

Build One Another Up

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Date: 19 May 2013

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[0:00] I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle. Be patient, bearing with one another in love.

! Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called.

One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

But to each one of us, grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says, when he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.

What does he ascended mean, except that he also descended to the lower earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens in order to fill the whole universe.

[1:04] It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of service.

So that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants tossed back and forth by the waves and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is Christ. From him, the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love as each part does its work.

Well, please turn this morning in your Bibles to the Gospel of Matthew in chapter 28. I'm grateful for the opportunity to bring God's Word to you all this morning, to see your faces again.

[2:26] We miss you. We love you. It's nice to see some faces here that I don't recognize. I think that's a good thing, but we thank you for praying for us and for the church planting work in Warsaw.

It would seem that the time for constituting that work into an independent local church is drawing closer. And if that is the case, then my time as a pastor of Grace Fellowship Church in Bremen is drawing to a close.

Now, you might find it odd, some of you that have never met me before, that I'm one of the pastors of Grace Fellowship Church. Obviously, my duties has kept me in Warsaw, have kept me from functioning that way here in Bremen over the last three years or so.

But if this is the last sermon I preach here as one of your pastors, and it may not be. I don't know that. But if it is, there are several things that I would like to leave you with regarding the nature of ministry in the church.

There's one other thing I would like to do as well. Some of you have been here since the day I was. And some of you have heard call after call to come to Jesus Christ and to trust in Him as your Savior.

[3:47] You've heard it in the high school classroom at the end of the hall. You've heard it in what was once our sanctuary is now a fellowship hall. You've heard it in this room or the junior high classroom or that one back there.

And you're going to hear it once again. There is no Savior like the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no life like the life of following Jesus.

There is no joy like the joy of having sins forgiven and resting in the finished work of Christ.

There is nothing on earth like it. And if you do not yet know that joy, that peace, that forgiveness, then I would urge you one more time.

You come to Jesus. You cry out to Him and say, God, be merciful to me, a sinner. And He will. He's not yet turned a repentant sinner away.

[4:52] But I want to leave you with something else as well. And these thoughts this morning regarding the nature of ministry and the church are not earth-shattering. They are not novel.

In fact, they're written right into the constitution of Grace Fellowship Church in some ways. But I want to challenge and encourage you in this direction where it's needed and commend you where you're already doing these things.

This was the last message on the Gospel of Matthew that I just preached last week down in Warsaw. And to finish off our exposition, we've been going through, working through the Gospel of Matthew there.

And to finish it off, we've given a rather detailed look at the Great Commission, the last words of Matthew's Gospel that you find here in Matthew 28. We'll read them in just a moment.

But what is the work of citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven? If you're a follower of Christ, you're a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven. What is your work? Should those Kingdom citizens be seeking further citizens to join with them?

[5:51] What errand are they to be on for the sake of their king? Well, the Great Commission, at least in part, answers those questions. On Jesus' authority and helped by His presence, remember He said, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.

And then at the end He says, And behold, I am with you always, all days, every day I am with you, to the very end of the age. How can Jesus be with us? He went back up into heaven.

Well, He's with us by His Spirit dwelling in us. He's with us today. And so on the authority of Jesus and helped by His presence, Kingdom citizens are to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them.

And as we want to focus on today, teaching them to observe all that Jesus has commanded. Jesus had given His disciples a lot of direction. He's given them a lot of instruction over their three years together.

That instruction wasn't to stop with that first generation of disciples. It was to continue by the disciples passing it on to the next generation and so on down through today.

[7:01] In other words, disciples are to make further disciples and teach them what Jesus commanded. And so here we are today, still teaching the commands of Christ.

And this morning we want to consider the content of what we're to be teaching disciples and how we are to go about that teaching. So notice with me from Matthew's Gospel, Matthew 28, verse 16, to the end of the chapter.

And this is the Word of God. Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him, but some doubted.

And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Here's our emphasis today. Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.

[8:06] So we're going to consider again the content of what we're to be teaching disciples and how we are to go about that work. So what is the content? Well, very simply, we teach them to observe or keep all that Jesus commanded.

And so let's break that down a little bit. At a minimum, this means teaching them the very words of Christ. Some of you might have a red letter edition Bible. Those are the words of Christ there.

We're at a minimum to teach them that. And so we teach through the Gospels, noting the remarkable words of Christ that call men to repentance and faith.

We proclaim the wonderful blessings and the sobering warnings that Jesus proclaimed. We teach the law as something that is not kept merely outwardly, but as a matter of the heart.

We teach about works of necessity and mercy on the Sabbath. We teach about the sanctity and permanence of marriage. We emphasize the importance of not just hearing Jesus' words, but of doing them like the wise man that built his house on the rock.

[9:12] We comfort saints with the truth of God, who is sovereign over the provision of our food and clothing and the falling of a sparrow from the sky.

We preach about the coming of the kingdom of heaven. We remember Jesus' lament of his disciples' doubt and lack of faith. We warn against false teaching.

We speak of the suffering and the death and the resurrection of Jesus, because Jesus spoke of all of these things. He spoke of how sins are to be handled between brothers, and so we do that.

We encourage forgiveness. We exhort toward humble service. Instead of proud self-promotion, we teach disciples to love God and to love men.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. We help the church to remember that Jesus is coming again, but we don't know when, and so we challenge people to be ready for that coming.

[10 : 13] And of course, we exhort disciples to go and make more disciples, to baptize them and to teach them all that Jesus has commanded. But beyond the actual words of Jesus, we must also include the Old Testament, because Jesus taught the Old Testament.

We look to Moses and the prophets, and from them we proclaim Christ, as Jesus himself did. We show disciples how Jesus is the fulfillment of prophecy. We teach them that Jesus came to fulfill and not to abolish the law.

But I think we also include here the rest of the New Testament, which is the Holy Spirit-inspired apostolic Word of God. Paul recognizes himself as an apostle of Christ, one sent by Christ to proclaim the truth of Christ.

And so if you're going to proclaim the truth of Christ, then we must include that apostolic Word that he is inspired by his Holy Spirit. The New Testament is included in the commands of Christ.

And so what do we teach disciples? We make disciples and we teach them this book. We teach them the Word of God. It's this Word that's living and active and sharper than a two-edged sword.

[11 : 28] It's this Word that God has promised to bless, that he said it won't return to him empty without accomplishing the purpose for which he sent it. So why would we teach anything less than this?

It's this word of which Paul writes to Timothy, all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

It is the Word of God that we teach disciples. But how do we do that? What's the method? Who is to do that work?

Well, it's by the teaching of the church more formally and by disciples within the church more informally. And as we go through this, I want to acknowledge my indebtedness to several different resources.

One is a book called The Trellis and the Vine. Both this book and a workshop I attended that covers some of this material and my discussions on it with Pastor Steve Woodman from Kemp Road Baptist Church have helped me think through some of these things.

[12 : 37] And then a few weeks ago when Pastor Matt Foreman was here for the General Assembly, I found out that he had written a pamphlet for the church that he is pastor of and it's entitled A Culture of Discipleship.

And that has been helpful to me as well. And some of what you will hear, you would find in those resources. But I want you to notice this morning how both the formal ministry of pastors in the church and the work of all disciples in the church are mentioned together in Ephesians chapter 4. And so please turn there with me. Now I didn't give Pastor John a scripture reading this morning. My reading from Matthew was relatively short. The other place I might have had him read from was Ephesians 4.

And he did that anyway without knowing. And so I'm not going to read all of what I was going to read before. And I want you to see again the formal ministry of pastors in the church and the work of all disciples in the church.

Look just at verses 11 and 12 of Ephesians 4. And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ.

[13 : 50] I think NIV has for the work or for works of service there. This is in a context of pursuing unity in the church. And the work that is in view is the building up of the body of Christ in love.

Seeing the body grow. It's the spiritual growth and well-being of the church. It's strengthening disciples. And so if that is the goal, the church being built up in love, disciples being strengthened,

who is to do that work?

Well, first, God has given gifted men to do that work. In verse 11, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. These are formal church workers.

We have the apostles and prophets in the pages of Scripture. We don't believe those are offices continuing for the church today, but that they were foundational. But we do have their writings.

We do have that foundation in Scripture. Evangelists, a little bit more difficult to nail down, could be something like a missionary today. But I believe pastors and teachers are synonymous here and refer to the role of elder or pastor or shepherd in the church today.

[14:58] And the formal ministry of the church through its pastors and teachers is integral. It's vital for teaching disciples. It's important for the work of building up the body of Christ.

But it doesn't stop with them. You see, it's not just the pastor's work to encourage the disciples for the body to be built up in love. It's the saints' work as well.

They are to equip the saints for the work of the ministry or for works of service so that the church, all those in the church, participate in works of ministry.

So you see, the lay people also have a part to play in building up the body of Christ. So let's think about each of those in turn. First, the formal work of the ministry, pastors in the church proclaiming the Word of God, and then a little bit less formal, the more informal work of disciple to disciple, discipleship.

So the formal ministry by the leaders of the church, by those that God has given to the church. How do we teach disciples the command of Jesus? One way is by the ministry of pastors in the church.

[16:08] We call it the preaching of the Word. We emphasize the preaching of the Word here. It's very important. It's crucial. It's vital. It's primary. You've heard that taught here before. Just remember that this is what Paul tells Timothy to do.

Preach the Word. And when speaking to the elders in the church in Ephesus, Paul reminds them of his own practice in Acts 20 and verse 20. How I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable and teaching you in public and from house to house.

Teaching you in public is what we're doing here this morning. Preaching the Word. That's equipping you. That is teaching you the commands of Christ. The early church was devoted to the apostles' teaching, Acts 2.42.

And God sent messengers are to proclaim the good news of the gospel, Romans 10. When we preach, we're teaching disciples the command of Christ.

We're fulfilling that part of the Great Commission. Make disciples and teach them to observe everything that Jesus has commanded. Now add to that preaching the teaching of the Word in the adult Sunday school class like we heard on Providence this morning.

[17:14] This is the teaching of disciples as well. In other words, Matt Foreman put it this way, coming to church is discipleship. When you come and sit under the ministry of the Word, you're being disciplined.

You're being instructed in the commands of Jesus. If things are as they should be in the church when you come here, you're taught the words of Christ. But there's more beyond this for the formal minister of the gospel.

Paul mentions teaching from house to house. Pastors can and should be doing more than just preaching. We seek to do shepherding visits here. Visiting the homes of our people largely to see on a more personal level how you're doing, but also to apply God's Word to your various struggles and to what's going on in your lives.

Pastors should also be involved in training, I believe. Here in Ephesians 4, pastors and teachers are to be equipping the saints. That takes with preaching. Generally, you should be being equipped this morning as I preach by God's grace.

But I think there's more. Jesus' own model is helpful. He spent extra time with a select group who would be leaders. Jesus invested focus, time, and energy with them.

[18:27] He answered their questions. He prayed with them. He taught them how to pray. He demonstrated humble service to them. He didn't just teach them. He showed them. And pastors today should be doing likewise.

Remember what Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2. What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Teach other men who will be teachers. Do some training work, Timothy. And so the formal ministry of pastors in the church is absolutely crucial to faithful discipling.

Disciple making. Disciple strengthening. But I think if we stop there, we make a crucial error. If our rightfully strong emphasis on the preaching of the Word leads to a culture in the church where disciples come, and they're merely looking to be discipled, and are never looking to disciple others, we've done ourselves a great disservice.

It's not healthy when saints are part of a church only in order to be fed and ministered to and served instead of looking for opportunities to feed and to minister to and to serve others.

[19:48] So think with me now about the second part of what Paul talks about in Ephesians 4. A further outworking of Jesus' direction to teach disciples that have been made.

Equipped saints are then to do the work of ministry, works of service. They are to build up the body in love.

They're not just to soak up the good teaching and keep it to themselves. They're to share it with one another. Now listen to our own constitution at this point. These are from the agreements of members.

If you're a member of Grace Fellowship Church, this is something you agreed to when you joined the church. Every member agrees to be willing to serve the local body of Christ according to his natural talents, spiritual gifts, and God-given responsibilities.

The members must actively seek to cultivate acquaintance with one another. Love, comfort, and encourage one another, and help one another materially as necessity may require.

[20:56] Love, comfort, and encourage one another. I believe the best way to do that is with the Word of God. Don't forget what we said at the beginning. What is the Word with which we are to teach the disciples?

It's Scripture. It's the Word of God. And so if you want to love, comfort, and encourage one another, speak to one another, encourage one another with the words of Scripture. The Word of God.

And what I want to spend the remainder of our time this morning doing is showing that the rest of Scripture supports this notion that disciples in the pews, everyday disciples, not just pastors, are to be about the work of encouraging one another.

About the work of speaking the truth of God to one another. You are to be involved in building up the body of Christ in love. And then we'll take some minutes to look at some practical ways that we can do this.

Our aim is that we would be, and this is trellis and vine language, but a church of disciple-making disciples where we're all involved in the work of teaching one another the commands of Jesus and pushing one another toward greater growth and grace and greater likeness to Christ.

[22:08] So here's some passages to that effect. Hebrews 3.13 But exhort one another. And notice it's one another. It doesn't say pastors exhort your people. It says exhort one another.

That's you all exhorting each other. Exhort one another every day. Wow! When's the last time you exhorted someone?

Was it today? Maybe yesterday? How about in the last week? Last month? Exhort one another every day as long as it is called today.

Then none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. As God's children, this is what we're called to to exhort or to encourage or challenge or even comfort one another. Let's be looking for and creating opportunities to challenge one another with the truth of God's Word.

Don't forget what we saw earlier in Ephesians 4. Look down at verses 15 and 16. You've been equipped. You're to be building the body up in love. How do we do that? Rather, speaking the truth in love.

[23:16] Where do we find the truth that we speak? Here. It's the Word of God. So, this is the Word we're to speak to one another in love. Speaking the truth in love, we're to grow up in every way into Him who is the head into Christ, from whom the whole body joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped.

When each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. There's a part for each one of you to play as disciples of Christ.

You are to be building the body up in love. Speaking the truth in love to one another. Look down at Ephesians 4, verse 29. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up as fits the occasion that it may give grace to those who hear.

I think the NIV has benefit those who hear, but give grace to those who hear. Do your words, the words that come out of your mouth, give grace to those that hear those words?

Let me ask it this way. Do your words help transfer unbelievers from darkness to light, or do they help transform believers into the image of Christ?

[24 : 34] Now, I'm going to do something bold. I'm going to use the projector. Some people's heads came up when I said that. We have a white board down in Warsaw, and I drew this on the board as I preached last week.

I don't do that very often during preaching, but I hope, I think it will be instructive, it will be helpful. Okay. So you see the arrow? There's the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of heaven moving towards maturity in Christ.

Everyone that you know is somewhere on that spectrum. Everyone is either in the kingdom of darkness or they are in the kingdom of light. Some are far away from the kingdom of light. Some, it seems, are getting closer.

They're warming to the gospel. They're drawing near. Others are already believers. They're in the kingdom of light, and they are moving towards maturity in Christ. Let me ask you this morning, are your words to one another moving people to the right?

If you're speaking with an unbeliever, are you challenging them? As it's appropriate, as you've laid a foundation to be able to speak to them, are you moving them to the right? Do your words with unbelievers seek to move them, to transfer them out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of heaven?

[25 : 47] Your words should be moving people to the right. And then, as you're interacting with believers, are your words seeking to transform, to move people further to the right, transform them more and more into the image of Christ?

We're to speak the truth in love. Our words should give grace to those who hear with this goal, that we move one another along, at least in terms of this diagram, to the right.

Transferring into the kingdom of light and being transformed more into the image of our Savior, Jesus. Are your words, as disciples, doing that? Colossians 3.16.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Now, if we are to do the teaching and admonishing one another with wisdom part of that verse, then we first have to have the word of Christ dwelling in us richly. If you're going to be able to encourage people, if you're going to help them transfer and transform, then you need the word of God dwelling in you richly.

[26 : 59] We must be faithful students of Scripture, soaking it up by reading and study and meditation and memorization and listening to it preached and receiving it from one another.

This discipling has a wonderful, expansive, ripple effect. As you share the word that is dwelt in you richly with someone else, it then can dwell in them richly.

And they can move over here and share it with someone else in whom it will dwell richly. And then they will share it with someone else and so on and so on. Do you see what a healthy body of believers that would be?

The word is dwelling richly in us and we're not keeping it just to ourselves, but we're teaching and admonishing one another with it. Romans 15, 14, I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another. Paul is convinced that the Romans were filled with knowledge and able to instruct one another. You know what? I'm convinced of that of Grace Fellowship Church as well. To varying degrees, no doubt.

[28 : 10] But as I encourage you to these things this morning, don't take it as me hitting you over the head because I have seen these things happening here. I'm seeing them happen down in Warsaw and I praise God for it.

But I want us to think about it this morning to be more intentional about it so that we're thinking I'm soaking up the word of God so I can share it with others. And we'll talk more about that being intentional about it as we go.

But the saints should be able to instruct one another. The pastors should be able to say that as Paul does here, I am satisfied about you that you are full of goodness and filled with knowledge and able to instruct one another.

To instruct, we need to be full of that goodness and knowledge. 1 Thessalonians 5.14 And we urge you, brothers, it's not just pastors, we urge you, brothers, all of you, to admonish the idol. Excuse me, we urge you, brothers, admonish the idol, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. To do that, you're going to have to keep your eye out for the idol and for the faint-hearted and for the weak to do this work of disciple-making that we're talking about this morning, we can't be totally focused on ourselves.

[29 : 20] If we're self-centered, we won't see the idol, we won't see the discouraged and the faint-hearted. We won't know who needs which words of encouragement or challenge. And so we have to be selfless for this work.

Hebrews 10.24 and 25, and let us consider how, think about that, we'll think about it more in a minute, let us consider how to stir one another up to love and good works.

Stir one another up. It's your job to stir each other up to love and good works. Not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

One of the purposes of gathering together is the people of God besides receiving the preached word, and that's one of the reasons we're here, one of the primary reasons we're here, right? To receive the preaching of the word. But another reason that we gather together is to encourage one another to love and good works. To stir one another up to that.

[30 : 23] If you are missing out on the gathering of the saints together, you're missing out on the opportunity to be encouraged, to be stirred up, and the opportunity to do that for someone else.

And when we gather together, make sure that you consider how. Make sure you think about it. Make sure you have a plan when you come to church on Sunday mornings.

Maybe not so formal as having a plan, but listen to an example of someone who did this consider how. How many of you here know the name William Wilberforce? Go ahead, raise your hand.

Good. William Wilberforce was a key player, perhaps the key player, or one of several, and leading the movement for the abolition of the slave trade in England.

You can find his story in the biography Amazing Grace, and it's by Eric Metaxas. There's a movie with the same title. I've not seen the movie, and so I can't recommend it.

[31 : 21] I know others of you have. Find someone that has if you're interested. But the biographer is Eric Metaxas, and he writes this about William Wilberforce. Wilberforce was a Christian man, and he was a member of Parliament in England.

Wilberforce would prepare lists of his friends' names, and next to the entries make notes on how he might best encourage them in their faith, if they had faith, and toward a faith, if they still had none.

Do you hear this language? Listen to it again. How he might best encourage them in their faith, if they had faith. He's looking to transform them into the image of Christ.

and toward faith, if they still had none. He's looking to transfer people from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. He would list subjects he could bring up with each friend that might launch them into a conversation about spiritual issues.

He even called these subjects in questions launchers, and was always looking for opportunities to introduce them. Do you have any launchers? Do you make a list of people and things that you can talk about with them that will help move them to the right down this spectrum?

[32 : 36] Now, Wilberforce wasn't clergy. He wasn't a pastor. Again, he was a member of Parliament. And he considered how he could stir up others to love and good deeds.

1 Thessalonians 5.11, Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up. One another, one another, one another. Just as you are doing. As we await the second coming of Christ, that's the context of this verse.

We're not to be idle. We're rather to be about the work of encouraging and building one another up. Discipling one another. Who have you done that with recently? Proverbs 27.17, Iron sharpens iron and one man sharpens another.

Are you having a sharpening influence on anyone in the body of Christ? Well, what are some ways that we could work these things out? There's some of the scriptural weight that demonstrates that we are to be about this work as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Well, what are some ways? Some practical things. How about one-on-one meeting to read and discuss Scripture? Maybe that sounds intimidating to you. I don't know how to read the Bible with somebody.

[33:46] But think about doing this. Find a buddy. Maybe once a week or twice a month or even one time a month. Get together on your lunch break to read Scripture together.

Or do it at home with another mom while your kids enjoy a play date together. This is a helpful resource on how to sit down and read the Bible with someone in a way that promotes growth. It's called One-to-One Bible Reading.

You could read this in maybe one, two hours. But it has some very helpful tips, hints on how to do that. Say, you know what? Let's get together and let's read Scripture together twice a month. Here's some ways to do that in a way that's profitable. That will encourage one another. That will move one another to the right. Help transform one another. Well, who could do that together? Well, peers can do it. Moms with moms and breadwinning dads with breadwinning dads over that lunch break. College students with college students. Husbands with wives. Older with younger.

[34:43] Men with men. Older women with younger women. Titus 2, verses 3 and 4 says of older women, they are to teach what is good. And so train the young women to love their husbands and children.

To be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind and submissive to their own husbands. Friends, that the word of God may not be reviled. There's work that some of you ladies can do that wouldn't be appropriate for me to do.

And so we need you to do that work of discipling one another. Sitting down and reading Scripture together. Parents can do it with their children. Moms and dads, do you speak the word of God to your children?

Do you do it in your family worship? Do you do it when you have to discipline them? Do you speak the word of God to them? Remember, this is the word that we're to be teaching. Right? The commands of Christ.

Do you use it in your home? A huge part of raising your children is pointing them to the teaching of Jesus. You could encourage one another with notes that are full of Scripture.

[35:45] We had a wonderful model of that, didn't we? And our pastor. Pastor Bob Heaney. Many of you can testify that you got one of those notes. Or more than one of those notes.

Day of Grace. And Scripture after Scripture to help move you to the right. He wouldn't have said it in that language, but to help transform you into the image of Christ.

Do you write notes like that? Or send text messages like that? Or Facebook messages? Do you communicate God's truth? How about older couples helping younger couples?

And when I say older, there could be a broad range there. Invite them into your home. You've had a little bit of experience in raising children and you see a new young couple and they're about to have children or already have one.

Invite them to come along into your home and to have supper with you and let them just see how your house works. It doesn't have to be a focused time over the Word even, but let them observe how you interact with your children.

[36:50] Let them see your family worship. Aaron and I, and we're not old, certainly, right? Aaron and I have had some young couples into our homes and really without intentionally doing it, it got to be time for bedtime and we didn't want our guests to leave and I don't think we're ready to leave.

And so we just did an abbreviated family worship right there. We sing with our kids, pray with them. We didn't do everything we might sometimes do, but so some of these young couples, one of whom was about to have a baby and others who were engaged, this is what we do with our kids and you can model that for people.

Invite them into your home, some of you older couples, and let them see how your life works with your children. And young couples, if nobody approaches you, seek them out.

Aaron and I, when we were expecting our first son, that was 10 years ago, he's going to be 10 this year, which is just, anyway.

When we were pregnant with our first born son, we went to a couple in this church that we admired and respected and still admire and respect today.

[38:02] And we sought out parenting advice from them and we received it and we're thankful for it. So if nobody comes to you, go to them. It could be done with men's or ladies' Bible studies or book studies, looking into God's word together as men or women, gleaning insights from a helpful author, writing about scripture on a particular subject can be very helpful.

It will promote growth and grace. It doesn't have to be as formal as getting together once a month or once a week or whatever. Do you seek in your conversations after church to be that sharpening influence on the people with whom you interact out in the foyer over fellowship lunch in a few moments?

Do you look for someone who's hurting and seek to apply God's word to them in a helpful and healing way? Don't waste the time that you have together before and after our services.

I love how you stay around in fellowship, how you talk with one another, how you bear one another's burdens, how you'll even pray together standing out in the foyer.

That is a wonderful example of what we're doing. Knowing what's going on in one another's lives and sharing in it and taking scripture and applying truth to those situations.

[39 : 20] Even hearing about one another's past week or upcoming week or their work situation or their child-raising challenges can be an encouragement. I'm not saying that every word out of your mouth out there has to be scripture, but be looking for those opportunities.

And you'll make better use of your time there if you're prepared. Give thought beforehand. Consider how to stir one another up. Remember what we said about Wilberforce and launchers.

Have some things that you can bring up that you know will lead into that spiritual conversation that will be edifying, that will be helpful for them or that you think might get you there. And if it doesn't work this Sunday, try again next.

Edifying conversations often don't just happen. They'll take some work, some thought, some planning. When you see someone in sin, don't be afraid to gently bring the Word of God to them.

Galatians 6.1 Brothers, if anyone is caught in transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourselves lest you too be tempted.

[40 : 24] And notice again, it's brothers. It's not pastors. It's brothers. You who are spiritual should restore him. This is one of the ways we take the Word of God towards one another and help transform them into the likeness of Christ.

When we see them in sin, we don't leave them there. Bring the Word of God to them gently and keeping a guard on your own heart lest you be tempted. I hope I don't even need to mention that hospitality plays a crucial role in cultivating this sort of disciple-making culture in a church.

Have people into your home in itself. That act of inviting them in and serving them a meal or just... It doesn't have to be a meal. Serve them popcorn and water from your tap.

Right? That requires very little planning. But have them in and even that act will be an encouragement to them. Demonstrating faithful love to them.

But it will also create opportunities for those good interaction. That good transaction between people. Learning about how God has worked in your life to save you and sustain you and how He's helping you in your everyday life as you talk about those things over that meal or over that whatever dry crust of bread that you have left in your pantry.

[41 : 44] Sharing those things will build up the body of Christ in love. It will contribute to the growth of healthy, strong disciples. 1 Peter 4.9 Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

Have you shown any hospitality lately? We should be known as a hospitable people that will contribute to a culture of discipleship. Are you looking for these opportunities?

Are you creating these opportunities to speak the commands of Christ to one another? We must be. It doesn't have to be about programs and formal meetings. It might take some of that to get the ball rolling but this should be as we've noted a habit, a way of life, a culture.

We should be a people so saturated with the truth of God's Word. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. So absorbing the Word of God that it's natural for us to be sharing that Word with others. Encouraging and challenging one another towards growth and grace and greater likeness to our Savior Jesus. Let it be part of your home life and your family worship and in your hospitality and your parenting and in your recreation.

[42 : 51] Let it be part of your church life as you come here not just to receive the ministry but to minister to one another. I think God's words to parents in Deuteronomy 6 are a good reminder for all of us.

Deuteronomy 6 verses 6-9 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. Do you hear that? Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. These words that I command you today they shall be on your heart.

Don't forget that part. We run ahead to teach them to your children and we're going to read that but don't forget to let them be on your heart. Soak them up. Memorize them.

Meditate on them. These words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children. And shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise.

You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorpost of your house and on your gates. That's a culture of passing the truth on to the next generation.

[44:00] I believe the principles there apply to us as a church. Let this word be on your heart and then teach one another. Admonish, encourage, instruct one another. Challenge one another.

When you're walking out of the doors. When you're going to your cars. When you see each other at the game. When you have fellowship lunch together. When you greet one another.

When you say goodbye to one another. Let it be a part of your mindset that you are about the work of encouraging disciples of Christ. Speaking the truth.

And what better to encourage them with than with the Word of God. Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And remember as you do this work. The authority and the presence of Jesus.

Don't forget the rest of the Great Commission. We focused on one phrase today. But don't forget that Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth. There's nothing outside of His control. His power. His ability.

[44:58] And He is with you in this work. Lo, I am with you always. All days. Every day. To the end of the age. And so, if you may be overwhelmed by this.

I haven't been doing this as I ought. Don't go out of here. Depending on yourself. Go out of here remembering Jesus is with me. And so I can do this work by His grace.

And His strength. By His authority. So may God make us to be a church of disciple making disciples. So that the body may build itself up in love. Don't wait for a study.

Don't wait for a program on discipleship training. Just start the work. Continue the work in many cases. Thank you for being this kind of people. May God give us grace to continue and to increase in it all the more.

Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the commands of Christ. We pray that we would heed those commands. The one to make disciples.

[45:59] And that we would teach those commands to others. We pray that you would help us to let your word dwell in us richly.

We pray that we would be faithful students of your truth. And we pray that we would be eager to share that truth with one another so that we might see sinners transferred out of the kingdom of darkness and into light.

And then saints transformed more and more into the image of Christ. Do that work, we pray. Use us to do that work. All so that you might be praised. Not for our praise.

Not for our glory. We want the body of Christ to be built up in love so that Christ will be praised. So that His name will be held in honor among the nations.

And so make us to be this kind of people. Give us grace for the work. Thank you that we are not alone in it. Help us to be trusting our Savior Jesus not just for salvation and the forgiveness of sins but for strength to follow Him every day.

[47:01] We thank you for your love. We thank you for your truth. Help us to go and live it, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.