

For the week of February 4-10, 2018

Based on Pastor Reggie's message from February 4

PUT ON CHRIST

Best Way to Prepare for Your Group? Listen to the teaching and read the appropriate scripture. Please give emphasis to the latter. These notes are prepared on Fridays. Sometimes, the sermon gets modified right before service. So, allow for flexibility. Remember, your time together isn't meant to be a re-teaching of the most recent lesson. Instead, the discussion points and questions are designed to encourage group members to share insight and application of what they've learned from God's Word—and thereby grow closer to the Lord and each other.

[Format for the Evening]

WELCOME:

Get to know each other. Re-introduce yourselves if need be and welcome any newcomers. Invite those new to the group to share a little about their lives and Christian experience. Spend some time talking about real-life issues that may have come up during prayer or fellowship time the previous week. These Community Groups are more than Bible studies. They are designed to help believers form deep and lasting relationships.

KEY PASSAGE:

"And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts." –Romans 13:11-14

THINK ABOUT THE TEACHING: Topic

Throughout Romans Paul has been building up to chapters 12-15, in which he tells us how to live as a church body. We are a part of a bigger picture and there is no longer room for the individual agenda that desires to rule itself and promote anything different than God and His principles. Paul opens with our need for the Savior, both Jew and Gentile. In chapter three he makes a clear statement that we all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. He then takes a journey to explain the gracious work of God through Christ's blood reconciling unto Himself all those who would believe, clean and set apart, to now reflect His glory. Jesus' statement "It is finished" (concerning the work of Salvation), is challenged by our nature to "do and to work" in order to earn a righteous honor before God. The law has been made obsolete in that Christ has fulfilled the law and achieved righteousness before God, thus we now only need to believe on the power of Christ's blood as the payment made on our behalf.

Once we get to chapter 12 Paul pulls out an unexpected trick play. He now urges us to offer our lives in sacrifice to God, not as a work unto salvation, but as the outworking of the salvation you have already received. A new life is in order. The old is dead. You have been made alive in the Spirit thus you have been made acceptable to God and set apart for His glory. The only reasonable response is to now do what you've been made in Christ to do; reflect His image and glory, not just as an individual, but as a part of a harmonious body of believers working to confirm the transformative work of the Spirit upon each life. The next step is to now live, for you are now resurrected unto new life, and Romans 12-15 gives us the play-by-play commentary on how to live this new victorious life as an answer to Jesus' prayer in John 17:20-23: "...I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them

and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me” (NLT).

TALK ABOUT THE TEACHING:

1. Read John 17: 20-23. What evidences are there in our body that this prayer is being answered by the Father in our church?
2. **Making it personal** — How has God spoken to you and your family to be a part of the greater body in service to Him? (Are there things you can recall God moving your heart toward in the last year?)
3. Spend some time praying together about what roles the individuals in your group/family may play in the larger body. (What are your gifts, talents, abilities, family dynamic and how can you use these in our body as service to our God?)
4. **A challenge From left field** — With the rise of racial tension in our country I would like to challenge you as a group of Christians and ask, “If your race and family publicly collided with your faith, which one would you publicly forsake and which would you publicly cling to?” Why?

THINK ABOUT THE TEACHING: Topic?

In Romans 13 we are told to be “people of the day.” This is a metaphor that Paul uses to exhort us to mature in our walk with Christ. In the book of Ephesians Paul separates the different aspects of the believer’s life that parallel what he is saying here in Romans 12-15. In his commentary on Ephesians called “Sit Walk Stand,” Watchman Nee says that we should rest, “Sit,” in the privileges of knowing Christ. We should Walk in response to His call upon our lives as His people. We should Stand against the principalities of darkness in the power of Christ. Here in Romans 12-15 Paul is telling us how to stay tight as a unified family of believers who Sit, Walk, and Stand in Christ by growing in unity as a mature body of believers who can work together to accomplish the will of God in the world around us. Christ’s prayer was that we would be unified so that the world would not doubt that Jesus is the Messiah and that we are His people. How does this happen? It is because we are set apart for His glory by the way we live and process life differently than the world does.

TALK ABOUT THE TEACHING:

1. Admitting that you no longer dictate your life but that you belong to God is the first step toward maturation in Christ. Are there areas in your life where you hear God telling you to “let go” so He can use you? (“*Throw off all that hinders...*” –Hebrews 12:1)
2. Romans 12:9 says let your “*love be without hypocrisy.*” What does this mean and what sort of practical examples can you discuss to strengthen your understanding of its meaning?
3. We’re surely growing when we begin to adopt the life of Christ: “*Put on Christ.*” His love was sacrificial even at great cost. He associated with the outcasts even though it made Him unpopular. He sought to bring healing to the broken hearted. He cared for the poor, the widow and the orphan when no one else would. How can we put on Christ as individuals, as a group, and as a church?

PRAY TOGETHER: This month is Black History Month. Please pray for God to work in the churches around the country to be bold and show a different kind of love and a different harmony amongst believers of different races, colors, genders, creeds, and cultures in order to have a healing dialogue in the many communities in which they reside. Pray this can happen so the Gospel can be disseminated amongst the different people groups. Please pray for our own church body to unite and do more with the Latino and African churches that

meet on campus. May we be brothers and sisters doing the different parts of the work in the larger body. May we be one as Christ prayed we would be as He and the Father are one.

TRANSITION TO REAL LIFE:

Before you head home take some time to talk about the week ahead, make note of any needs and prayer requests, and enjoy each other's company. That's what family does.

WEEKLY PRAYER REQUESTS

“But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.” –Matthew 5:44-45

The Lord Jesus teaches that we must do all the real kindness we can to *all*, especially to our enemies. We must pray for them. While many will render good for good, we must render good for evil; and this will speak a nobler principle than most men act by. Others salute their brethren, and embrace those of their own party, and way, and opinion, but we must not so confine our respect. It is the duty of Christians to desire, and aim at, and press towards perfection in grace and holiness. And therein we must study to conform ourselves to the example of our heavenly Father (1 Peter 1:15,16).

Surely more is to be expected from the followers of Christ than from others; surely more will be found in them than in others. Let us beg of God to enable us to prove ourselves His children. –Matthew Henry

Our Core Group:

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Our International Missions: Marlon & Becca Brown, Vancouver, BC, Canada

As many of you know Becca has been struggling with health issues ever since she was injured in a hit-and-run car crash several years ago. Multiple surgeries to correct a severely pinched nerve in her neck have been unsuccessful and she experiences intense chronic pain. After lots of prayer we have a praise report. The insurance has approved Becca for a new trial surgical treatment. She will begin a seven-day trial on February 19 in Oregon. It involves temporarily installing a nerve stimulator to see if they can reduce her pain. Lord willing the test trial is successful, then they will remove it and give her body a few weeks break, before they implant it permanently. The pain has to be reduced by at least 50% for them to permanently implant it. To gauge the success of the test trial, Becca needs to be at the peak of her pain before the trial starts. So, she will be reducing medications and other things before her surgery. Pray for peace and strength for Becca. She is nervous but also excited. She will be gone for 10 days, and our sweet friend Summer Genovese will be with her the whole time, while Marlon stays back in Canada with their children.

Our Local Ministry: Calvary Christian School

Principal Mindy Tiber shared the following prayer requests:

- That God would be glorified in all that we do;
- That His love would be evident in our staff, volunteers, students and families;
- That God would bless our upcoming open house on March 12th and our enrollment for next year. Pray that God would bring students/families and provide financial provision for those He has purposed to be here.