



GOING DEEPER

Discussion Questions and more from Sunday's message, before we begin, here are the verses for this week's study! Open your bible to the book of Ephesians 2:19-22; Romans 12:4-5; Titus 1 and 2; Hebrews 10:24.

How much time have you spent this past week reflecting on Jesus and the hope of the gospel? How has reflecting on Him been of help to you? Because that is how we grow in how we think about our relationship to God and how we bring Him Glory each day, in each conversation, interaction, our work, our family. **In everything.** The gospel and the love of Christ should indwell us, and we should be burdened to share that good news with others in these last days. ***Have you shared the good news with anyone this week? Have you showed the love of Jesus to anyone this week?***

A New Normal

"Over the last few decades, a quiet but massive shift has taken place in Western culture. Many churches are still operating out of an older framework, even though the cultural conditions underneath have fundamentally changed". -Carey Nieuwhof

REVIEW from the table talk at the end of May called, "The Great Reversal," Billy opened the discussion discussing the Original Church Model across America (@ 2005 and earlier)

Content was scarce

Biblical teaching was primarily accessed through gathered worship

The church functioned as the main distribution point for preaching and formation

Community was abundant

Strong neighborhood ties, civic participation, and regular in-person interaction

Belonging was largely built into everyday life

1. The Goal for a Pastor Is Not Better Teaching... It's Teaching Yourself Out of a Job Ephesians 4:11-14

11 "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds[c] and teachers,[d] **12** to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, **13** until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood,[e] to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, **14** so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes."

"In such a dehumanized society, the fellowship of the local church will become increasingly important—whose members meet one another and listen and talk to one another in person rather than on screen. In this human context of mutual love, the speaking and hearing of the Word of God is also likely to become more necessary for the preservation of our humanness, not less." John Stott, 1982.

The church succeeds when God's people stop consuming and start constructing.

Questions Billy wrestled with this week...

What is different between how people connect and belong today?

What is God showing us about what His church is meant to be?

What questions will we need to wrestle with as the church moves forward?

The last half of Ephesians 2 focuses on being "one in Christ". It concludes with

Ephesians 2:19-22

19 "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,[d] but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, **20** built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, **21** in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. **22** In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by[e] the Spirit."

If Jesus is the cornerstone, what happens when we try to build our lives on something else?

1. A church home is for everyone

19 "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,[d] but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,"

Billy talked about issues around denominations

Notice Paul's progression: Strangers > Aliens > Citizens > Family

CONTEXT: When Paul says no longer strangers here, this is in contrast to their previous status, Gentiles are now included in the people of God through His generosity in Christ. They used to be outsiders, they now belong to God's family!

We often think salvation is moving from lost to saved.

Paul says it is moving from distant to family.

Questions for Christiana and Bailey for Table Talk discussion this past Sunday:

Christian: *Do young adults today want a church they can attend or a family they can belong to? Christian responded that he thinks it both. They are looking for a family and a place to belong. Our job as a church is accepting them as our family. He said most can see the church as judgmental. 66% of 18-20 years old have left the church.*

Bailey *do you agree or disagree? She said she agrees, this generation is very in their feelings, so if they are going to a church and feel like they are being judged or they feel like they don't belong, they will just pack up and find someone to blame it on.*

Billy then discussed the different generations.

Bailey: *What will it take for the next Generation to move from "I attend here" to "this is my church family"?* **Bailey** *I think it goes back to feelings. They want to be included, involved and my generation is not involved in Sunday School, they don't have small groups, they come to church, sit, go home and check off the list that they went to church. We need to start small and look at ourselves and see how can I have a relationship with the younger generation."*

The younger generation needs models, not just messages

In **Titus 1**, Paul emphasizes the character of leaders.

The point is not just **"say the right things"** but **"live in a way worth following."**

Young people often can spot hypocrisy quickly.

They may not respond first to authority alone, but they do notice **integrity, humility, consistency, and sincerity.**

Titus 1 reminds the church that spiritual influence starts with **character.**

Titus 2 shows that discipleship is relational and intergenerational

In **Titus 2**, older believers are told to help train and encourage younger believers. That gives a strong picture of church life:

older men investing in younger men

older women investing in younger women

truth being passed down through close relationships

spiritual maturity growing in community, not isolation

The younger generation does not only need programs—they need **people**

They need older believers who are present, approachable, and willing to walk with them

Titus 2 shows that the church should function like a **family**, where wisdom is shared across generations

Titus 2 is not just about age groups; it is about intentional spiritual relationships.

The younger generation needs to see that the gospel is not just something we believe—it is something that shapes how we live and love.

Relationships require intentionality

Titus 2 assumes older believers will step towards younger believers.

That means speaking to them, listening to them/inviting them in/encouraging them/making room for questions/walking with patience

If we want younger people to stay connected, we have to go beyond welcoming them into a room and start welcoming them into our lives.

What does Titus 2 teach us about the responsibility older believers have toward younger believers?

Why do you think authentic example matters so much to the younger generation?

What would it look like for our church to practice Titus 2 more intentionally?

How can we move from simply welcoming young people to actually discipling them?

Loneliness Has Become a Public Health Crisis was discussed next:

The U.S. Surgeon General released an **advisory warning** that loneliness and social isolation carry health risks comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Think about that.

We live in the most connected generation in history:

More texts -More social media -More digital communication

Yet studies consistently show increasing loneliness, especially among young adults.

Paul's words are strikingly modern: "You are no longer strangers..."

The gospel doesn't simply forgive sin; it addresses isolation.

The church is one of the few places left in society where people from different ages, incomes, backgrounds, and political views can become family.

B: Americans Move More Than Ever Before

The average American will move multiple times during their lifetime. Many young adults leave hometowns for college, careers, military service, or relationships.

And it's not just moving locations... They move careers, churches, communities, and even families on a regular basis.

Sociologists call this a loss of "social capital" (the network of relationships that provides support and belonging.)

Paul's language is powerful: "Members of the household of God."

The church becomes a family for people whose biological family may be far away.

The church is not replacing family; it is expanding it.

When have you seen Church as "an extra family support system" and it's very

best? The best stories came from people supporting and caring for one another, going back to what Billy taught last week. Showing the love of Christ to others. Being Christ to others.

Romans 12:4-5

"For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another."

2. A Home is a place to grow

22 "In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit."

The topic “Belonging” has now become “formation”

You don't build a house Out of **One Board**

Paul does not say "you are being built."... He says "you are being built together."
One board is not a wall. -One brick is not a building. -One believer is not a church.

American Christianity often emphasizes personal faith (my way, my feelings, my culture)
.... Paul emphasizes connected faith. Illustration
A single brick may be beautiful. But it was never designed to stand alone.

Its purpose is discovered when it is joined to other bricks.

Questions for Christian and Bailey: **Christian:** How can we help younger believers discover that belonging is not optional but essential? *Christian said we have to do a good job of being an authentic church. They should see us struggle just as they do and we are the same as them (doing life together). Maybe I can help someone and they help me. It is personable. I am having a relationship with someone else and talking about God and Jesus.*

Bailey: Walk me through life lessons you have learned/not learned transitioning from "Home church" to young adult "finding church"? *She talked about being in a church where she knew everyone to one where she knew no one. The first time she visited a church of about 500 people, no one spoke to her. So the next week before she attended she sat and debated about going in and asked God to send someone for her meet and as she went in a lady complemented her on her dress and asked her to sit with her and it developed into a relationship while she was in college attending Zoom meetings with them. God answered her prayer.*

A: Human Growth Happens in Community

True isolationist... **How does school work?**

But... "I don't like people."

Billy reviewed a W.H.O Study:

Less than 1% (0.03) truly have isolationist tendencies

83% of Americans claimed they are introverts or have introvert tendencies

61% use this as a badge of honor

It is not that you don't like being around people... You don't like the responsibilities that being around people incurs. It is...

a fear of responsibility -enabled by someone in authority with a fear of responsibility

Being social matters!

Hebrews 10:24-25

"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together... but encouraging one another."

Paul understood this long before sociology existed.
He doesn't say believers are being built separately.
He says they are being built *together*.

B. Construction Sites Are Messy

Notice the phrase:... "being built."
Not "already built."
Being built.

Many Christians become discouraged because churches are imperfect.

Every church/family/job has:
rough edges -unfinished rooms -occasional noise
Paul says imperfection is evidence that construction is still underway.

The Current

Observations for the beach... Billy said this last week he noticed an interesting play on words "the current" leading to both today's society and the undertow that is out in the ocean. Children go out into the water and play and have a good time. However, the current moves them down the coast. There's nothing we can do about the current, time or under tow, the two are inevitable. What matters is we learn to handle the two of them properly. At the same time we emphasize that simply giving up and going back to the hotel room should never be a permanent solution.

"Our relationships with others are reflections of our relationship with God." Edwin Louis Cole, Maximum Manhood

***Are you currently prioritizing content, connection, or both in your walk with Christ?
Who has helped equip you spiritually, and how can you begin doing that for
someone else? Pray about that opportunity!***

Howard Hendricks was famous for saying that each believer needs three people in their lives: 1) Someone who mentors them 2) Someone beside them who shares the journey, 3) Someone who they mentor in return. Is this you? Why not?

"Without this dynamic, we risk stagnation—a church where Christians sit, soak in information, and leave unchanged. This isn't the vision of discipleship. It's a cycle that lacks passion, personal application, and multiplication. "– Chuck Swindoll

How should I pray for this life change?

"You don't want to ask the Lord for a trouble-free life. You should ask the Lord this, "Lord, work Your work in my heart, don't give me more than I can endure. Show me grace and compassion, you know my weaknesses and frailties. I want to see Your lovingkindness, but I want You to do Your work. I want You to do Your perfecting work. I want You to do whatever it takes in me to make me what You want me to be." You need to come to terms with that. You need to be able to say that." John MacArthur

Remember:

"We are to run the race with endurance, not in our own strength, but by fixing our gaze on Jesus. He is not only the goal of our faith—He is the source and sustainer of it." R.C. Sproul

**"The gospel is not only about changing WHERE you will live for eternity, it's also about changing HOW you will live today." Shane Pruitt
And that is a heart change. So that we glorify God in all we do.**

Having Jesus as Savior will cost you nothing. Having Jesus as Savior will cost you everything. How so?

Who do you say God is? You cannot "come after" Jesus unless you come to Him.

Two roads stand before us in this world today. There is the way of the divine things of our Lord, which is the way of Christ. And there is the way of human things of the world. There is a way to save your life, and you will lose it there. And there is a way to lose your life for the sake of the Kingdom, and there you will find it.

How do we follow Jesus' ways? First of all, we turn from our sin and entrust our lives to Him as our Savior and Lord. Then, we seek His will in His Word each day and put it into practice by the power of the Holy Spirit within us. We learn to deny our selfish desires and give ourselves completely to following Jesus.

This choice we have — to seek first the kingdom of God — is the fundamental choice everyone makes when they first repent and turn to Jesus Christ. Yet every day after that, our Christian life will either reinforce that decision or deny it.

Remember the gospel is personal. Your changed life shows that to others around you based on what happened at the cross. You are at a crossroads if you have not accepted Christ. Which road are you traveling on right now? Are you on God's side?



Are you in a Growth Group at First Baptist? In this isolated world, Growth Groups help people connect in a healthy way. God has created us for a deep longing for community. We grow when we are living out our faith in a small group with others and we do this by loving, caring for, and encouraging each other. If you have any questions about our Growth Groups, contact the Church Office for more information.