

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
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Lesson 11: The Genuine Article¹

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

Objective: *Provide Scriptural support for being genuine with others.*

Overview:

How open and genuine are you with members of the church family? “Churches are filled with people who outwardly look contented and at peace, but inwardly are crying out for someone to love them.”² In this month’s lesson Jacobsen emphasizes the need for believers to be honest or genuine in every situation with others. Why would this be important to the life, vitality and the fellowship of believers? All too often, we choose to cast the image that we are perfect or that everything is always well with us. “Living authentically is the freedom to be known exactly as we are – strengths and weaknesses rolled into one.”³ Authenticity in our relationships allows others to see what God can do within the body of Christ. It becomes a witness of God’s transformative power in our lives both personally and corporately. When we are not authentic, the reference point for learning is eclipsed. We limit our potential for developing a genuine relationship with God and each other.

Sometimes confession in the community is necessary before healing can take place.⁴ Honesty, transparency and the willingness to share our needs will empower believers to strengthen each other in the spiritual battle. This fosters meaningful relationships and fellowship that allows God to restore our brokenness.⁵

All too often, church members make the tragic mistake of substituting gossip and rumors for being honest and transparent about our weakness and shortcomings. The truth is that gossip is a destructive force in the body of Christ. Scripture (Eph. 4: 16) tells us that God has designed the body of Christ to build each other up for the purpose of being a witness and building the kingdom of God. Compare the amount of gossip that goes on in our groups with the amount of confession. James 5: 16 encourages us to confess our sins one to another, but the exhortation is followed by the command to pray for each other so that healing can take place. God has fixed the body of Christ so that when we share our weaknesses, our faults, His divine power is available to us through corporate prayer! Gossip and confession are not the same. The two can’t

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

² Ibid 123

³ Ibid, 128

⁴ The ESV Study Bible (copyright 2008)

⁵ John MacArthur Study Bible

exist side by side.⁶ How often are others seeking to share the latest gossip with you? “Wouldn’t you love to live among a group of people where nothing harmful is shared about another person outside his or her hearing, and where honesty is so prevalent that there is no room to hide in the darkness?”⁷

When we truly live out the Word of God as a community of believers, we will discover there is no place for distrust, betrayal, gossip, and deceit. God gets the glory when we can be transparent about our deepest and most painful life struggles, give them to God in prayer, and emerge as overcomers. Vulnerability in the hands of God is transformed into strength and victory!

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. [James. 5: 16]

“...But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects in Him who is the head even Christ. From whom the whole body being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.” [Eph. 4: 15-16]

While we are free to speak truthfully, discretion must be utilized because we are at varying levels of maturity. In a mature community of faith, people have clarity about what it means to be transparent so that the result is the church is edified and God glorified.

As believers, we have not reached perfection but are all in the *process of becoming*. God has provided the Holy Spirit to guide us as we are transformed daily into “new creations” in Christ Jesus. Each day we ought to seek to become more Christ-like and intentionally live out the Word of God. God has provided a community of faith where we can support each other in our faith journey. *We serve an awesome God!*

Discussion Point #1

What is the benefit of sharing your strengths and weaknesses with others so that we all can grow in our relationship with God?

Growth by means of the Word of God, prayers and *faith* in God enables us to make an honest self-assessment and should increase our willingness to share how God has delivered and transformed our lives.

“But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world” –1John 4:4 (NLT)

⁶ Ibid, 127

⁷ Ibid 128

Discussion Point #2

How does refraining from gossip build up the church?

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, [which is] your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what [is] that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” –Romans 12:1-2 NKJV

Discussion Point #3

Have you missed opportunities to share your story or testimony with others? Be prayerful of opportunities that God might present to you to share with others.

Biblical Exercise:

As you Identify, Pray, Witness and Invite (IPWI) people to experience a closer relationship with God, practice being *authentic* to 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>