

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, September 12, 2012 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

STRENGTHENING YOUR GRIP “Strengthening Your Grip on Involvement” *Romans 12:6-16, 1 Corinthians 12:20-27*

INTRODUCTION

A saying that has been popularized in our day is the phrase, “Get a grip!” This saying refers to a persons need to get a hold of themselves or some situation in which they find themselves that is quickly getting out of hand. There are many things that can come our way in life that can make us feel like we are losing control, that things are getting away from us, or that we can’t handle the situation any longer. In such a situation we might hear the words, “Get a grip!”

Never has there been any greater need for Christians to not only “get a grip” but to actually strengthen their grip than in our day. We live at a day and time that has been characterized by mediocrity, the status quo, aimless desperation, moral depravity, disrespect, and that list could go on and on. We are seeing the sand castles that our present day society has erected, that once housed our hopes and dreams wash away, and many Christians today are being washed away right along with them.

But we don’t have to be washed away with this tide. Instead, we can focus our aims anew on the essentials. We need to, not only “get a grip,” but strengthen our grip on such things as:

- Keeping our priorities straight
- Staying involved with others
- Striving for purity of life
- Maintaining integrity
- Cherishing family life

These and other principles form fixed points, eternal truths, and foundational principles that can keep us from drifting aimlessly. God’s eternal and essential principles must be firmly grasped and communicated afresh if we hope to survive... if we hope to get a firm grip on our Christian life.

If you are looking for a few essentials to grab hold of as your world seems to be spinning by, almost out of control, then grab hold and strengthen your grip on these Biblical truths and principles.

INVOLVEMENT

We in the family of God desperately need on another. Some are less aware of this need than others until life is thrown into reverse – the clutch is popped and back it drives across that unsuspecting individual who thought he needed no one else, no support, no encouragement. A financial breakdown... the burning of a hard-earned dwelling... terminal illness... the unexpected and devastating loss of a loved one... in moments such as these, even normally self-sustaining, aggressive, highly resilient folk realize they cannot make it alone. It is only a matter of time before our lives are touched by that one occurrence we had not anticipated. In such a moment what is needed is another person's tender and supportive touch. To what extent do you need others? Do you know someone who at this moment needs you? Generally speaking, the Christian has four areas of intense involvement:

4 Areas of Intense Involvement

1. **With God** - First, our salvation... our spiritual life. Second, our walk with Christ through life. Listen, we can't make it without Him! That is the truth of it plain and simple! How many times have you heard someone say, "I don't know how I would have gotten through this without the Lord." We need... no we much His involvement in our lives. That is our first and foremost help.
2. **With members of our own families** – Related by blood... parents, children, and relatives – distant and close, married and single, healthy and ill. We really do need our families involvement when we go through the sifter in this life. When a loved one passes away, we want family around us to nurture us, to support us, to comfort us, to stand by us. We need their involvement. It is often essential for our survival through those times.
3. **With members of God's family** – Related by faith... ones in our own assembly, those from another church, Christian brothers and sisters who come along side us to just be there... who stick close with their prayers and strong shoulders of faith. Very important!
4. **With people of the world** – Related by creation... those outside the family of God whose lives contact ours in various life situations. We really do need other people, admit it or not, and God places those around us who can support and encourage and be involved in our lives for our good and theirs.

Questions on Case Studies: Involvement

- (1) How would you respond to this person?
- (2) In your opinion what does this person need to do?
- (3) In your opinion what do you need to do in response to this person? How would you do it?

Case Study #1

"Why, I've been a member of that church for many years now, and no one down there even knows I exist. I haven't been going now for a while and I don't think anyone has even missed me. At least, no one has ever contacted me or asked why I'm not there anymore. I don't think they even care."

Case Study #2

“I go to church every Sunday morning, and I am a member, but that is about it. I like it that way! If I wanted to do more I would, but I enjoy just coming in, finding my seat, enjoying the service and going home. I really don’t want any more than that. I don’t want to have to commit to be at the church every other day doing something. I just like going on Sundays!”

Case Study #3

“I go to my church and I hear about reaching out to my neighbors, and I feel convicted about it. My neighbor is an elderly lady in a wheelchair. She lost her husband last year. We would often see them out together on the front porch, now she just sits out there alone day after day, and she looks so sad to me. I know that she must be lonely and there doesn’t seem to very be much activity other there, so I don’t think she has much family around. I feel inside that I should reach out to her, but I’m so busy with my 5 children and husband that I just don’t feel like I have the time. I am afraid that if I start something over there I will just get in too deep. I’m not sure what to do!”

Case Study #4

“I am a member of the church. I go faithfully. I have been praying lately about a place to serve and get plugged in. Lately there has been an announcement in the bulletin that they need a Children’s Sunday School Teacher, and they have announced it from the pulpit several times. I know there is a need there and that it could be a place for me to serve, but I’m just not sure I have the energy, time or gifts to teach children. I don’t know what to do, so I just keep praying and praying for God to send someone to teach that class so I won’t have to.”

I. INVOLVEMENT AMONG MEMBERS OF GOD’S FAMILY – A HISTORICAL GLANCE (Acts 2:41-47)

At the conclusion of Peter’s notable address on the day of Pentecost, approximately three thousand Jewish people responded to the claims of Christ just presented. Suddenly there was a congregation with on building in which to meet. There was not Bible, no seasoned pastor, no traditions or forms of church government (as we know them today) on which to rely. They were on the front end of a phenomenal historical movement which has not diminished in size or intensity with time’s passing. The life of this new assemblage was characterized by the following activities: absorption of the apostle’s teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer (v.42). These earliest Christians were drawn together by a common commitment. They were involved with each other – something all too uncommon in today’s world. Some observations can be made from the fellowship patterns of our earliest brothers and sisters.

2 Observations of the Fellowship Patterns of the Earliest Church:

1. Their Fellowship Analyzed – (see Acts 2:44-47)

- (1) **It was entered into by all (vv.44-45, 47) –** *“⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵They sold property and possessions to give to anyone*

who had need...⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

- (2) **It held them together (vv.44, 46)** – *“⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common...⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.”*
- (3) **It was genuine (v.46)** – *“⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.”*

2. **Their Fellowship at Work** – What we see in this text in a simple form, we see described in other New Testament passages as well. This fellowship (involvement) took two directions...

- (1) **It shared with someone** – Such things as food, money, time, encouragement, reproof, confession, etc.
- (2) **It shared in something** – Such situations as an experience, a failure, a promotion, a need, a mutual project, etc.

NOTE: The early Christians were held together by intense involvement and love – expressions of authentic Christianity to be freely shared among members of the family of God. This is Biblical fellowship, “koinonia.” The term is used at least twenty times in Scripture and never refers to something one does alone... only with others.

II. INVOLVEMENTS AMONG MEMBERS OF GOD’S FAMILY – A PRESENT GLANCE

Authentic fellowship finds people giving to – and receiving from – each other. **Question:** *Why should we become involved with other people risk opening up our lives to them?*

2 Reasons To Risk Involvement:

1. **God commands it (Romans 12:9-16)** – Listen to Romans 12:9-16, *“⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.”* **What are we commanded to do here?** Be sincere (genuine) in our lives for others, be devoted to one another, honor one another about ourselves, share with others in need, practice hospitality, bless those who persecute us and do not curse them, be happy with those who are happy, mourn with those who mourn, live in harmony with each other,

associate with everyone... even those who you think may be beneath you. Wow! That pretty much covers it. I think that we would say that God is commanding us in his word to be “involved.”

2. **The Body needs it (1 Corinthians 12:20-27)** – Here is 1 Corinthians 12:20-27... listen to it, *“²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body. ²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. ²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”* In a word, “We need each other!”

2 Reasons the Body Needs Your Involvement:

- (1) **Involvement dispels division (v.25)** – By breaking down cliques, mending fractures, and halting the spread of destructive internal diseases. Did you notice it in verse 25, *“²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.”*
- (2) **Involvement cultivates compassion (vv.25-26)** – Caring is a sign of good health. Listen to verses 25 and 26 again, *“²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.”* I emphasis it again, involvement cultivates “equal concern for each other.”

III. INVOLVEMENT AMONG MEMBERS OF GOD’S FAMILY – A PERSONAL GLANCE

Our involvement should be characterized by 3 things...

3 Characteristics of our Involvement:

1. **Spontaneity (1 Corinthians 12:25)** – *“²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.”* We must initiate action ourselves, not wait for someone else to make the first move.
2. **Vulnerability (1 Corinthians 12:26)** – *“²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.”* We must be willing to be hurt... wounded, if necessary.
3. **Accountability (1 Corinthians 12:27)** - *“²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”* We must be mutually responsible to other members of the

Body so that they may warn us if they see that our attitudes or behavior could impair the Body as a whole.

IV. LET'S APPLY THE TRUTH

1. **Ask yourself...** be completely honest with yourself as you answer these two questions

2 Questions to Ask Yourself

(1) **Am I deeply in touch with someone... at least one person?** –

(2) **Am I willing to be?** – Very important that you be willing to invest of yourself to be “involved” in the lives of others.

2. **Ask God...**

2 Request to Ask of God

(1) **Open a door into for involvement into the life of someone who needs me** –

(2) **Give the opportunity to enter into either a small-group ministry or a discipleship relation with a friend** –

***Note:** If you find that you are at a loss as to where to begin, have your pastor or a mature Christian friend, guide you into a meaningful involvement.*

Key on strengthening your grip on involvement: Get involved! Somewhere, on some level, with someone... involved yourself! You need it and so will someone else!