

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, January 6, 2016 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

BUILDING KOINONIA “Honesty and Humility” *John 13:1-17*

One church growth pundit (authority, specialist) has stated,

*“Our front doors are open, but we are losing more out of the
back door than we are welcoming in the front”*

What might he be saying about the church? Do you think this is a true statement? If it is a true statement, why do you think this is happening? What is causing this? What step should we, could we take as a church to remedy this problem? These are all good and relevant questions.

Just as the world is in need of change, so also is the church. Genuine group change cannot occur apart from genuine fellowship... “koinonia,” because without it there is no complete action of sharing the essentials of Christianity with one another. There are certain qualities... we might call them “character qualities” that can create channels through which we can build real “koinonia” which should be one of the most distinctive characteristics of the church, the body of Christ, and indeed may be one of the most inconspicuously absent and downplayed qualities of our churches today. Let’s face it we are rapidly becoming more and more disconnected, disassociated, and dissatisfied by the sense of community, family and belonging that we often find at church. As already stated, our front doors are open, but we are losing more out of the back door that we are welcoming in the front. What are the qualities, even “character qualities” that must be evident in building true “koinonia” fellowship. We have already explored the importance of unconditional love and acceptance in building truly Biblical and life giving fellowship or “koinonia,” ... the same unconditional love and acceptance that we have been extended by God we are to extend to others both inside and outside of our fellowship. God expects it of us! But a second area of genuine “koinonia” production in our midst is transparent honesty and humility. Think about, this quality of honesty and humility can remove barriers which keep Christians standing at a distance from one another. Christ’s behavior cited in John 13 provides a precedent which must not be overlooked. Though He was honest and humble, gentle and gracious, He was not weak.

Answer these relationship questions:

1. **When we are just starting out a relationship, do we let others see only our good side (the best part of us) or our bad side also? Why?**

2. **In a relationship is it easy or hard to be completely honest about yourself? Why or why not?**
3. **When we mess up in a relationship why do we sometimes find it so hard admitting we messed up or made a mistake?**
4. **Why do we sometimes fail to let others see what is really bothering us?**
5. **Do you think these questions apply within the church? Why and how?**

I. WHY HONESTY AND HUMILITY?

Why are honesty and humility so important if we are to build genuine fellowship... “koinonia”? Why do these (honesty and humility) make fellowship so risky?

Why Important:

1. **Genuine fellowship is about relationship and you can’t build relationship without honesty and humility.**
2. **The opposite of honesty and humility are dishonesty/deception and pride and these will kill genuine fellowship. Why?**

Why Risky:

1. **Honesty and humility leave us exposed... and no one likes to feel like they have nothing to hide behind, completely naked and revealed for who you are.**
2. **Honesty and humility make us vulnerable... and no one likes to feel vulnerable and easy prey for attack.**
3. **Honesty and humility means an admission of need... it is hard to admit I am needy and lacking in some way**

II. MATTERS OF BACKGROUND IMPORTANCE

1. **The disciples were in the midst of a heated argument (Luke 22:24-30) – The subject of the heated argument between the disciples was who was the greatest. *“Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered greatest” (v.24).* Dr. John McArthur says, “This dispute may be prompted the episode where Christ washed their (the disciples) feet in John 13:1-20.” It reveals how large an issue this was in the minds of the disciples, and how far they were from grasping all that He had taught them.**
2. **The disciples had dirty feet from traveling the local roads (John 13:1-5 – The dusty and dirty conditions of the region necessitated the need for foot-washing. Although the disciples most likely would have been happy to wash Jesus’ feet, they could not conceive of washing each other’s feet. This was because in the society of the time foot-washing was reserved for the lowliest of menial servants. Peers did not wash one another’s feet, except very rarely and as a mark of great love. Luke points out in the passage above (Lk. 22:24) that they were arguing about who was the greatest of them, so that none was willing to stop to wash feet. When Jesus moved to wash their feet, they were shocked. His actions serve also as symbolic of spiritual cleansing, but also a model of genuine Christ-like humility and honesty that should exist between brothers**

and sisters in Christ... genuine fellowship. Through this action Jesus taught the lesson of selfless service that was supremely exemplified by His death on the cross.

III. SIX PRINCIPLES CONCERNING HONESTY AND HUMILITY (John 13:1-17)

Six Principles Concerning Honesty and Humility:

1. **Honesty and humility must be prompted by love (v.1)** – "... *Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.*" The New King James says, "*Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.*" "... *to the end*" meaning "to perfection" with perfect Love. God loves the world (Jn.3:16), and sinners (Jn.3:15, Mt.5:44-45) with compassion and common grace, but loves his own with perfect, saving, eternal love. Keep in mind, death for Jesus was imminent, and very much a part of His thoughts. As His disciples bickered over their greatness, Jesus witnessed their competitive and childish behavior. Sill... he loved them. **Worth Remembering:** *This kind of perfect love and acceptance ("agape") makes being honest about ourselves and humbling ourselves before our brothers and sisters in the Lord possible. It feels dangerous and risky, but we are free to be broken, honest and humble about where we are and what is going on in our lives because in love and acceptance the body only wants our best and is there to encourage and support us in love and acceptance. Why dangerous and risky?*
2. **Honesty and humility need no announcement (vv.3-4)** – Without introduction, Christ washed the bickering disciples' feet. True "koinonia" humility learns the ability to work without the lights and public attention, and to feel comfortable with obscurity **Worth Remembering:** *The perfect blend of honesty and humility exists when we are willing (as He was) to be involved in someone else's failure or need, but remember it is dangerous and risky. Why?*
3. **Honesty and humility see beneath the surface (v.5)** – Jesus was not deaf to their words, nor blind to their motives... He was not naïve. He observed His disciple's feet and faces and acid comments marked harsh competition. He saw the real needs beneath these and was not sidetracked. **Worth Remembering:** *An important part of building genuine fellowship..."koinonia" is seeing past surface issues, past defensiveness and resistance to the heart level and honestly and humbly serving, loving, giving, meeting needs. Do not be put off by the walls some put up... continue to humbly and lovingly pursue relationship with that one. It is dangerous and risky. Why?*
4. **Honesty and humility are as comfortable receiving as giving (vv.6-8a)** – Unmasked pride... embarrassed humiliation... an absolute refusal to submit to the Lord's expression of humility – this was Peter at his best. Unwilling to admit his personal need, he said literally... in a literal translation from the Greek in verse 6 (watch this), "Lord, You – my feet, do You wash?" **Worship Remembering:** *A part of building fellowship is us being willing to be served as well as to serve. It is much easier to give than to receive sometimes, but it (giving but unwilling to receive) can also become a part of debilitating pride the creates unnecessary divisions... "I don't need anything!" "I'm okay!" "I don't want anyone to see my needs!" "If I am always*

... serving, giving, doing it appears that I am better than those who have the need to be served.” Remember this same Jesus who was humbling Himself and washing the disciples feet, was also the one who had his feet washed by a woman with her hair and tears. He received as well as gave. Why is this dangerous/risky?

5. **Honesty and humility are marks of strength, not weakness (v.8b)** – In this world to be the “big man” we must never show weakness or vulnerability or sensitivity so what must we do given the fact that the reality is that we are all weak, vulnerable, sensitive, needy... fail human dust? The Lord’s remarks to Peter must not be overlooked at the end of **verse 8**, “...Unless I wash you, you have not part with me.” These proceeding embarrassed all the disciples. While others remained silent, Peter, perhaps on behalf of others (see Mt. 16:13-23), spoke up in indignation that Jesus would stoop so low to a posture of weakness to wash his (and their) feet. Peter failed to see beyond the humble service itself to the symbolism of spiritual strength and cleansing involved. Jesus’ response made the real point of His actions clear... unless the Lamb of God cleanses a person’s sins (i.e. as portrayed in the symbolism of washing), one can have not part with Him. Jesus was here symbolizing His willingness to not only wash their feet, but do die on a cruel Roman cross... the ultimate picture of bravery and strength, in order that Peter, the disciples and all who would call upon Him might be washed... cleansed. Remember Paul said in **Philippians 2:8** that Jesus “... *humbled Himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!*” **Worth Remembering:** *Honesty and humility require real strength. It is much harder to be honest and to admit your weakness and need. It is much harder to be genuinely broken and admit when you are wrong. That require real strength. However, we are taught in this life to resist this at all cost, “Never let them see you cry!” “Never cry uncle!” “Never show weakness or vulnerability!” The bravest people in this world are never afraid to let other see who they really are warts and all. But remember this is dangerous. Why?*
6. **Honesty and humility must be expressed before joy and genuine fellowship can result (vv.12-17)** – Here the Lord draws it all together. These matters are not for thinking about, but for doing... expressing. Notice **verse 17**, “*If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.*” What “things” is he talking about? What had He just modeled for them and taught them about? Remember they had been arguing about who was greatest... who was most important. That kind of discussion has not place in building real “koinonia.” Real joy and the building of genuine fellowship is tied to obedience to what God calls us to... honesty and humility. There is no real and genuine fellowship... “koinonia” apart from honesty and humility as exhibited by Christ when He humbled Himself and washed the disciples feet as an example. **Worth Remembering:** *We cannot experience real and genuine fellowship... “koinonia” without getting honest and making ourselves vulnerable to one another and that require really humility, and it is dangerous and it is risky! Why?*

NOW, YOUR TURN...

Talk About It: Do you think our society is encouraging honesty and humility? Discuss why or why not. How are we influenced by the media in this whole area? Be specific.

Write About It: Read the six principles concerning honesty and humility. Place a check by the ones you currently observe in your life. Place an asterisk by the one you struggle with most. Write down a strategy on how to implement that principle in your life.

Act Upon It: Reflect on John 13:17. Honesty and humility must be demonstrated, not just considered. Start today by willingly investing your time and energy in the life of another person. There is no real “koinonia” otherwise.