

Week 5: Day 14-16

Week 6: Day 17-19

**Week 7: Day 20-21**

Week 8: Day 23-25

## **Introduction**

### **I. The Purpose Driven Life**

#### **a. This Teaching**

- Based on a bestselling book written by Rick Warren, lead pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, CA.
- The book is written as a 40 day series of daily devotionals.
- The number 40 was selected because of it's biblical significance
  1. Noah's life was transformed by 40 days of rain.
  2. Moses was transformed by 40 days on Mount Sinai and 40 years in the desert.
  3. The spies were transformed by 40 days in the Promised Land
  4. David was transformed by Goliath's 40 day challenge.
  5. Elijah was transformed when God gave him 40 days of strength from a single meal.
  6. The entire city of Nineveh was transformed when God gave the people 40 days to change.
  7. Jesus was empowered by 40 days in the wilderness.
  8. The disciples were transformed by 40 days with Jesus after his resurrection.

#### **b. The Goals for this teaching**

1. Promote personal devotion and understanding of our individual purposes for life.
2. Strengthen the desire of individuals to serve the fellowship of believers through each partner discovering his/her divine calling.
3. Create opportunities for small group leaders to share this information in a small group setting with their un-churched friends and family.

## II. Restoring Broken Fellowship (Day 20)

### a. Introduction

1. Christ established the church for the ministry of reconciliation.
  - i. Bringing an alienated man back to his creator, God. [2 Cor. 5:18]
2. Broken fellowship is a disgrace to our testimony to unbelievers. Consequently, Paul urged the Corinthians to stop their infighting. [1 Cor. 1:10, 6:5]
3. Christ declared blessings upon those who worked to create peace. [Matt. 5:9]
  - i. Ex: We can make peace in our ministries by encouraging people who are at odds to find areas they agree upon and work from that point outward.
4. Peacemaking is not running from a problem just to avoid conflict.
5. Peacemaking is not appeasement or simply giving in to the other person's wishes. That will simply create bitter resentment for the person who feels he lost.

### b. How to Restore a Relationship

1. Talk to God before talking to the person.
2. Always take initiative no matter if you are the offender or offended.

**5:23** Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

**5:24** Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

- i. Do not delay. Schedule a face-to-face meeting as soon as possible.
3. Sympathize with their feelings.
  - i. Use your ears more than your mouth.
  - ii. This is not the time to score points and display how right you are.
  - iii. Paul admonishes we should look at other's feelings. [Phil. 2:4]
  - iv. Feelings are not always true or logical, but people should have an opportunity to respectfully share their emotions.
4. Confess your part of the conflict.
  - i. Sometimes asking a third party to evaluate your own actions before meeting with the person with whom you have a conflict is necessary.
  - ii. Apologizing often diffuses the other person's anger and disarms their attack.
5. Attack the problem, not the person.
  - i. "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a grievous words stir up anger." [Prov. 15:1]

- ii. “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” [Ephesians 4:29]
- 6. Cooperate as much as possible.
- 7. Exercise reconciliation, not resolution.
  - i. Christians can disagree without being disagreeable.

## II. Protecting Your Church (Day 21)

### a. Introduction

1. Unity is a paramount concern in the New Testament.
2. We are to be unified in the same closeness of the triunity of the Godhead.
3. Christ prayed for the unity of his disciples just before being arrested in the garden. [Jhn. 17:20-23]

### b. Focus on what we have in common, not our differences

1. “As believers we share one Lord, one body, one purpose, one Father, one Spirit, one hope, one faith, one baptism, and one love.”
2. “We share the same salvation, the same life, and the same future.”
3. “Conflict is usually a sign that focus has shifted to less important issues...When we focus on personalities, preferences, interpretations, styles, or methods, division always happens.”

### c. Be realistic in your expectations.

1. God requires real fellowship not simply ideal fellowship.
2. “You must passionately love the church in spite of its imperfections... Longing for the ideal while criticizing the real is evidence of immaturity.”
3. “Settling for the real without striving for the ideal is complacency. Maturity is living with the tension.”
4. Walking out on the church because there is something you don’t like is equal to walking out on your family.
  - i. Ex: Many teenagers contemplate running away from home because they do not agree with their parents rules.
5. People become disillusioned with the church for many understandable reasons.
  - i. Ex: conflict, hurt, hypocrisy, neglect, pettiness, legalism, and other sins.

*“ Because we are sinners, we hurt each other, sometimes intentionally and sometimes unintentionally. Instead of leaving the church, we need to stay and work it out if at all possible. Reconciliation not running away, is the road to stronger character and deeper fellowship.”*

6. “Divorcing your church at the first sign of disappointment or disillusionment is a mark of immaturity... Besides; there is no perfect church to escape to. Every church has its own set of weaknesses and problems.”

d. Choose to encourage rather than criticize.

1. We are continually warned not to criticize, compare or judge each other.

2. When we judge another believer these four things instantly happen:

- i. We lose fellowship with God
- ii. We expose our own pride and insecurity
- iii. We set ourselves up to be judged by God
- iv. We harm the fellowship of the church

3. It's the devil's job to criticize, complain, and blame the believers. [Rev. 12:10]

e. Refuse to listen to Gossip

1. “Gossip is passing on information when you are neither part of the problem nor part of the solution.”

2. Listening to gossip is equally wrong with spreading the offense.

3. When someone begins gossiping to you, have the courage to say, “Please stop.”

4. Listening to gossip makes you a troublemaker.

f. Practice God's method for conflict resolution.

1. Jesus gives the three step process for handling conflict.

- i. If a brother offends you, go tell him. Work it out between the two of you.
- ii. If he won't listen, take one or two others along.
- iii. If he still won't listen, tell the church.

**18:15** Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

**18:16** But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

**18:17** And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but \* if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

g. Support your pastor and leaders.

1. The pastor often has the task of serving as mediator between hurt, conflicting, or immature members.

2. Pastors will have to give an account for how they have watched over your souls.

[Heb. 13:17]

3. Instructions for dealing with divisive people in the fellowship

- i. Avoid arguing, gently teach the opposition while praying they'll change, warn those who are argumentative, plead for harmony and unity, and rebuke those who are disrespectful of leadership and remove divisive people from the church if they ignore two warnings. [2 Tim. 2:14, 23-26; Philippians 4:2; Titus 2:15-3:2, 10-11]

*“What are you doing personally to make your church family more warm and loving? There are many people in your community who are looking for love and a place to belong. The truth is, everyone needs and wants to be loved, and when people find a church where members genuinely love and care for each other, you would have to lock the doors to keep them away.”*

I love Thy kingdom, Lord,  
The house of Thine abode,  
The church our blessed Redeemer saved  
With His own precious blood.

I love Thy church, O God.  
Her walls before Thee stand,  
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,  
And written on Thy hand.

If e'er to bless Thy sons  
My voice or hands deny,  
These hands let useful skills forsake,  
This voice in silence die.

Should I with scoffers join  
Her altars to abuse?  
No! Better far my tongue were dumb,  
My hand its skill should lose.

For her my tears shall fall  
For her my prayers ascend,  
To her my cares and toils be given  
Till toils and cares shall end.