitments, *privately held often go silently unfulfilled* if we have not embraced Biblical accountability which includes sharing and answering to others.

ACTION ITEMS

We have put forth some challenging dynamics and characteristics for those who want to go beneath the surface and chisel out genuine Relational health, wellness and wholeness. **These dynamics cannot be demanded or forced.** Each of us must decide whether we are willing to embrace them. Look into your own heart and life and identify where you are in regards to *belonging, embracing connection, commitment and accountability* in order to achieve Relational health.

INVOLVING OTHERS

The richness of God's blessings will be seen on those who as a group, identify, embrace and share Biblical dynamics that bring about health, wellness and wholeness. Discuss with your small group these challenging understandings. Please know that they are readily available to those who will surrender and dare to walk in Faith.

STUDY & REFLECTION

As we look into our devotional scriptures we can gain insight to levels of Belonging and degrees of commitment. These insights will allow us to progress or regress in regards to where we are in Christ. Our lives in Christ are not static or stationary. They flow and progress as we walk with Christ, but can also be stagnant and stuck. Let us look at a framework that may help us understand our Relational health. One framework I have found useful is called the 5 circles of commitment:

- **COMMUNITY** The pool of people that live within driving distance of the church, who are not saved.
- **CROWD** Everyone who shows up on Sunday. They are regular attendees. They are committed to attending a worship service every week.
- **CONGREGATION** Born-again believers who have been baptized and made a commitment to becoming a part of the church family.
- **COMMITTED** These people are serious about their faith. They are committed to growth, maturity, and becoming more godly. They are committed to growing in their discipleship. They are committed to three spiritual habits: (1) having a daily quiet time (2) tithing the first ten percent of their income (3) being active in a 'small group'. These three habits are essential for spiritual growth.
- **CORE** Represents the deepest level of commitment. These are the dedicated core of members, workers and leaders, those who are committed to all of the above and to ministering to others! They lead and serve sacrificially, and contagiously, with joy and honor.

ACTION ITEMS

Today and tomorrow, spend a focused amount of time, studying this framework. Be prayerful, and honest. Then decide where you presently fit. Next, reflect on what it will take for you to move to the next level. Can you see where this demands growth in your relationship with others!?

INVOLVING OTHERS

Over the next two days, share with others this exercise and listen to their findings. Discuss together where the group would assess our church's level in general and what we must do to move deeper. This will genuinely show us where we are and where we need to go to enrich our Relational Health.

Relational Health, Wellness, Wholeness

RELATIONSHIP PROGRESSION: MOVING SELF & OTHERS FROM THE OUTSIDE IN?

SCRIPTURE OF THE DAY

Friday, July 23, 2021

Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 John 3:1-2; 2 Peter 1:4-8

STUDY & REFLECTION

Over the past 2 days we have been focusing on a tool put forth by Pastor Rick Warren from his best-seller book, The Purpose Driven Church. His 5 circles of commitment is both an understanding and a framework, where we can visualize where we are in Relationship to God and the local Body of Christ. Each level represents a different level of commitment and a deeper level of relationship in reference to others and the purposes of the global and local church.

Let's put them in perspective, and work our way from the Outside, In. The **Community** represents the *unchurched*. The initial understanding placed them within driving distance of the local church. Today, that field is widened because of technology to include others we can reach that don't live near us. The **Crowd** represents those who attend, each Sunday or on a regular basis. The **Congregation** represents those who have been born-again and are committed to the local church. The **Committed** are born-again, and are serious about growing in Christ. This commitment is clearly demonstrated in certain personal spiritual habits but they are not necessarily involved in ministering to others. The **Core** represent a level of commitment that involves all of the above and dedication to the welfare of others in a consistent sacrificial manner. They seek to Glorify God and lead others to doing the same.

These characteristics are captured in our devotional scriptures. Notice that each not only call us to manifest these vital habits and practices, but each demands that to be authentic, they must provoke and motivate others to a deeper level of commitment and therefore relationship to the church and to others.

ACTION ITEMS

Connect the teachings of our devotional scriptures and apply them to the 5 levels of commitment. After doing this, consider if and how you can move others as you move yourself "from the outside out!"

What habits and practices are in your life that by their very nature, move others to a deeper commitment to Christ and their life in the local church? What habits and practices need to be added?

INVOLVING OTHERS

Since you have completed the Action Items, share the same with others in your small groups. Compare notes on plans and strategies that will move others toward become a part of the Core. Discover how this is done by deepening our Relational connection with others in the local Body.



Relational Health, Wellness, Wholeness REVIEW

SCRIPTURES OF THE DAY Saturday, July 24, 2021

Romans 12:1-3; Romans 12:5

Romans 12:5; Ephesians 4:1-6; Ephesians 4:16

Romans 12:5; Proverbs 4:18; 2 Peter 1:1-10

Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 John 3:1-2; 2 Peter 1:4-8

STUDY & REFLECTION

This week involves summarizing a wealth of devotional scriptures for review and reflection.

ACTION ITEMS

Individually on a scale of 1-10 indicate where you see you present standing in Believing, Belonging, and Being Connected and Committed to the local church?

INVOLVING OTHERS

Compare and share with others and together give a rating to where we are as a local church.

With your group come up with 1 or 2 strategies that we can use to build our Relational Health and Connection with One Another.

