

CONNECTED – Uniting People February 18, 2018

Living a “connected” life is our heart here at Kings Circle. We want to help you live a spiritually connected life by:

Knowing God, Relating to God, Growing in God, Serving & Sharing God

Colossians 2:19 they're not connected to Christ, the Head of the body. He holds the whole body together w/ its joints & ligaments & it grows as God nourishes it.

God's power helps us flourish, as long as we stay connected to Him.

When you stay connected to God—united w/ Jesus—all the power of heaven is at your disposal. Come on!! Think how wonderful it'd be to have such harmony w/ God that you knew what He wanted you to do & your prayers were being answered. That kind of prayer power is available to every believer as we make our union w/ God & His Church.

To be connected to God & His church means:

- 1.** We have His **POWER.**
- 2.** We have His **PRESENCE.**
- 3.** We have His **PRODUCTIVITY** Galatians says the Holy Spirit produces...

One of the crucial purposes of our church community at Kings Circle is to help alleviate this sense of disconnection. There are people in our midst every week who aren't connected to our church in a meaningful way. We need to talk about why it's important to get & stay connected.

James 4:8 Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands...; purify your hearts, your loyalty is divided between God and the world.

If we draw near to God, He'll draw near to us. God isn't going to do everything for you. He's always willing & able, but we have to do our part & start drawing near, plugging in, & seeking communion.

We need to be connected to the Jesus & His church to fulfill our divine purpose. Wouldn't we have the most amazing life if we started our days supercharged in the Lord & completely connected to the ultimate of all power sources? The connection that's always reliable, never subject to error, the one that can't break down or become obsolete. The one source that can never be hacked, breeched, or compromised! The highly functional, trustworthy, super intelligent, miraculous, omniscient kind of connection that can never fail! His presence & anointing in us. Worship Him and surrender to Jesus. Without Him we can do nothing. Stay connected to God & LIVE! God & His Church is the power source.

**Old black & white television; I was the remote control! Handful of channels; antenna on the roof; had to get up on the roof to adjust the antenna to get reconnected to the signal coming in.*

1 John 1:7 If we're living in the light, as God's in the light, then we have fellowship w/ each other & the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

There are two types of electrical current: Alternating Current A/C and Direct Current D/C. Some of us are A/C in nature. We're hooked up to an alternating current. We attend church when it is convenient-on an alternating basis-when we feel like it. We pray on an alternating, irregular basis-convenience. We give to Gods work on alternating occasions; when we feel like giving. Us A/C believers are motivated by how we feel.... we're not in charge of our life...our feelings are.

Then there are those who are hooked up to the D/C, the direct current. Disciplined discipleswho allow the Direct Current of God to flow consistently in their lives. We're yearning to mature in the Faith.

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS

Ephesians 1:15 Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in Jesus & your love for God's people everywhere, 16 I haven't stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom & insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. 18 I pray that your hearts will be flooded w/ light so that you can understand the confident hope He has given to those He called—His holy people who are His rich & glorious inheritance. 19 I also pray that you'll understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe Him. This is the same mighty power 20 that raised Christ from the dead & seated Him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. 21 Now He's far above any ruler, authority, power, leader or anything else — not only in this world but also in the world to come. 22 God's put all things under the authority of Christ & has made Him head over all things for the benefit of the **church**. 23 And the **church** is His body; it's made full & complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere w/ Himself.

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GEORGE BARNA writes, "In the church today, there's a "McChristian" mentality which picks & chooses here & there to fill one's ecclesiastical shopping list. There are hitchhikers who attend one church for the preaching, send their children to a second church for its dynamic youth program, & go to a third church's small group. Church hitchhikers have a telling vocabulary: "I go to"/"I attend," never "I belong to" or "I'm a member." The average adult thinks that belonging to a church is good for other people but represents unnecessary bondage & baggage for himself." So today, we have a phenomenon unthinkable in any other century: Churchless Christians. There's a vast herd of professed Christians existing as nomadic hitchhikers w/out accountability, w/out discipline, w/out discipleship, living apart."

Let's not be churchless Christians! We need the church. We need to be connected to the church; to one another.

Ephesians 1:22 MSG At the center of all this, **Christ rules the church.** The **church**, you see isn't peripheral to the world, the world's peripheral to the **church**. The **church** is Christ's body, in which He speaks & acts (He's the head), by which He fills everything w/ His presence.

Once we grasp that we're the body of Christ, we start to see the church in a whole new light.

4 Distorted Images or False Pictures of the Church:

1. The church as a **gas station**. A place where you fill up your spiritual gas tank when you're running low. Get a good sermon, and it will keep you going for the week.
2. The church as a **movie theater**. A place that offers entertainment. Go for an hour of escape, hopefully in comfortable seats. Leave your problems at the door; come out smiling; feeling better than when you went in.
3. The church as a **drug store**. The place where you can fill the prescription that will deal w/ your pain. The church is therapeutic.
4. The church as a **big box retailer**. The place that offers the best products in a clean & safe environment for you & your family. The church offers great service at a low price—all in one stop. A producer of programs for children and young people.

You won't find any of these pictures of the church in the Bible. All of these distorted images & false pictures have one thing in common—**they're all about me. Fill me up! Entertain me! Take away my pain!** Give me the programs my family and I are looking for! It's pure **consumerism**. This isn't surprising. This mindset is pervasive in our culture. I don't have any particular loyalty to a gas station, a movie theater, a drugstore, or a big box retailer. I move around looking for the

best deal at the time. Christians who think about church in these ways find it hard to settle and miss so much as a result.

I want to help us move away from these self-centered ways of thinking about church and look at the pictures God gives to help us understand what it means to be the church. Ephesians 1 is this marvelous picture of the church as the body of Christ.

Paul prays in **Ephesians 1:19 NKJV** what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.

Paul's praying that God will open our eyes to see that God has power. He has great power—incomparable great power! There's nothing to compare w/ God's power! It's not like any other. Satan has power. Temptation has power. Government has power. The media has power. But God's power is altogether different. It is incomparably great, and this power is "for us who believe!"

Since God's power is incomparably great, it can't be compared to anything else. So Paul gives us an example of this power at work. He says in verse **19b** it's "like the working of the Father's mighty strength 20 which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead." The power that raised Christ from the dead is "for us who believe." Not only did God's power raise Jesus from the dead, but the Father "seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule, authority, power, dominion, and every title that can be given! Then Paul says verse **22** "God placed all things under His feet & appointed Him to be head over everything!" *Why did the Father raise Christ from the dead? Why did He seat Christ at His right hand in heaven? Why have all things been placed under the feet of Christ? I'm so glad you asked: "God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything **for the church**, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way."*

Connecting to the church

How do you stay connected to God? We stay connected by staying connected w/ God's family, the church. When we choose to become a follower of Jesus, we inherit His family as well, whether you like it or not, it's part of the package deal. Just like when you are born you don't get to pick your family, God has chosen it for you. When you are born again, you inherit God's family, that is all Christians across the globe. It means you have a lot of brothers & sisters. Nearly 2 billion Christians on the planet, that's a big family. Your family includes brothers and sisters in every country. It also includes the Christians right here in our community. Look around you, you have family right here, it's called the church. In the Bible God's family is called the church.

Conclusion:

If you're living for Jesus but you've been drifting, unconnected to other believers, I encourage you to "Get Connected." Get planted in the house so you can flourish. Worship w/ us regularly. Join us at Next Steps. Get involved w/ one of our Community Groups to help you mature in your faith. It's about being in God's church.

It all begins w/ confessing Jesus as your Lord, surrendering your life to Him. Connecting to Jesus. I'm going to lead us in a prayer. Today you would say, "I'm ready, now's the time." I'm not going to ask anyone to stand or come to the front. But if you want to live a God first life, right now. Lift up your hand. That's me. That's me. Good.

Remember the Bible says we believe in our heart & we confess w/ our mouth. "Jesus, thank you for dying for me & giving me Your life. I receive your payment for my sin. I invite You into my life, make me brand new. I will live for you. In Jesus name"