

Belonging to One Another

Week 4: A Body That Pursues

Scripture:

Romans 12:11-13

Motivation (Why You Need This):

Have you ever wondered what makes a person attractive? What makes us pursue someone or what makes us pursuable?

Our society has nearly reduced beauty to what can be seen on the outside.

Since *outward* appearances change over time, the *external* cannot be the foundation for **lasting** love (maybe temporary love, but not a forever love).

So, here's what we're wrestling with today: **What makes a person worth pursuit?**

This has nothing to do with romantic love, but the self-giving love we talked about last week.

Why draws us to other people?

Why are people drawn to (or not) us?

Paul provides some key attitudes and actions that move us closer in belonging to one another...

- Enthusiasm
- Steadiness
- Hospitality

This is not an exhaustive list, but these are a great starting place for the way we should act toward each other.

Remember, our programs or gathering environments cannot do this for you.

They can provide the place or the space, but they cannot do the work for you.

Information (What You Need to Know):

Let's read these verses out loud together...

Romans 12:11 (ESV) Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. **12** Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. **13** Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

Attitudes or characteristics that will make you more “attractive” to others...

■ **Enthusiasm**

Romans 12:11 (ESV) Do not be slothful [*lazy*] in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.

“The temptation to lose steam in our lifelong responsibility to reverence God in every aspect of our lives, to become lazy and complacent in our pursuit of what is ‘good, well pleasing to God, and perfect,’ is a natural one—but it must be resisted.”
– New International Commentary (NT)

So how do we guard against complacency and laziness in loving God and loving one another?

- ✓ Serve the Lord (where we start)
 - The word *serve* literally means *to give ourselves over to*
 - Wrestling with *who owns who* is where we must start – do we determine the direction of our life or does the Lord?
- ✓ Maintain zeal (diligence, vigilance)

Proverbs 4:23 (NLT) Keep your heart with all vigilance...

“When we guard our hearts, we take responsibility for our mental, psychological, and spiritual well-being. In doing so, we protect ourselves from sinful influences that impede spiritual progress. By guarding our hearts, we become who God designed us to be.” – Got Questions

- ✓ Be fervent in spirit (enthusiasm is the overflow of what happens in the heart)

Proverbs 4:23 (NLT) ... for from it flow the springs of life.

■ **Steadiness**

Romans 12:13 (ESV) Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

- ✓ Hope – a heart and mind that looks toward what may not be able to be seen in the current circumstance of life
- ✓ Patience – a steady heart posture when the mind and body are under pressure
- ✓ Prayer – the constant dependence in God's protection and provision

▪ Hospitality

Romans 12:13 (ESV) Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

- ✓ An awareness of what others need (implies knowing and being in close proximity to others)
- ✓ A proactive pursuit of inviting others in (someone who includes others and provides a sense of “*you belong here*”)

Application (What You Need to Do):

How do you begin to practice enthusiasm, steadiness, and hospitality?

Let's get really practical...

- Move from "we should get together sometime" to "are you free Thursday?"
- Invite one person, couple, or family into your home or out to a meal in the next two weeks. Specific date.
- Stop waiting to be invited. You be the inviter.
- Don't wait until you're ready. You'll never be ready. Invite people in anyway.

We provide ways for you to connect. Those create proximity.

They cannot create pursuit.

Opportunities can introduce you to people. They cannot pursue those people for you.

If we want to be a church who belongs to one another, we must pursue relationships with one another. There are no shortcuts.

Belonging to one another leads us closer to the people in the church, not away from them.

Ecclesiastes 4:9 (NLT) Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. **10** If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.