

## Life in the Local Church, Part 3

### Selected Scriptures

Now, love, humility, unity, those one another attitudes, they lead to one another actions. Actions, that's what we want to talk about today, action. We want to see how the one another commands manifest among us. We want to see how they produce real effects. We want to see how they move from the inside to the outside, from attitude to action. When your mind, when your internal life is governed by those three attitudes, love, humility, unity, that's inevitably going to lead to this second point: The external one another actions. The external one another actions.

Godly attitudes lead to godly actions. Godly attitudes lead to godly actions. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are learning, all of us, to be doers of the Word not hearers only. We don't want to be self-deceived, believing it's enough to merely hear sermons from the Bible, all the while failing to put God's Word into practice. You know why? God demands change. God didn't enter into your life to leave it the same. God entered your life

to radically transform you, to forgive you of every sin you've ever committed, to cover you with a righteousness that is not your own. And you know what? He loves you enough not to leave you where you are. He loves you enough to help you to grow, to change. It's called living a life of repentance. Repentance, that is the essence of the Christian life. Those who want to entertain a notion of faith that allows them to just sit and be merely hearers of the Word, just listening to preaching every week, coming and having some coffee and donuts and things like that and then going on home, never really obeying the Scripture, never really taking it seriously, you know what? James, the Apostle James, wrote a book in the Bible, he describes that kind of faith as a dead faith. He calls it a demonic faith. He calls that kind of faith absolutely useless and ineffectual.

We don't want to be like that. We need to be doers of the Word, right? Listen, we don't want to be just doers of the Word because we're commanded to even though that is enough. We want to be doers of the Word because it is the greatest joy. Freedom is found in doing what God commands. That's freedom. We are in this country very fond of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, right? You know what true life is? Jesus Christ. You know what true freedom or liberty is? Doing what God commands. You know what true happiness is? The joy of obedience; the joy

of obedience to God. Here in this country, we honor those virtues of life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness. You know, the Bible describes it a little bit differently, actually, radically differently than our culture describes it. We are completely counter-cultural here. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, it's God's idea, it's not the US Constitution. It's God's idea.

So we want to talk about the one another actions today, and after each point, we're gonna make some practical applications for our church, okay? We're gonna get this, get real practical and I don't want you to misunderstand me, here, as we talk about the one another's. I, I'm going to describe, another, a, a number of actions that we want to characterize our church, okay? We want to grow in these things. What I'm *not* saying is that these are the *only* actions or attitudes or behaviors we're going to find prescribed in Scripture. They're not. There's a lot to hear in Scripture, obviously, you've read it. There's a lot here. All we want to do today, though, is to talk about the actions that are prescribed in the one another commands. Okay? So we're just looking at that, we're just looking at all of this attitudes and actions, through the lens of one another commands, okay? Other commands as well and we'll get to those in God's good time, but right now we're going to talk about this. These

commands, these one another commands, they are a really good starting place for us to pursue healthy, productive life in the local church.

So, that little qualification out of the way, just so you don't think that's all we're doing, there is more here, but let's just consider the first of several one another actions commanded in the New Testament. First, you can see in your outline there, we're commanded to reinforce the truth with one another. Reinforce the truth with one another. A lot of one another commands fall under this heading, a lot of them. Local church is literally to be saturated with the truth, saturated, and that is not just the responsibility of the preacher. It's not just the responsibility of the pastor up front, the paid professional. It's not just the purview of the elders or nerdy Bible people to be saturated with truth. All of us are to be saturated with truth. It's not a professional issue. This is a responsibility of every single Christian. I'm gonna give you a category. I'm gonna read the verse. I'm gonna give you another category, read the verse, and so on.

So reinforcing the truth, Sub-point letter A, just generally in reinforcing the truth, we are to talk with one another about the truth. Just to talk with one another about the

truth. Pretty simple. We're to speak truthfully and what I want to say here is we're to speak truthfully, not just telling the truth and not telling lies. We're to speak truthfully, we're to speak to one another from a biblical worldview. That is, we're not to think like worldlings. We're not to think like all those people out there. Doesn't matter, we don't want to be thinking like Republicans or Democrats or Libertarians or whatever your flavor is. We don't want to be thinking like sports people or IT people or jocks or nerds or whatever. We don't wanna, we don't wanna be thinking from those perspectives. We want to be transcending all of those categories and thinking like Christians.

When as we think like Christians, we want to talk like Christians. You know what Christians talk about? Truth. They talk about the truth. We're to speak truthfully, talking to one another from a biblical worldview. You know what, we went over this in our Ephesians Sunday school not long ago, Ephesians 4:25, "Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another." That phrase, put away falsehood there in Ephesians 4:25, is literally, put off the lie. Put off the lie. Definite article: *the* lie, which in context refers to the unbelieving worldview. We're to put that off, that idolatrous approach to

life that excludes God and defines everything according to self and self-happiness, put *that* off and speak truth to one another. Speak through the lens of the Christian worldview.

When we speak like that, it demonstrates how much we love hearing what God has to say. Do we love his Word? Are we grateful that he has revealed truth that we could've never gotten on our own? Let's talk about it, then. Our words and our thoughts, our expressions, our feelings, all of the stuff that comes from us that's generated from the human heart, all that pales in comparison, really, doesn't it, to what the eternal God has to say about life, about the universe. When we love divine truth, when we love listening to what God has to say, his truth becomes buried deep within our hearts. It becomes a passion to us, and "out of the overflow of the heart," what? "the mouth speaks," right? His truth is gonna permeate our speech. In fact, truth becomes so dominant in our thinking that we even devote our creative energies to expressing it.

That's what we're doing up here in music, right? Our creative energies are invested, working hard, so that we express those truths in just beautiful ways. Music, poetry, song, our most elevated forms of language, our most elevated forms of artistic creativity, they become the means of expressing the

truth to each other. And by the way, that's a by-product of being filled by the Holy Spirit, being saturated by the truth. In that truth-filled, truth-saturated condition, we start addressing one another, Ephesians 5:19, "in psalms, in hymns, and spiritual songs," right? Because we're "singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord." Our highest creative talents should serve to reinforce the truth with one another.

Alright, sub-point Letter B: We're to encourage one another with the truth. We're to encourage one another with the truth. Encouragement is so vital, beloved. So vital. When negativity and pessimism dominate any atmosphere, it kills life, doesn't it? You see it in your workplace, you see it in your home, you see it in the church. You see it when negativity enters in, when someone's pessimistic and negative, it just is a kill, kills all the joy, takes all the fun out of it. But when positive words of encouragement permeate our assembly, they create such a pleasant, such a joyful, optimistic environment of hope and joy, don't they? Words of encouragement, they ring hollow when they don't spring forward from the truth, right? When you know, I don't know, ladies, you're wearing something that you just don't particularly like, and someone comes up and overly flatters you about the really ugly dress you're wearing or whatever, you know it's a lie. You know. We call those kinda, all that kind of

puffed-up language that's meant to try to encourage and you can tell they're overdoing it, you know, that's what we call flattery. We see right through it. It's not according to truth. Some forms of encouragement are so superficial, so meaningless, they tend toward flattery and that's actually sinful speech. That's not what we're talking about there. This is very far from encouragement.

Words of encouragement are grounded in God's truth; they're grounded in what his Word says, principles of truth in his Word, so that your expressions of encouragement come out of and correspond to what God says is good, what God says is right, what God says is beautiful. So you can legitimately, when you see somebody quietly serving over in a corner, never saying anything, they're just dusting or pick up trash or they're, they're children's room or whatever and nobody every pays attention to them, you can legitimately walk up to that person and say, you know what? God sees that service and that's an investment into eternity. I'm so grateful for you. Thank you for what you're doing for the Lord. That's encouraging. That's true. That's grounded in the truth. That's what we need to be doing, don't we? Is to be recognizing people who are serving in our midst and thanking them for their service. Don't, don't worry about them getting puffed up or a big head. It's God's job to



take care of their pride, not yours. You encourage; let God take care of their pride in a different way, all right?

Truly uplifting, truly edifying, life-giving edifying, Paul says in Romans 14:19, "Let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding." Another way to translate that, what makes for peace and the edification of one another. That's another one another command. Let's pursue the edification of one another; pursue it, strive after it. Paul says, after teaching on the doctrine of the Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4, he says in 1 Thessalonians 4:18, "Encourage one another with these words." You know what? Eschatology is not for you getting everything right in predicting the future. It's not so you can read the headlines better. It's so that you can encourage one another with those words. We have a God who drew Christ into heaven bodily, and he's going to send that Christ back to us bodily, just as he left. And he's gonna rule the world. Is that encouraging to you? You read the headlines, you read the headlines and you see, boy, there's a lot to be discouraged about. Someone else is shooting somebody else, and somebody else is rioting, and the finances are going to tank, and we're all going, oh, no, it's all going to fall apart! You know what? In the midst of that, we have a sovereign God. None of this is outside of his plan; he's using it all and he's driving it all

to his ends. What's the end? The Rapture's going to happen; the church is going to go to heaven. Is *that* good news?

Again, in 1 Thessalonians 5:11, after teaching on the doctrine of the second coming, our future hope, the consummation of all things in Christ, Paul says, "Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing." Just keep doing it more. We need to hear that so much. The writer to the Hebrews, Hebrews 10:25, he exhorts us "not to neglect meeting together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day draw near." You know what? I think that's a good passage for why we ought to be in the regular fellowship of the church. Why? So we come and receive encouragement, "all the more as we see the day drawing near." You know what? Every breath we take, every step we take, every day that goes by, we're closer to Christ's coming. Closer. Let's encourage one another with that. Coming together in this corporate assembly of believers is so vital because we reinforce the truth to one another, and that is so encouraging, so edifying. We need that one another ministry desperately, don't we? We need it.

So speak the truth with one another; encourage one another. Let me give three more, I'm gonna give you these in rapid

succession. They all have to do with our individual teaching ministry as Christians. We're to instruct one another, we're to exhort one another, and we're to admonish one another. Okay? Those could be sub-points C, D, and E: instruct, exhort, and admonish. You say, well, those one's aren't for me, I'm not really a teacher. It's not my gift. Listen, if you're a Christian, at some level you're a teacher of the truth; you're a teacher of the truth. Let's go through those one by one: instruct, exhort, and admonish.

Sub-point letter C: We're to instruct one another with the truth. Paul says, 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," get this, "instruct one another." Instruct one another. He says, "I'm satisfied about you, my brothers, that you are able to instruct one another." Paul wrote Romans, the Epistle to the Romans to the whole church, not just the pastors, not just the elders. He wrote it to the whole church. It says in Romans 1:7, "to all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints." It's pretty comprehensive, right? Christians. Implication: Get busy instructing one another, all right?

Sub-point letter D: We're to exhort one another with the truth. We're to exhort one another with the truth. Hebrews 3:13 says, "But exhort one another every day as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." Sin's deceit, does it harden us? Yeah, it does, doesn't it? Do you ever get into a rut when you're kinda pursuing self-centered thinking and all that kind of stuff? You can get hardened in that condition. That's bad, okay? We need to stop that, and the only way we're going to stop that is when someone comes up to you and says, Hey, stop that! You can't be like that anymore. You're being hardened in the deceitfulness of sin. Sin isn't going to pay good dividends; it's going to pay bad dividends, so quit investing in it. Hebrews 10:24, "Consider how we are to stir one another up to love and good works." Stir one another up to love and good works. We need to consider how to do that. We need to be faithful to do that every single day as long as it is called today. We're to exhort with the truth.

Sub-point letter E: We're to admonish one another with the truth. admonish one another with the truth. Admonish is a little bit stronger word than exhortation. Exhortation is getting pushy; admonishment is getting corrective. Go to Colossians 3:16. This verse kind of combines the last three points into a single verse. Colossians 3:16 says, "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.”

There it is: We’re to instruct one another, exhort one another, and even admonish one another with the truth. As I said, admonish has a corrective element to it. Admonishing someone means loving them enough to identify biblically where they’re wrong, identify biblically how to help them to see that corrective, and then walking alongside them to learn what’s right, walking alongside them to help to, to understand the process of repentance, what repentance looks like in this case, what it means to put off that bad behavior and put on a righteous behavior.

Paul’s not here to unleash a critical spirit of the church in Colossians 3:16. Quite the contrary. He’s unleashing the Holy Spirit into the church. That’s what this is about. It says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,” and then notice the results of that, “teaching and admonishing one another, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” Does that sound familiar? Turn over to Ephesians chapter 5, Ephesians chapter 5 in verse 18, it’s going to seem very familiar. In Ephesians 5:18, you’ve read this before, Ephesians 5:18, and following, Paul says, “Do

not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery," or dissipation, "but be filled with the Spirit."

Now notice the effects, verse 19, "addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." You see that, there? "Being filled with the Spirit," Ephesians 5:18 and "letting the Word of Christ dwell richly with in you," Colossians 3:16, the two of those are one. They produce the same results. To be Spirit-saturated is to be Word-saturated and vice versa. To be Word-saturated is to be Spirit-saturated.

Why is that? Because the Spirit authored this, didn't he? The Spirit wrote this down. If his words are saturating you, he's saturating you. When the Spirit is operative in his church through the saturation of his Word, Christians will be instructing, they'll be exhorting, they'll be admonishing one another with the truth. That's healthy, beloved. That is healthy. You may not have the role of office of pastor. You may not have the role of elder or teacher, official teacher in the church, but that is okay. That's okay.

Christ has commanded you to make disciples, you're along with the rest of us. We're all making disciples. Find someone

who knows less than you do and teach them. If everyone around you knows more than you do, then you'd better get busy. Learn something that they *don't* know and teach that. Better yet, go out, talk to an unbeliever and evangelize him. If you know the gospel, you know what? You possess in your mind, in your head, in your heart, you possess in your Bible an eternal knowledge. That guy's still walking in darkness. You have the light of the gospel. So if you don't know much, you know *that*. Teach him. Teach *that* guy.

One more sub-point letter F: We're to practice the truth with one another. We're to practice the truth. If you're still looking at Ephesians 5, let's read that again, and this time reading through verse 21, "do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ."

God is telling us through the Apostle Paul, here, how to work out mutual submission. He goes through, here, the filling of the Spirit, the saturation of the Word in the congregation. You know what it leads to? It leads to a sanctified life in one



word, sanctified living; living out the truth with respect to our God-ordained roles: wives submitting to their husbands, husbands loving their wives, children obeying parents, parents raising their children in the Lord, slaves submitting to their masters, masters treating their slaves with dignity and respect. So out of the filling of the Spirit, out of the filling of the Word comes God-honoring marriages, healthy families, useful productive members of society. All of that just flows out of a church that reinforces the truth with each other.