

Some Quotes Related to Our Study

—“It should be evident that there can be no true Christian sharing unless there is first an impartation of new life in Christ. An organization and a name do not make a church. One hundred religious persons knit into a unity by careful organization do not constitute a church any more than eleven dead men make a football team. The first requisite is life, always.” —**A.W. Tozer**

—“Unity in the church will not happen if members have unforgiving hearts. ... few things can destroy the unity of a church like gossip. A unified church is powerful. Gossip tears apart that unity and renders a church powerless.” —**Thom S. Rainer, *I Am a Church Member: Discovering the Attitude that Makes the Difference***

—“The New Testament has a strong emphasis on the fact that we aren’t supposed to be Christians in isolation, but in close relationship with one another.” —**Gene Getz**

—“In this fallen world, and unfortunately even in the body of Christ, relationships will always expose you to the risk of getting hurt. It’s almost inevitable that our different backgrounds, experiences, and ages will result in the possibility of conflict, and when you throw in the influences of the world, the flesh, and the devil, the potential increases. But the benefits from sincere, loving relationships should always outweigh the risks of getting hurt. The church has been described to Noah’s Ark: *You wouldn’t be able to stand the stench on the inside if it weren’t for the storm on the outside.* That’s why we need to keep working at our relationships and growing in love for one another.” —**Steve Cole**

—“We must never underestimate the power and potential of evil. If we fail to see how much destruction and damage evil can cause, we become increasingly more vulnerable to being controlled by it!”

—**GAD**

—“Sometimes it takes having differences, not understanding one another, and even being a little bit irritated by and bored with one another, to remind us that the church is a family and not a club. At its best, this family dynamic of the local church functions as God’s fertile soil for growing us beyond mere tolerance toward true expressions of love and unity.” —**from an unnamed pastor in Tennessee**

—Some Questions for Personal Reflection & Discussion—

—The list of inspired instructions & practical principles in Romans 12:9–21 lays a foundation that strengthens the unity in the church.

—**1}** In Romans 12:1–21, Paul puts a strong emphasis on responding properly to God’s gracious gift of salvation. He exhorts us to commit to follow Christ in 12:1–2. In 12:3, he points the spotlight on each of us & forces us to evaluate how we view ourselves, making us honestly ask ourselves if we’re humble or proud. Bible teachers for many years have accurately taught that “a wrong view of self is the source of nearly all evil.” What’s involved in developing a balanced or a healthy view of ourselves? Why is this important and how does it affect our ability to express sincere and pure love to one another?

—**2}** Romans 12:9 instructs us in a blunt and bold way to hate evil. How can we develop godly hatred for evil? We’ve all heard that we should *love the sinner, but hate the sin*. Why is this difficult to do and how does it relate to our responsibility to proclaim the Gospel? The Psalms and Proverbs often warn us about making close friends with evil people? What are some biblical guidelines for having relationships with people whose actions are characterized by evil? How should we respond to other followers of Christ who become involved in evil actions? How does that relate to maintaining unity within the church?

—**3}** Romans 12:10 instructs us that the church should be like a family that loves one another in a supportive and encouraging way. This verse describes a family whose relationships are attractive to those outside the family, making them want what we have. What are some steps we should take to follow this teaching in a positive way?

—**4}** Look closely at the flow of thought in Romans 12:11–16. How do these exhortations guide us toward a lifestyle that maintains fosters a sense of unity within our church community? As you read thru these verses, which individual instructions stand out as something that needs to be emphasized in our daily discussions or conversations with other followers of Christ? Why is it important and helpful to remind one another about these things? How can we hold each other accountable without damaging that sense of unity we want to maintain? Please notice & discuss how following these instructions will enhance the togetherness God wants us to enjoy.