

More Than Accountability

BIG Meeting – “Fellowship” series, Ephesians 4:11-16 – Kenneth Maresco – Feb. 8, 2011

Maturity in Christ occurs as Christians speak the truth in love to one another in the context of the body of Christ.

1) We pursue maturity in Christ in the context of the local church

- Unity of faith
- Knowledge of the Son of God
- Protection of our spiritual lives

2) We pursue maturity in Christ by speaking the truth in love to one another

- How can we function as a community or Christ's body?
 - Grow in knowledge of the truth of the gospel
 - Grow in knowledge of the love of the Savior
- In showing love to another consider:
 - Where they are in their spiritual lives
 - What they know about God and his ways
 - What truth will serve them at this moment

3) The source and goal of growth: Jesus Christ

- God's role – spiritual growth
- Maturity in Christ Comes through the living Head, Jesus Christ
- Our role:
 - Knowing, praying, and encouraging others with God's word
 - Speaking and listening to truth in love
 - Practicing obedience

4) Each person must play their part

- Fellow believers need you, and you need them in order to grow into maturity in Christ!
- The body of Christ is designed to be joined together

More Than Accountability: Outline

"We should not, therefore, think of fellowship with other Christians as a spiritual luxury and optional addition to the exercises of private devotion. We should recognize rather that such fellowship is a spiritual necessity; for God has made us in such a way that our fellowship with himself is fed by our fellowship with fellow-Christians, and requires to be so fed constantly for its own deepening and enrichment."

—J.I. Packer, *God's Words*

- Application
 - Where do you want to grow?
 - Who can help you take the next step in your walk with Jesus?
 - Who can you help take their next step in their walk with Jesus?

5) Practical suggestions for pursuing fellowship with other believers

- Remind one another of the gospel (Ephesians 4:15)
- Conversations about God and his word (Ephesians 4:15)
- Discussions related to the Sunday message (Ephesians 4:15)
- Encouragement to another believer (Hebrews 3:13)
 - Ways they have grown (1 Thess 1:7; Acts 11:23)
 - Reminders of the promises of God (Hebrews 10:24)
 - Encouraging, admonishing or helping a brother or sister grow through the Word (1 Thessalonians 5:14) Be patient with them all!
- Praying together (Colossians 4:2)
- Studying the Bible together -- do a Bible study with someone else (2 Timothy 3:16)
- Worshiping God together (Colossians 3:16)
- Speaking to another believer about how God is working in their life—what are they learning from his word as they read?
- Helping one another achieve the goals you are setting through accountability
- Helping others to cultivate conviction by sharing Scriptures that have served you (Hebrews 4:12,13)
- Celebrating God's grace with others or mourning with those who are mourning (Romans 12:15)
- Serving others (Galatians 5:13)
- Helping a young believer grow (Titus 2:3)
- Fellowship can be spontaneous but rarely happens without effort; it takes devotion. (1 Corinthians 15:58; Philippians 4:9)

6) Questions for pursuing fellowship with other believers

- What have you been praying for most consistently over the past number of weeks?
- What are you praying for today?
- What ways do you feel God is calling you to take a step of faith in your life right now?
- Where are you having to trust God in your life right now? What Scriptures are helping you? Any books or messages that have been helpful?
- As you struggle through discouragement, are you praying that you will be strengthened with power through God's Spirit in your inner man? (Ephesians 3:16) Are you praying that you will know the extent of Christ's love for you? (Ephesians 3:19)
- Have you given any thought to how you might employ the armor of God so that you might stand today in the face of the battle? Are you remembering and utilizing the weapons that God has so graciously provided for you? Are you standing and fighting? What is keeping you from engaging in the fight? (Ephesians 10:6-18)
- What do you feel about God being near to you right now? What does God's word say about the nearness of God right now and what you and I are supposed to do in response to his nearness? (Philippians 4:4-7)
- How can you cultivate the Spirit's power by employing edifying speech, rather than grieve the Spirit by grumbling and complaining? (Ephesians 4:29-30; Philippians 2:14-18)
- What do your words reflect about what you believe about God right now? What small steps of faith can you take that you believe would serve your soul right now? (Matthew 12:34)
- What does God's word teach about fighting lies with the truth, and tearing down strongholds? (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)