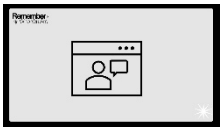


Invest in People

Remember Who You Are #2 • October 18, 2026



Testimony Clip – Janice White (7:00) [Play Video]



Opening

People matter.

[Close binder. Start to walk off stage]

Do I really need to convince you of that? The love of people is central to our faith!

Listen to this passage from 1 John 4:



> *"Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us."* (1 John 4:7–12, NLT)

We're supposed to **love God and love people**. End of story.

But HOW we love people matters. We can't just appreciate them from a distance. We can't just settle for who they are or have been.

We must love in a way that **invests in them** and brings them closer to Jesus!

We've got to **invest in people**!

Janice's story is an example of that. (*NOTE: I'm thankful for our Outreach/Evangelism team working on these videos to share – allowing some of our church members to tell their stories!*) **Janice White** had parents who invested in her as she was growing up. She has regularly invested in people

since then by sending messages of encouragement to others. She has shared her testimony where she can, and as evidenced by her 'inmate' story, there is power when we invest in people!!!

Recap



Do you guys remember our vision statement?

> **TCC exists for HIM:**
> **Honoring Jesus, Investing in People, Making a Difference.**

Say it with me: *"TCC exists for HIM: Honoring Jesus, Investing in People, Making a Difference."*

That is the vision of Tonganoxie Christian Church. Last week, we talked about that vision as a way to frame our pursuit of **God's glory** as we engage in **God's mission**. *That vision is who we are*. We need to **be the church**!



> As a little boy in kids' ministry growing up, our leaders taught us a little rhyme with cool actions (at least it was cool for a kid).
>
> *Here's the church* *[interlock fingers pointing down]*
> *Here's the steeple* *[stick index fingers up]*
> *Open the doors* *[flip hands]*
> *And there are the people* *[wiggle fingers]*

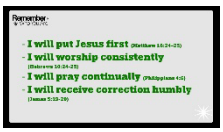
It's fun…but really, that rhyme should have just started and ended with that last part! Because *these* [wiggle fingers] ARE the church. The church is comprised of *people* – you and me. So, if we want our *church* to be pursuing God's glory and mission…that means our *people* – you and me – need to be actively engaged!

Are you all in?

Last week we talked about honoring Jesus and how we do that.



- We talked about **practical environments** you should be in:
  - **Worshiping** in services (weekly)
  - **Studying** the Bible in a class (weekly)
  - **Sharing** life in a small group (regularly)
  - **Serving** (meaningfully)



- We talked about **decisions and fruit** those environments should be producing. "Honoring Jesus" should have you saying…
    - I will put **Jesus first** *(Matthew 16:24–25)*
    - I will **worship consistently** *(Hebrews 10:24-25)*
    - I will **pray continually** *(Philippians 4:6)*
    - I will **receive correction humbly** *(James 5:19-20)*

That was "Honoring Jesus."

Now, we need to talk about what we want next from members of TCC: **"Investing in People."**



Recognizing the People

If we are going to invest in people, we should know "Which people?!" We need to recognize them.

➔ **Can we do a little test?** Grab your bulletin or a piece of paper. Write down the name of the person sitting in front of you and behind you…and the person to your left or right (the first one that didn't come with you and isn't related to you!).

➔ **How well did you do?** (If you don't know – introduce yourself quickly. I'll wait…)

Could you pass that test with the people at your work? Could you pass it with your neighbors? Could you pass it at a football game on Friday night?

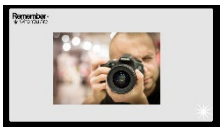
Church, need to recognize each other!

From the very first days that the church existed, relationships were important. The early Christians invested in each other, like we hear demonstrated in Paul's letter to the Thessalonian church:



> *"May God our Father and our Lord Jesus bring us to you very soon. And may the Lord make your love for one another and for all people grow and overflow, just as our love for you overflows. May he, as a result, make your hearts strong, blameless, and holy as you stand before God our Father when our Lord Jesus comes again with all his holy people. Amen."* (1 Thessalonians 3:11–13, NLT)

But, if we want that level of connection in the church we need to at the very least **recognize** who is here!



Directory

This is why I'm excited to announce that we are going to put together a church directory this year!

- This is not a **paid version** like we've done in the past (e.g. professional portraits where they try to sell you expensive prints in exchange for X number of "free" glossy directories for the church). Those go out of date quickly, and we don't always like the pressure to buy.

- Instead, this will be **home grown**. We will take some decent pictures of you…but more like pictures with our phones! You can wait for us take photos here (starting November 1st), or you can send us your own pictures (vertical, shoulders and up) and we'll compile everything.
    - **Individual** (Required)
    - **Family** (Bonus!)

- We'd also ask that you update your **contact information**. Fill out your Connection Cards with some extra info – verify your phone, address and family members (birthdays and school grades would be lovely, too). Then share it all with us…or tell us what info is okay to share and what you'd like to keep private.

- This will help us connect! And you can find some of it on the **church app**…but we'll also have some **paper copies** available when it's complete.

Why do this? Because our church is too big and too spread out. Our situation is better with two services than with three, but we still don't connect with other hours or even other sides of the room. This will give you a chance to discover, "*Who is that guy? He was so nice*," or to know, "*She's the youth sponsor my kids were excited about*."

It doesn't replace conversation and actual engagement with them. But it is a helpful tool. Because after you RECOGNIZE a person, you can start to KNOW a person.



Knowing the People

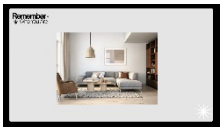
The New Testament was surprisingly personal. It wasn't just a "religious text." It was communication between real people. For example, Paul and Timothy had a close connection. They didn't just *recognize* each other; they ***knew*** each other. Paul writes in his second letter to Timothy:



> *"I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you. This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline."* (2 Timothy 1:5–7, NLT)

Who **knows** you at TCC?

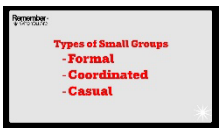
Your new best friend (whose name you just learned) sitting next to you may or may not know you well. But you should have people in this church that know what is happening. They should have an idea of how to pray for you right now.



That knowledge cannot be gained in this room. Because it's not a "worship center" thing. It's a "living room" thing – it's where you open up about life.

We all need this. So, one of our expectations of members at TCC is to be **intentionally sharing life with others in a small group** – meeting together somewhere outside of church to build relationships.

Don't let this scare you. It's easier than you think.



- It could be **formal** (a Bible study that meets every Monday – like the men's group I meet with. Tyler, Billy, Colton, Marc, Ryan, and Don going through a study together)
- It could be **coordinated** (one of our "Who's Coming to Dinner Groups" – meeting about once a month for fellowship and maybe prayer. Today, I'll be at the Jenkins home with the Ayers and Saathoffs and Krivjanskys for our October meal – it's cajun!)
- It could be **casual** (a breakfast group that meets with little agenda – with Andy and Chris and Fletch at Flashbacks on Friday mornings).



I know I said it's a "living room" thing. But really…

- It's a "coffee shop" thing.
- It's a "watching the game in the garage" thing.

- It's a "fishing with the guys" thing.
- It's a "Saturday morning with the girls" thing.
- It's an "after school at Sonic" thing.

It's anywhere you can talk and let down your guard. Being known happens when you share life intentionally with others, somewhere. And you talk about challenges. And you talk about faith. And you share a love for Jesus. And you encourage one another. And you laugh and cry or both or neither.

You must *know* the other person. Because it is only when you know a person that you can really ***invest*** in him or her.



"Investing in People"

Investment means you pour something in, hoping that it becomes something greater.

If we want the church to become greater, we must pour in … [wiggle fingers] … to the people. Sometimes you pour into your own self, but you can't stop there. We must invest in people.

In a book I was reading on Christian community, I came across this quote that explains why:



> *Sainthood is perfected in communion with others, never apart from it….The purpose of Christian formation is not developing a better self-image, achieving self-fulfillment or finding self-affirmation; nor is it the development of individualistic qualities that make singularly outstanding saints. Rather, it is developing certain qualities that enable us to live responsibly within the community that we have been baptized into….The theological virtues of faith, hope and charity make the best sense (if not the only sense) for Christians when they are lived out in the Christian community….*[1]

God's glory is best shown when we display His qualities…and these MUST be done in relationship. You can't love alone; you can't extend grace in an empty room. His glory shows up when we invest in others.

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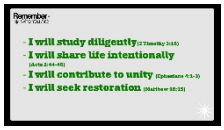
[1] Chan, quoted in Julie A. Gorman's "Community That is Christian" (Baker, 2002) p. 244

God's mission is best achieved when we grow others, not just ourselves. Telling them the good news, teaching them to obey. This requires investing in people.

Member Agreement

There are four kinds of "fruit" we want our members to display in this area. Can I just share this from our new member agreement?



As a member of Tonganoxie Christian Church, to the best of my ability and with grace from the Lord and extended by my church family…I will grow in the way I Invest in People:

- **I will study diligently [daily/weekly].** I will read and explore the Bible to apply its truth to my life and **to equip me to share it with others**.

  "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right." (2 Timothy 3:16, NLT)

- **I will share life intentionally [weekly-monthly].** I will be engaged in the church community by being an active member of a small group overseen by the shepherding model of TCC, both for my spiritual growth and to **contribute to the spiritual growth of others**.

  "And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity" (Acts 2:44–46, NLT)

- **I will contribute to unity [ongoing/as needed].** I will speak and act in a way that brings a spirit of love, generosity, peace, and **unity in the TCC community**.

  "Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit,

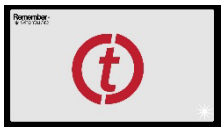
binding yourselves together with peace." (Ephesians 4:1–3, NLT)

- **I will seek restoration [as needed].** I will approach any problem I have with someone within the church with loving, corrective, restorative action.

  "If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back."
  (Matthew 18:15, NLT)

Will you do those things? Will you really invest in the people beyond yourself and help us build a church community here in Tonganoxie that models the love of Christ and shows the transformation he can bring?

Conclusion



Church, I do see it in you!

- I see it in the women who show up for Bible Study Fellowship on Tuesday afternoons to **study diligently**
- I see it in the men's group that meets on Wednesday mornings at church as they **share life intentionally**
- I see it elder's meetings as issues are passionately discussed but then the men walk out the door **in unity**
- I see it in marriages where failures are confronted and graciously offered an opportunity for **restoration**, with grace that can only come from the Holy Spirit's actions.



You aren't just **recognizing** people in the church. You don't just **know** a bit about them. No, you **INVEST** in them.

Church, keep it up. Gain momentum! Continue to pour into the lives of the men and women and kids around you.

We must love people in a way that **invests in them** and brings them closer to Jesus!



Remember who you are. Let's live it out!

Prayer

Invitation

Our church's future depends on investing in people.

- Your investment is preparing the **next elders** of TCC.
- Your investment is equipping the **next teachers** in our church.
- Your investment is encouraging a young person to go to Manhattan Christian College or Ozark Christian College to study and become the next **preacher** or **youth minister**.

During our invitation song today, I invite you to think about who you are investing in. Pray for those people today. Catch them on the way out and do it in person! Meet with them this week.

Take your responsibility to heart and pour into the lives of the people around you. Think about it as we sing!

Sermon Notes

Recognizing the People

(1 John 4:7–12; 1 Thessalonians 3:11–13)

Knowing the People

(2 Timothy 1:5–7)

“Investing in People”

(2 Timothy 3:16; Acts 2:44–46; Ephesians 4:1–3; Matthew 18:15)

Sermon Discussion Questions

- How many people do you recognize in church? Make a list of people whose names you know in the congregation.
- Of those people you recognize in church, how many do you talk to on a Sunday or throughout the week?
- Of those you talk to, how well do you know them (ex: read 2 Timothy 1:5–7. Could you talk to someone with that level of connection?)
- Are you satisfied with your level of connection in the church? Why or why not?
- Share your response to this statement: *"The most important qualities of a Christian can only be shown in relationships."* Can you give an example of what that statement means?
- What are some ways you can invest in your fellow church members? What qualities would that investment develop?
- Who invested in you to help you become the Christian you are today?
- Choose one of the following: study, sharing life, pursuing unity, pushing for restoration. How will you grow in this area this week? List 2-3 actions you will take.