

THE BIG IDEA: What unites us is more important than what excites me.

The Take-Off

Last week we kicked off our new series by taking a look at worship and the role it plays in our transformation from being less self·ish to more selfless.

Remember, 2 Cor. 5:17 states clearly that we ARE new creations and 2 Cor. 3:18 shows us clearly that there is a process that takes us from what we were to who we now are

The second verse helped us to see the way worship helps in that process - we see Jesus and then we become like Jesus. In other words, we become like what we worship

Now, sometimes I think I could become like Jesus quicker if I could just be left alone to worship Him and not have to be bothered by others because, well, sometimes people are adorable, right?

But community is just as much a part of that sanctification process as worship.

In fact, **Proverbs 27:17 (NLT)** tells us that others can make us sharper and more effective.

Sure, there will be sparks, heat, and a lot of noise, but in the end we're better for it.

So community isn't as much about singing "Kumbaya" around a campfire as it is about forming and forging strong relationships in the fire

This morning, I want us to see why that matters so much and how community can help us become less self·ish

So, let's look at a couple passages and make a couple of points:

1. We weren't made to live by ourselves

- a. Ecclesiastes is an interesting book full of rants and truth and I love that God included it in His word
- b. It can give us perspective and wisdom (but not everything in it is necessarily a good perspective or wise)
- c. But we do find some powerful understanding in **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NLT)**
- d. Here are just a couple quick takeaways about community from these verses:
 - v. 9 / Community helps us
 - v. 10 / Community heals us
 - v. 11 / Community warms us
 - v. 12 / Community protects us
- e. Basically, community is the answer for loneliness
- f. I found some studies in my prep that BLEW MY MIND!!
 - One found that low social connection carried a similar risk of premature death equal to smoking 15 cigarettes a day
 - The second found that loneliness and physical social isolation lead to a greater risk of premature death than obesity, physical inactivity, and air pollution
- g. God knew what He was talking about in **Genesis 2:18 (NLT)**
- h. That's not a verse just about marriage because if it was, every single person would be settling for less than what God desires for them. (Even Paul said it was better not to marry - 1 Cor. 7:7-8)
- i. The statement by God was one grounded in relationship - human interaction (if it was just about having a pet, Adam surely would have found that among all the creatures he named)
- j. Bottom line? We need each other!
- k. Even animals understand that!
- l. **[IMAGES / Animals helping each other]**
- m. 1 Cor. 12:27 / Community closes gaps, it makes up the difference
- n. Think of it like this: the enemy wants to isolate us but the Father wants to insulate us
- o. We weren't made to live by ourselves and community addresses that

2. We weren't made to live for ourselves

- a. If we go back to Ecclesiastes 4 we'll see a second truth about community
- b. Look at **Ecccl. 4:7-8 (NLT)** / Basically, this is a man who is working for stuff and has no one to share that stuff with - he's living for himself
- c. Just like we weren't made to live by ourselves, **we also weren't made to live for ourselves**
- d. When we understand this, we'll realize that community is the answer for selfishness
- e. We'll talk about this more deeply next week, but for now, let's turn to 2 passages in Romans as a primer

- f. **Romans 14:7 (NLT)** / Paul reminds the follower of Jesus that we aren't here just for ourselves
- g. **Romans 15:1-6 (NLT)** / Why? Because even Jesus didn't just please Himself
- h. If you read the whole context you'll find that these statements were made in the middle of a tough chapter about "getting along" with each other even when we all have different preferences
- i. Basically Paul is saying that it would be easier to just do what I want, but there are others to consider and there is a greater goal than my happiness - unity in the body and glory for God
- j. Verse 6 sums that goal up beautifully!

The Landing

This week's Big Idea says that **what unites us is more important than what excites me**

If I live my life by myself and for myself, then I'll always struggle to overcome myself and my self·ish tendencies

But God knew that, and He knew that community would help all of us live for a greater purpose

Truly, we are better together than we are apart because there is power in community to overcome loneliness and selfishness

Let's pray