

# People Need People

Simple Life #3 – Pastor Gary Combs – 1/21/24 – Romans 12:3-13

**INTRO:** Good morning church! We're continuing our series today entitled: "SIMPLE LIFE: How Simple Commitments Create Great Life Change." But how do we simplify when the life we live today is far from simple?

Indeed, we live in the age where everything is being "supersized." And I'm not only talking about McDonald's asking you, "Do you want to supersize that?" BTW, have you ever said "yes." Then you end up having to carry a 5-gallon diet coke with both hands?



**Need:** And it's not just McDonalds. Everything is more complex, more busy, more chaotic, more... supersized! Well not everything. We have more communication technology, but less person to person communication. We have more social media, but less time socializing together. We've supersized our stuff, but we've downsized our time with others. As a result we are becoming more and more isolated from our families and communities.

What we really need to supersize is our time with people. **People Need People!**

## Why do we need fellowship with other people?

- **Because God made us that way.**

Genesis 2:18 (ESV) Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone ...

**ILL:** "Friendships play a far more important role in maintaining good health and having a long life than most people realize. Social ties are the cheapest medicine we've got" (Dr. Shelley Taylor, UCLA).

People with strong social networks are shown to boost their chances of surviving life-threatening illnesses, have stronger, more resilient immune systems, improve their mental health, and live longer than people without social support.

- **Because we can't grow spiritually without being connected to the body of Christ.**

Colossians 2:19 (NIV) He has lost **connection** with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

**ILL:** "One of the worst things you can do to someone is isolate them" (Dr. Ronald Glaser, Ohio State University)

**Trans:** That's why the call of Christ is a simple call to a personal relationship. Jesus says, "Come, follow me." Jesus wants to connect us to God and to God's family.

**BODY:** In the book of Romans chapter 12, the apostle Paul appealed to believers to fully devote themselves to God, which would lead to a transformed and renewed mind that would know and follow the will of God (*Rom. 12:1-2*). He then instructed them in the new way they were to think of themselves and one another in Christ. We can have this new way of thinking of ourselves and one another in Christ. How can we have this new way of thinking of ourselves and one another in Christ? The text gives **three ways** we can have this new way of thinking of ourselves and one another in Christ.

**Today's text:** Romans 12:3-13 (ESV) 3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. 9 Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. 10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. 11 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.

## HAVING THIS NEW WAY OF THINKING IN CHRIST...

### 1. We can find our true identity in belonging to one another.

**EXP:** (3-5) "Think" (3) of your self as "one body in Christ" (5) and "individually members one of another" (5).

"Think" (3) (φρονέω, *phroneō*) - to think, regard, understand.

"Think of himself more highly" (3) (ὑπερφρονέω, *hyperphroneō*) - Lit., "high-minded." Instead be...

"Sober judgment" (3) (σωφρονέω, *sōphroneō*) - sound minded, right minded. Identity from Christ.

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“**Measure of faith**” (3) (μέτρον) - standard for measuring, ie. “metric.” “The gospel prevents us thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought—we are sinners, saved entirely by Another’s kindness. And the gospel prevents us thinking in a more lowly way than we ought—we are saved sinners, and we are loved and valued in the gaze of the only One whose opinion ultimately matters” (Keller, *Romans For You*, 110).

“**One body...many members**” (4) (σῶμα, *sōma*) – Paul’s analogy of the human body as Christ’s church.

“**Same function**” (4) (πρᾶξις, *praxis*) – practice, work. Different “functions,” yet same body.

“**One of another**” (5) (ἀλλήλων, *allēlōn*) - mutuality, together. We are made for God and for one another.

**ARG:** **We belong to Christ and to one another as His body.**

Romans 12:5 (NLT) ... And since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other ...

Ephesians 2:19 (Living) ... you belong in God's household with every other Christian.

**ILL:** "In his book *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putman makes the case that loneliness is America’s new epidemic. People are searching for a place to belong. The issue of the 21st century appears to be 'where do I belong?' Belonging is a God-given human need. We all need and want the security of belonging to a family, belonging to a group, belonging to a team, belonging with people who need us just like we need them in a healthy and productive way. The fragmentation of the family and the rapid growth in technology have made people more mobile and isolated than ever before. The aching need to belong is at an all-time high" (Chip Ingram, *Living on the Edge*, 132).

**APP:** Have you found your true identity in belonging to Christ and to His family? Here are some steps to take: 1) Become a Christ-follower, 2) Get baptized, 3) Attend Membership, 4) Join a CG. There are 59 “one another” commands in the NT. Remember, you can’t do the “one-anothers” without one another.

## 2. We can find our true purpose in serving one another.

**EXP:** (6-8) Paul gives examples of how we are to serve one another. Use your “gifts” (6) to serve one another.

“**Gifts**” (6) (χάρισμα, *charisma*) - unmerited favor or gift, a spiritual endowment.

“**Prophecy**” (6) (προφητεία, *prophēteia*) - those who speak on God’s behalf with God’s authority.

“**Service ... serving**” (7) (διακονία, *diakonia*) - service, ministering, the root word for deacon.

“**Teaches ... teaching**” (7) - to teach, to impart instruction, instill doctrine.

“**Exhorts ... exhortation**” (8) - Lit., “to call to one's side,” to entreat, to urge.

“**Contributes**” (8) - to give over, to share. “**Generosity**” (8) (ἀπλότης, *haplotēs*) - not self seeking, openness of heart manifesting itself by giving.

“**Leads**” (8) - to be over, to superintend, preside over, to rule. “**Zeal**” (8) - eagerness, earnestness, passion.

“**Acts of mercy**” (8) - to help one afflicted or seeking aid, to bring help to the hurting.

“**Cheerfulness**” (8) (ἡλαρότης, *hilarotēs*) - where we get the word hilarious, cheerful, merry.

**ARG:** **Serve one another with the gifts God has given you.**

1 Peter 4:10 (ESV) As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace

**ILL:** There was an agnostic husband attending with his Christian wife. She fell ill. Several of our ladies cooked and cleaned for the family. The husband came to faith. He said, “It wasn’t your words, it was their service.”

**APP:** Are you in a CG? Take time to pray for one another. Celebrate birthdays and anniversaries. Meet one another’s needs when someone is sick or has a baby, or needs help moving, or loses their job... Are you doing LOLD? Exhort and teach one another. Everyone needs a Paul, Barnabas and a Timothy. Will you find your true purpose in serving one another? Remember, you can’t do the “one-anothers” without one another.

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## 3. We can find our true happiness in loving one another.

**EXP:** (9-13) Paul gives 13 ethical exhortations concerning love. He used 3 of the 4 Greek words for love in this passage (*agape*, *phileo*, *storge*). There are 12 participles under the umbrella of genuine love.



“**Love**” (9) (ἀγάπη, *agape*) – unconditional love, God’s kind of love, giving love.

“**Genuine**” (9) (ἀνυπόκριτος, *anupokritos*) – Lit., “Without hypocrisy.” By impl: genuine, sincere, true.

“**Abhor**” (9) (ἀποστύγω, *apostygeō*) – to hate, to detest utterly, abhor..

“**Hold fast**” (9) (κολλάω, *kollāō*) – to glue, to glue together, cement, fasten together, cleave

“**Love one another**” (10) (φιλόστοργος, *philostorgos*) – fraternal love. (The 1st of 3 “one anothers”)

“**Brotherly affection**” (10) (φιλαδελφία, *philadelphia*) – fraternal affection:—brotherly love

“**Outdo one another**” (10) (προηγέομαι, *proēgeomai*) – to lead the way for others, to go first in honoring.

“**Honor**” (10) (τιμή, *timē*) – honor, precious, price, also: respect, credit.

“**Slothful**” (11) (ὀκνηρός, *oknēros*) – lazy, slothful. “Zeal” (σπουδή *spoudē*) – “speed.” With haste, striving

“**Fervent in spirit**” (11) (ζέω, *zeō*) – to be hot, to boil with heat, fervent. Spiritually on fire.

“**Patient in tribulation**” (12) (ὑπομένω, *hypomenō*) – endure, persevere, patient “under pressure.”

“**Constant**” (12) (προσκατερέω, *proskartereō*) – to adhere closely, to be devoted, to continue steadfastly.

“**Hospitality**” (13) – (φιλοξενία, *philoxenia*) – Lit., “love of strangers.” Hospitality,

**ARG:** Paul connects loving one another with happiness.

Philippians 2:1-2 (NLT) <sup>1</sup> Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? <sup>2</sup> Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.

**Loving one another is the mark of a true believer.**

1 John 4:20-21 (GW) Whoever says, “I love God,” but hates another believer is a liar. People who don’t love other believers, whom they have seen, can’t love God, whom they have not seen. Christ has given us this commandment: The person who loves God must also love other believers.

**ILL:** Our Declaration of Independence states that we have the right to “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” So why do we rank so low in happiness? According to the latest *World Happiness Report*, published this past Monday, the US ranked 15th among nations surveyed in 2023. Economist Jeffrey Sachs blamed social factors for the decline in happiness. He noted how fewer people report feeling they have control over the choices in their lives; fewer people feel they have others to count on in times of difficulty; fewer people trust politicians and other public figures; and that, judged by data on charitable giving, people are less generous toward others than they used to be. Sachs concluded, “America’s crisis is, in short, not an economic crisis. It’s a social crisis.”

**APP:** We think that buying more things, making and having more money will make us happy. Yet, the opposite is true. We were made for God and for one another. Will you find your true happiness in loving others? That’s where true happiness lies. Remember, you can’t do the “one-anothers” without one another.

**CONCLUSION:** Having this renewed mind, this new way of thinking Christ, we can ...

1. Find our true identity in belonging to Jesus and to one another.
2. Find our true purpose in serving one another.
3. Find our true happiness in loving one another. Let’s pray.