

## Day 38: Commitment to One Another

We live in a culture that celebrates radical individualism. The self-made man or woman. The Bible tells a different story. While we are all created as deeply unique people, we are not called to independence but dependence on God and others. Sociologists state that we are the average of our five closest friends and influences. There are powerful forces at work in our social circles to shape us.

Who are your five closest friends or influences? How are they shaping you? Towards Jesus or away?

Our focus scriptures for today are taken from Romans 12:3–18

<sup>3</sup> "... Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. <sup>4</sup> Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, <sup>5</sup> so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. <sup>6</sup> In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. ... <sup>9</sup> Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. <sup>11</sup> Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. <sup>13</sup> When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality. <sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. <sup>15</sup> Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all! <sup>17</sup> Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. <sup>18</sup> Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone."

A commitment to biblical community is both beautiful and painful. We bless and hurt one another. Yet, God knows that we need one another. This is not a journey of just Jesus and me. It's that, but more. There is so much fruit on the other side of finding your people—those people who you can share life with. Not perfect people, but those who embody the verses from Romans where you live, work, and play.

Pause to consider what stood out to you from Romans verses. Why did they stand out?

As an invitation to a spiritual practice—a way to say “yes, Lord,” from the verses that stood out, prayerfully make a plan to see these verses become a reality where you live, worship, work, and play. You could bless a coworker who is hard to work with. You could practice hospitality and live in harmony with your neighbors. You could join or start a small group to love others genuinely. The opportunities are all around us.

Prepare to walk with God into the day before us, be challenged and inspired by the words found in:

1 John 3:16–19 <sup>16</sup> “We know what real love is because Jesus gave up His life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup> If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God’s love be in that person? <sup>18</sup> Dear children, let’s not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions. <sup>19</sup> Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God.”

Father, help us discern where you are leading us as a church - making Your invitation clear.

Jesus, help us become worshipers, friends, apprentices, and guides who live as disciple-makers in all areas of our everyday.

Spirit, help us become a disciple-making hub, loving the lost and proclaiming Jesus in all we do and say so our communities will flourish.