

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
2080 West Grand Blvd.
Detroit, Michigan 48208
Nathan Johnson, D.D., Senior Pastor

Lesson 12: Partnering in the Journey¹

Goal: *Build Authentic Relationships by Reestablishing the Art of “One Anothering.”*

Objective: *Provide Scriptural support for partnering in the journey.*

Overview:

We are by nature people of relationship. For this reason, our series of Deacons lessons have addressed authentic relationships with others over the past year with the interest of promoting sound Christian interactions and relationships within the church body and among family members. By virtue of the fact that we are social beings, makes for challenges, no matter how spiritually mature, wise or stable an individual we are. Day to day events bring about changes in life circumstances. The perplexity of many of problems necessitates seeking advice or input from another brother or sister in Christ. We hope for a listening ear and sound godly advice.

We may seek others from within the church body or others may come to us for opinions, advice, or answers to questions. In essence, we become what Jacobsen called ‘partnering in the journey’.² This provides a spiritual support system for Christian brothers and sisters. This is so vitally needed in the body of Christ especially when others are struggling. We would want to give and receive godly input and conduct ourselves in accordance with biblical principles.

Submission plays an important role. It keeps us from being controlling, overbearing, and judgmental. “Unfortunately ...more abuse travels through the body of Christ under the guise of submission than any other admonition, often making believers a battered group of individualists rather than people who can effectively help others.”³ Sometimes, various personality factors cause misunderstandings and ill feelings especially when the other person feels pressured, criticized, rejected, abandoned, or even judged wrongly. In order to demonstrate the love of Christ, the church should be reminded to keep healthy supportive relationships as a prime goal.

Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Ephesians 5: 21 [ESV]

¹ Jacobsen, W. & Jacobsen, C. *Authentic Relationships: Discover the lost art of “one anothering”*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, (2003). Print.

² Ibid, 135

³ Ibid, 135

This month's lesson is based on Scripture; Ephesians 5:21, "*Submitting to one another*". Submission is the willingness to yield or surrender oneself to the authority of another. Additionally, it is to be humble or compliant.⁴ When we allow our brothers and sisters to follow their conscience when they feel they are being led by God and not try to control them or pressure them to conform to our way of thinking, relationships can be preserved and the door can remain open for future input even if they make a mistake or a poor decision. God can still use their errors for His purpose. Our own perspectives can sometimes be restricted and twisted by blind spots⁵. Submission in the body of Christ does not reduce decision-making to majority rule.⁶ God gives us liberty and freedom in Him and we should offer that same freedom to others by being honest, patience and loving when we differ. No Christian is inherently superior to any other Christian in their standing before God; we are all equal.⁷ Jesus Christ Himself was equal with God but did not cling to His privileges or position but He assumed a submissive role during His ministry on Earth.

Who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation taking the form of a bond servant and coming in the likeness of men. Philippians 2:6-7

Discussion Point #1

How and when should the rejection of known biblical principles, which are taught throughout Scripture, be addressed when *authentic relationships* in the church family are torn down?

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6: 1-2 [ESV]

Discussion Point #2

Should mature believers go along with new believers, even when it seems to undermine their true belief?

So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter. 1 Thessalonians 2:15 [ESV]

⁴ Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary. "*Submission*". Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster Inc., Publishers, 1983. Print

⁵ Ibid 142

⁶ Ibid, 134

⁷ John MacArthur Study Bible

Discussion Point #3

How can believers overcome a tendency to dominate younger members of the church family?

“Our freedom in Christ allows us to go into any situation with the ability to get along with others while still living authentically.”⁸ Jesus promised real freedom, as we believe in Him.

Then, said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him. If ye continue in my word, then ye are my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. John 8:32

Biblical Exercise:

As you Identify, Pray, Witness and Invite (IPWI) people to experience a closer relationship with God, practice partnering in the journey to experience and encourage spiritual growth.

Monthly Biblical Lessons

Month	Year	Monthly Biblical Lessons
October	2011	<i>Introduction to Authentic Relationships</i>
November	2011	<i>Loving Others Like God Loves You</i>
December	2011	<i>A Soft Place to Fall</i>
January	2012	<i>It's Not All About You</i>
February	2012	<i>Initial Contact</i>
March	2012	<i>Sharing God's Kindness</i>
April	2012	<i>Lightening the Load</i>
May	2012	<i>Cheerleading</i>
June	2012	<i>Pooling Our Wisdom</i>
October	2012	<i>Taking It To God</i>
November	2012	<i>The Genuine Article</i>
December	2012	<i>Partnering in the Journey</i>
January	2013	

⁸ Ibid, 139