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**WHEN HAVE YOU FELT MOST AT HOME WITH A GROUP OF PEOPLE?**

**We Are Joined Together**

The **POINT** ➤

**When we come to Christ, we also become a part of the body of Christ.**

## ➤ **EPHESIANS 1:20-23; 2:8-10,19-22**

<sup>20</sup> He exercised this power in Christ by raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavens— <sup>21</sup> far above every ruler and authority, power and dominion, and every title given, not only in this age but also in the one to come. <sup>22</sup> And he subjected everything under his feet and appointed him as head over everything for the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.

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<sup>8</sup> For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift— <sup>9</sup> not from works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship,

created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.

.....

<sup>19</sup> So then you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints, and members of God's household, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.

<sup>21</sup> In him the whole building, being put together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> In him you are also being built together for God's dwelling in the Spirit.



# THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

## FACT:

Trees are the longest living organisms on Earth and never die of old age. Methuselah, a Great Basin bristlecone pine in Inyo National Forest in California, comes in at over 4800 years old.<sup>1</sup>



## LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // CHURCH

The church isn't a place or a building, but is made up of the people who belong to the family of God, and whereas under the Old Covenant, God dwelled in the temple or tabernacle, today God dwells in His people and works through them to advance His kingdom.

A few years ago, I visited a redwood forest in California and was blown away by the sheer size of these huge trees. Redwoods can grow to over 350 feet high and the trunks can be as thick as 24 feet in diameter. Yet these massive trees have a remarkably shallow root system.

Some trees roots are very deep and grow 20 to 25 feet deep into the ground. However, redwood roots go only five or six feet deep. They're able to overcome their lack of depth by extending outward, often more than 100 feet from the tree's base. Each tree's roots then intertwine with the roots of other redwoods, and by joining together, the individual root systems create a forest of trees with incredible strength.

The simple reality is that redwood trees were not created to exist in isolation, and neither were we. Just as a redwood tree requires a forest of other redwood trees in order to stand, so also the Christian requires a spiritual family in order to grow. The church is that family. God has designed us to live in a relationship not only with Him, but with other believers. Being part of a church is not an option—it's absolutely essential for us to grow strong in our faith.

## EPHESIANS 1:20-23

**1** How is being a part of a church different from being a part of any other organization?

**2** What happens when we forget that Christ is the head of the church?



*Through our  
redeemed lives,  
God displays  
for the world  
His character,  
love, and glory.  
#BSFLtheChurch*



## EPHESIANS 2:8-10

**3** In your own words, how would you describe grace?

**4** What's the relationship between grace, faith, and works?

**5** How does it change our perspective when we view ourselves as God's workmanship?

## EPHESIANS 2:19-22

**6** How has the church played a significant role in your life?

**7** What are the responsibilities and blessings of being a member of God's household?

**8** How can we acknowledge our differences but celebrate what we have in common in Christ?





# LIVE IT OUT



GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

SALVATION

CREATION

**CHURCH**

PEOPLE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY  
& WORLD

## LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // CHURCH

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At times, we may be tempted to think we go to church, but the truth is that God's people are the church. The Bible refers to the church again and again as the body of Christ. God's people aren't simply an organization, but a unified organism, and the Spirit lives in this body making us alive in Christ. The Christian faith can't be lived in isolation because we were made to live and function as a part of the body.

## >CHRIST

To be saved means that we are united with Christ and made a part of His body, the church.

**9** If you're not a member of a local church, ask a leader how to become a member and what membership means.

**10** If you are a member of a church, how can you live as a healthier member? Work hard this week (and beyond) to live out those things.

## > COMMUNITY

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When we belong to a church family, God calls us to love and serve one another in meaningful ways.

**11** How has someone in your church recently served you in a way that you appreciated?

> How did this encourage you?

> How did this help you grow?



**12** How will you serve someone else in order to be an encouragement and help him or her grow?

## > CULTURE

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Unity within the church is one of the most powerful witnesses to the outside world. On the other hand, when the church can't get along, we bring harm to the name of Christ.

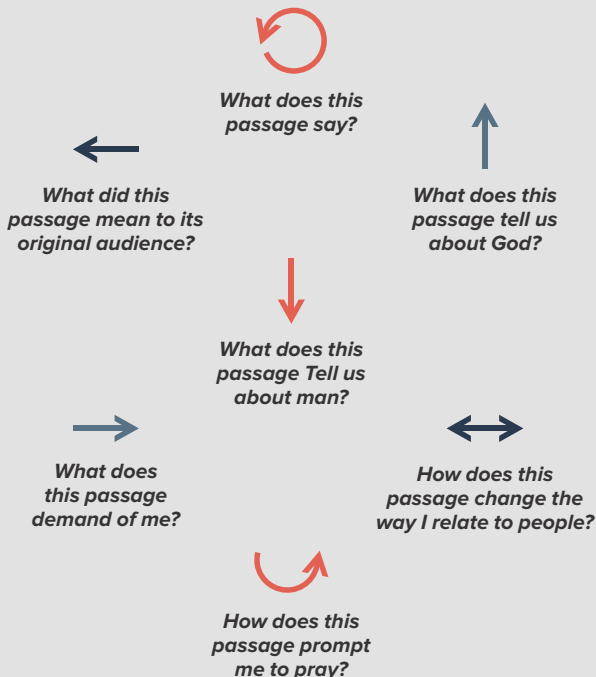
**13** Where is there disunity in your church (or relationships with other Christians) that hurts the church's witness? Immediately work to resolve these issues.

**14** How can you leverage love and unity within the church to serve as a witness to non-Christians?

# DAILY DEVOTIONS



## The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



## Day One

## GALATIANS 3:27

After coming to faith in Christ, all believers are called to be baptized. This is an expression that declares to the world, “I’ve been buried with Christ, raised with Him, and I commit to live the rest of my life for His glory!” Though there are different nations, languages, cultures, and lifestyles throughout the world—in fact, there’s a lot of difference and diversity in your school—for all who come to God in faith, we are baptized into Jesus. Baptism here refers not only to our being immersed in the water, but into the very life of Christ. When we experience union in Christ, we are naturally united with all others who have placed their faith in Him.

➤ **When have you seen people from different backgrounds come together?**

➤ **Why is unity so important in the church?**

## Day Two

# **GALATIANS 3:28a**



In our world, people often divide based on similarities or differences. In the first century, Jew versus Gentile was a major point of division among God's people. They also separated based on many other factors, including male versus female and slave versus free. Today, these still affect many in our society—there is still a lot of racial tension in America, and issues of sex and gender are at a boiling point in today's culture. But these aren't the only issues that create division. In your schools, many people are divided based on interests, such as athletics or music. But when we are in Christ, we are united, no matter our differences, by our faith in Him. Jesus has destroyed all division by the cross.

- **Where do you see separations at your school?**
- **What can you do to destroy these divisions?**

## Day Three

# **GALATIANS 3:28b**

The unity that exists among Christians doesn't deny that there are distinct differences among people. It's perfectly appropriate for people who love video games to hang out together or for those who love to play music to spend time practicing together. But there are still going to be differences. What Paul taught is that no one is better than anyone else. At times in Israel (and even in our country), people were inclined to believe that certain people were superior to others based on race, sex, attractiveness, intelligence, and many other factors. Because we were created in God's image and because of Christ, all people are equally valuable and on equal footing, spiritually speaking. Understanding this should help us view others correctly and live in unity with those in our church family.

- **Why do people sometimes think they're better than others?**
- **What does it mean that all believers are one in Christ?**

## Day Four

# **GALATIANS 3:29a**

Throughout the history of Israel, the Jews believed that they had favor with God because they were descendants of Abraham. God had promised to bless Abraham, and through his descendants, all the earth would be blessed. The Jews took this to mean that, because they had been born in the line of Abraham, they were naturally a blessed people. However, they missed a very important point. God did make promises to the Jewish people, but His eternal promises apply not to those who are Abraham's physical descendants. God's eternal blessings are promised to those who are Abraham's spiritual children. Abraham trusted God's promises—specifically, His promise to send a deliverer—and it was credited to him as righteousness. Abraham's true children are those who trust in Christ. When we live by faith as Abraham did, we belong to Christ and we can be confident we'll share in Abraham's blessings.

- **How can you be confident you'll share in God's blessings?**
- **How did Abraham demonstrate faith in God? How do you show this kind of faith?**

## Day Five

# **GALATIANS 3:29b**



The first blessing that God pronounced upon people was that Adam and Eve would fill the earth with people who reflect God's image. They didn't do so well, so God called Abraham from among the nations of the earth—those who had turned against God—so that he would fulfill that original blessing. God's promise to Abraham was that he would be blessed, his children would be blessed, and through them, all the world would be blessed. Today, if you are a follower of Christ, then this promise to Abraham applies to you. And if you are blessed, God wants to use you to bless others.

- **How would you describe God's blessing upon Abraham?**
- **How does this apply to you?**