



MERGE 
the community we are meant to be

May 29th, 2016

The Serving Community

Embracing The Deeper & Truer Christ Story –
Being Other-Centered is the Path to Greatness.

Let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.

– Luke 22:26-27 (ESV)

There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. – John 15:13 (NLT)

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. – Philippians 2:3-4 (ESV)

EMBRACING THE ONE BODY - PART 2 (A Study of 1 Corinthians 12:12-30)

...There are many of us, but we each are part of the body of Christ, as well as part of one another. – Romans 12:5 (CEV)

THE SIX BODY BUILDERS

Body Builder # 1: **UNITY** over **DIVISIVENESS** – 1 Corinthians 12:12 (ESV)

Body Builder # 2: **VITALITY** over **FORMALITY** – 1 Corinthians 12:13 (ESV)

Body Builder # 3: **DIVERSITY** over **ENVY** – 1 Corinthians 12:14-20 (ESV)

Body Builder # 4: SYNERGY over SELFISHNESS

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²²On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, ²⁴which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it...

– 1 Corinthians 12:21-24 (ESV)

Hebrews 4:2; Haggai 1:9

Body Builder # 5: SYMPATHY over APATHY

...that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. – 1 Corinthians 12:25-26 (ESV)

- BENEVOLENCE: *Isaiah 58:7*
- HELPFULNESS: *Romans 12:15*
- BURDEN-BEARING: *Galatians 6:2*
- FEELING FOR THE UNFORTUNATE: *Hebrews 13:3*
- VISITATION OF THE NEEDY: *James 1:27*

Amos 6:1,6; Genesis 4:9; Psalms 142:4; Ezekiel 22:30

Body Builder # 6: SYMMETRY over DISORDER

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

– 1 Corinthians 12:27-30 (ESV)

For God is not a God of disorder but of peace...But be sure that everything is done properly and in order. – 1 Corinthians 14:33, 40 (NLT)

I Will Merge by...

- Memorizing *Luke 22:27*.
- Following the example of Jesus in servanthood.
- Seeing the Body of Christ as more than just my own church.
- Giving my life to Jesus as Savior and Lord, for the first time.

WALK THE TALK

A Growth Group Guide

1. Have you ever witnessed in others, or even in the church, a self-centered, serve-myself-first behavior? Have you ever witnessed in others, or in the church, a self-sacrificial, other-centered service for others? What has been the fruit of each?
2. In what real ways can we at Crosswind Church become more other-centered with our community, our kids, our teenagers, our senior adults, etc.?
3. Do you think churches struggle to focus on love more than longevity, and on service more than size? What factors contribute to this struggle?
4. Pick one of the last three *Body Builders* in the outline above and comment on the one that spoke to you the most. How well is the one you chose working in your church? How can this body principle help us to conquer the spirit of independence so prevalent in the modern culture of America? How could it help bring the greater body of Christ together in the community?
5. Dallas Willard once said: *“The most important task we have, especially for those in church leadership, is to pray for the success of our neighboring churches.”* How do you feel about what he said? How does this break the narrative of selfishness within the greater body of Christ?

SOUL TRAINING – LOVING THOSE WE DISAGREE WITH

A Personal Transformation Exercise

The Principle:

John Wesley not only gave us a helpful way to stay unified, even if we disagree, but in the same sermon, he also offered five ways that we can show love to those with whom we disagree on the nonessentials: Treat them as companions, do not think or speak evil of them, pray for them, encourage them to do good, and collaborate with them.

These excellent suggestions will go a long way toward helping us get along with and love fellow Christians with whom we have differences. This idea echoes what we have been talking about so far in this series. We need to learn to put the needs of others before our own. One of the key principles of the Christian life is to love our neighbor as our self.

The Plan:

This week, think about a friend, or a fellow Christian who you may not get along with. It can be someone who attends our church or perhaps not. The plan for this week is to see if you can implement some or all of Wesley's ideas. The goal is to try and show love even if you cannot get along.

Treat them as companions - Ask the person to lunch. If it is a church you are feeling led to connect with in this way, worship with them.

Do not speak or think evil of them - Be sure to refrain from pointing out your differences, either to the person or to others. Focus on what you have in common.

Pray for them - Make that person or that church the special object of your prayers this week.

Encourage them to do good - During lunch or worship, or whenever you connect, be sure to encourage the person in the good work he or she is already doing. Ask questions and find out what the person is doing in ministry and affirm them.

Collaborate with them - If possible, see if you can work alongside the person (or church), either in something he or she is doing, or in some ministry in which you are engaged. Working alongside someone creates a bond of unity that overcomes our differences.