

**Blessing One Another**  
**“Belong to Bless” Series**  
**Valley View Bible Church**  
**February 19, 2017**

**Introduction**

I love the church. It has played an important part of my life since childhood. I can honestly say that it has been the source of some of my greatest blessings. I also confess that it has been the source of some of my greatest disappointments and hurts. The blessings have been many but disappointments and hurts often linger.

One recent study gives us some insight into the negative impacts of those disappointments. The question was “why do people reject the church?”

- People leave the church when they cannot find community.
- People leave the church because they need less drama in their lives.
- People leave the church because of unresolved conflict.
- People leave the church because of controlling leaders and unskilled teachers.
- People leave the church because they are turned off by social climbing, cliques, and nepotism.
- People leave the church when they feel like they need to look a certain way, or fit a specific role or ideal to be included or appreciated.
- People leave the church because they are tired of being told how “a good Christian” should vote.
- People leave because they are looking for something authentic.
- People leave because they feel lonely.
- People leave when they don’t find Jesus.

While I understand and recognize that it is easy to see where the church has failed, you cannot read the Bible and decide the church is not necessary. Christ loves the church (Ephesians 5:25-27). Christ is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18). We are the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:27). We are a body of those who have been forgiven and redeemed (Galatians 4:4,5). We are told to participate for the benefit of others (Hebrews 10:25). Paul points out that our being in Christ and experiencing the blessings of God gives us guidance in how we are to live and bless those within the church

**II Corinthians 1:4**

**God...”Who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God”**

The late Adrian Rogers concluded that, “You cannot obey God without your obedience spilling out in a blessing to all those around you.”

### What does this look like?

Pastor and Author, Ray Stedman, pastored the Peninsula Bible Church for many years. He believed in the church and the importance of the church being a blessing. He once challenged the church this way.

“There are many who look upon the church as nothing but a collection of religious creeps who are colorless, sterile, and dull, and who come to church only to sit with blank stares on their faces. They have no life to them at all. They remind me of the remark by the pagan philosopher, Nietzsche: ‘If you want me to believe in your Redeemer, then you’ll have to look a lot more redeemed.’

The thought here is clear. Before we can bring our message to those outside the church, we must be the people God redeemed us to be. That means we are to be a blessing to those within the church.

#### Acts 2:42–47

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.

Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Fresh off of the day of Pentecost, the church reflects both obedience and blessing. It is exciting to read this and it sets the bar high for those of us in the church. What is interesting, is that the church soon forgot and needed to be reminded of what this looked like. Paul wrote to a church around twenty years after Luke’s description of the church.

#### 1 Corinthians 1:5–7

For in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That is the kind of description that would enhance any church’s visitor’s packet. In every way, the church had been enriched in Christ. How? Enriched through their speech about Christ and knowledge of Him. And that is not all. The testimony of this church was strong because every member was exercising every

spiritual gift. Twenty years later, the church seems to be growing and faithful. But as you turn the pages to this letter, Paul points out something that was being neglected.

### **1 Corinthians 3:1–3**

**And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, for you are still of the flesh.**

So, while this church was doing some things right, there was a weakness present. They had failed to mature. They were not growing in Christ. Their actions were closer to the non-Christian norm than to the Christian norm. Before we jump to any conclusion, we should dig a bit deeper to see what brought Paul to this conclusion. While still in the first chapter, Paul identified a theme that he will return to throughout this letter.

### **1 Corinthians 1:10–13**

**Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters.**

**What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?**

So here we have a church that is spiritually schizophrenic. They had areas of maturity present while struggling with immaturity at the same time. Loyalty and pride to those who had brought them to Christ or baptized them was dividing them. They had begun to make judgements of one another and even claim superiority based on the past. The result was that they were divided. This is seen throughout the letters as Paul dealt with problems that developed from how they treated one another. Interestingly, Paul gives advice on how their worship should heal those divisions.

### **I CORINTHIANS 14:26-32**

**What should be done then, my friends? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn; and let one interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let them be silent in church and speak to themselves and to God.**

Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to someone else sitting nearby, let the first person be silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged. And the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets, for God is a God not of disorder but of peace.

I think this text is often misused by taking it out of context. It is not a lesson on what we are to do in worship but has more to do in our attitude as we worship. Notice the healing, uniting, communal attitude:

- Participation – Everyone
- Community over the Individual
- Silence for the sake of the community.
- The Importance of Learning
- Encouragement
- Accountability

## Becoming a Blessing

Paul was asking that they bless one another when they gathered for worship. A blessing, in the definition of one of my seminary professors, is a declaration halfway between a prayer and a promise. It is a statement that wishes or desires God's favor, blessings, and protection on another. One very familiar blessing of the church is the Aaronic Blessing from Numbers 6:24-26.

May the Lord bless you and keep you,  
May the Lord make His face to shine upon you,  
And be gracious to you.  
May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you,  
And give you peace.

It is impressive isn't it. But it is important that we see blessings as more than words. If we merely speak the words, the blessing is compromised. The Anchor Bible Dictionary explains it this way. A blessing is "*an authoritative pronouncement of God's favor that presupposes the automatic action of a blessing.*" It is spoken expecting God to act and God's immediate action is seen through the action of the one calling for the blessing. You cannot speak a blessing for another and not act in a manner that shows that blessing.

Let me give you 10 ways you can bless one another:

1. We Bless When We Serve One Another – John 13:14
2. We Bless When We Love one another as Jesus Loved – John 13:34, 35
3. We Bless When We are Devoted to One Another – Romans 12:10
4. We Bless When We Associate with Everyone – Romans 14:13

5. We Bless When We Stop Judging One Another – Romans 14:13
6. We Bless When We are Humble, Gentle, and Patient – Ephesians 4:2
7. We Bless When We Forgive One Another – Colossians 3:13
8. We Bless When We Are Thankful for One Another – II Thessalonians 1:3
9. We Bless When We Are Kind and Compassionate – Ephesians 4:32
10. We Bless When We Carry One Another's Burdens – Galatians 6:2

### Prayer

### Final Words

May the Lord bless you and keep you,  
May the Lord make His face to shine upon you,  
And be gracious to you.  
May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you,  
And give you peace.