

WEEK FOUR

# FAMILY

*Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*  
- 1 Corinthians 12:27

This week you will study the importance of the church (the Body of Christ, the family of God) and the relationships you will have in the church. This is what the kingdom of God is all about relationships. To be righteous means to conduct your relationships (with God and with others) in the right way.

## Day 22-Jesus' Church

1. Jesus Christ, who has all authority, taught us that the church is crucial in his plan. In Matthew 16:16-18, Jesus heard Peter confess to him to be the Christ, the Son of God; and immediately Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades *will not prevail against it.*" Jesus saw the church as the center of his plan. He wanted to build it and he intended to make it so strong that the forces of Satan could not stand against it. What Jesus counted as so important, we too must count as so important. What statements have you made or heard religious people make that discount (lessen) the importance of the church? What would Jesus say?
2. For a true picture of what the church should be striving to become every day, look at Acts 2:40-47. What impresses you the most?
3. What can you do today and the rest of this week to contribute to this kind of life among God's people (the church)?

## Day 23-New Relationships

1. As you read each of the following passages, write down something the passage teaches that must be in our relationships in the Body of Christ.

- a.) John 13:34-35
- b.) Ephesians 5:1-2
- c.) 1 Corinthians 13 : 1-3
- d.) Colossians 3:14
- e.) Galatians 5:6, 13, 14
- f.) 1 Peter 4:8, 9

2. What does it mean to love another person?
3. What does 1 John 3:16 say it means to love another person? How does this apply to our relationships?
4. What is so good and so right about loving like this? What are the results?
5. Surprise someone today with a special act of love.

## Day 24-Belonging

1. Paul describes the church as the "Body of Christ." Read Romans 12:1-8. How does giving yourself first to God need to lead to giving yourself to other people in the Body of Christ?
2. Notice particularly v. 5 which says, "*each member belongs to all the others:*" or "*we are all members of one another.*" How does this fit with or conflict with the often popular idea of individualism?
3. List three things that you already know you can do for other members of the Body of Christ. Share these with someone who is close to you and get their reaction.
4. List at least three things that you know you need from the Body of Christ in order to grow in Christ.

## Day 25-Unity

1. Read Ephesians 4:1-5. Why does it seem to you that God is so very concerned about the Body of Christ having unity and peace?

2. Turn to Romans 14:13-15:3 and read how far we should go and how much we should bend to keep the Body of Christ together. Can you think of a practical application of this passage?
3. Is there anything in your life that is so important to you that you would not give it up even if it was keeping people from coming to Jesus Christ or growing in him? If there is, look back to v. 21 and get help in dealing with this area of your life. What most competes against Christ in your life and why?

### Day 26-Purity

1. God is greatly concerned about the unity of the church. He is also greatly concerned about the purity of the Body of Christ. We are called to a holy life and a pure life, and sin in the Body that is being hidden or ignored will destroy the power of the church.
2. Read Ephesians 4:17-5:14. List those things which are described here as improper for God's holy people.
3. How would living as "children of light" be totally different from those things you have just listed? What is the basic difference?
4. You are a young Christian, but what should you do if you see brothers or sisters falling into some sin? Read Galatians 6:1-2 and write out the principles you learned about who should help others with their sin and how it should be done.

#### BUILDING GREAT RELATIONSHIPS

1. *Be open about what is really going on in your life.* We cannot get the help we need if others don't really know where we are. See 2 Corinthians 6:11-13.
2. *Be a great listener.* Carefully hear both the encouragement and correction that others give you. Don't be too quick to react. Also listen with care to the needs others are expressing. See James 1:19.
3. *Be a giver. Every disciple-including the new Christian-has much to give.* Some of the greatest encouragement for an

older Christian is to see a new one giving whatever he or she has. Give compliments, give encouragement, give what you are learning, give service. Be a joy. See Luke 6:38.

4. *Never quit.* Even the best of relationships will have bumps, but through Christ conflict can be resolved. Stay with it until unity is restored. See Matthew 5:23-25, Matthew 18:15-20, Philippians 4:2-3.

### Day 27-Encouragement

1. One of our greatest responsibilities is to encourage each other in the Body of Christ. Read this important statement about this in Hebrews 3:12-14.
2. According to this passage why is encouragement so needed? Judging from this passage, what kind of encouragement do you think would prove most helpful?
3. Carefully examine Hebrews 10:24-25. What do we need to do to make our fellowship times even more encouraging? Why is it discouraging for someone to miss meetings without communicating why they are not there or without getting advice?
4. Write down the names of three people you want to encourage and how you plan to do this.
5. Explain why different people are encouraged by different means.

### Day 28-Conflict Resolution

1. The Body of Christ will not be a "perfect place" immune from relationship problems. Why will problems even arise in relationships that are in the church?
2. Read these two important passages that tell us how to resolve problems that arise in the church.
  - a.) Matthew 5:23-24 (Remember Jesus is teaching Jews here who still went to the temple to offer sacrifices; but what is the



## WEEK FOUR HIGHLIGHTS

principle for us?)

b.) Matthew 18:15-20

- (1) How is this different from the way people often handle a problem of sin? Why will step one work most of the time?
  - (2) Why is step two sometimes going to be needed?
  - (3) Why would the church have to sever fellowship with the person who will not repent and confess his or her sin?
3. Determine early in your Christian life that you will not complain or grumble behind someone's back. Determine that you will go to them and seek to resolve the problem with God's help.
  4. You have been a Christian more than a month now. How would you evaluate the way you have handled your relationships in the Body?
  5. Read 2 Corinthians 1:12. What are you appreciating about relationships that are based on God's grace and not worldly wisdom?
  6. Ask someone close to you for some feedback on the conduct of your relationships so far.
  7. Praise God for relationships based on Jesus and the grace of God.