

# TOGETHER

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## THE HARD WORK OF STAYING



#CONNECT&GROW

## Together The Hard Work Of Staying

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**Col 2:1-3** For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, **2** that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, **3** in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

- Sunday attendance is important for spiritual life. But if you are not involved with others, interacting and connecting, you are missing a key element of life.
  - Things change with the dynamics that are encountered in a small group setting. Something different is accomplished in that kind of setting than can be accomplished in a large gathering on Sunday.
- I.** Struggle (Greek. "agon"- "contest")- Paul contended in the spirit for these saints, these churches.
- A. Paul cared for the people; even though he could not be with some

- churches, he carried them in his heart.
- B. “Agon” is word we get “agony” from; to struggle. Is there anyone in your life for whom you struggle on a regular basis? Anyone you carry in your heart for whom you struggle and are sensitive to their struggles.
  - C. It’s natural to “struggle” on behalf of those you know. But Paul “struggled”, he “agonized” over people he had never seen. Generally we don’t struggle for folks we really don’t know.
  - D. Small groups allow us to connect with others for who we can struggle and who can struggle for you.
    - i. How do you struggle for others? Thru constant intercession. There is a struggle in prayer that goes beyond the perfunctory that allows you to feel for that person.
    - ii. While you intercede, you are joined in your heart with the person for whom you pray AND you are joined in heart with God.
    - iii. In intercession, God prays “through” you for the well being of that other person.
  - E. Pastor Brett “struggles” every day for this church – for the people who make it up, for our unity, for the work of God’s Word among us and how to craft the use of God’s Word for building up the church.
    - i. He struggles for our reconciliation – that God would help us to diminish our need and ethnic emphasis for the sake of strengthening others and building them up.
    - ii. Nehemiah had people constructing the wall and had “non-construction workers” to do the job. Ps Brett, like Nehemiah, struggles every day with the task of “building” this church in unity that we might display something of unity, harmony, and relational connection that will allow us to testify to the heavens of the power of Christ’s death on our behalf. Such unity is the product of real “struggle” in prayer.
  - F. For whom do you struggle? If you only struggle for yourself, it reflects where you are in your maturity.
    - i. We need to grow and get past just our own issues.
    - ii. We need to get to the place where we can struggle for others, for those around us are hurting.
    - iii. If we all grow to the point where we struggle for someone else, all our needs get met. If we only struggle for our own progress, if we only selfishly struggle to figure out God’s provision for ourselves, we live in a way that is in marked contrast that is “over against” what Christ died for.
    - iv. For whom do you struggle?
  - G. Small Groups give us the opportunity to bind ourselves together with others.

- i. Yes, they are “artificial” – they are set up and structured so that we can begin struggle for one another.
- ii. There is no way we can make it apart from our struggling for one another and standing on behalf of one another.

**II.** Stitched (Greek. "sumbibazo"- "bring together", "stride together") – that your hearts “having been knit together in love”. “Knit” describes people who are together, “in step”, an army “in sync” moving together. One only gets “in sync” because they decide to move that way. An army moves together “as one” because they’ve purposed to walk that way...they worked at moving together, to be “stitched” together. We are to walk together because God calls us to move “as a people”. This is not the exception, but the way we do life and the way we do service of others. Only as we move together by being joined in other settings besides Sunday. With whom is your heart knit?

- A.** Encouraged Hearts are hearts that are “stitched” together
  - i. Relationships happen in Small Groups
  - ii. This is where you can get “tied” with others AND where you can bring others who are opposed to God into an environment where they can be loved on.
  - iii. The Small Group setting allows a group of friends to love on people outside the group.
  - iv. Outreach and evangelism isn’t just an individual process. “It takes a village to win a sinner and raise them up!”
  - v. People can feel what a family is like and a handful of folks can “struggle” for them.
  - vi. This is where hearts can be knit in struggling for “our cause” – the cause of Christ in the earth.
- B.** Wealth Attained From (**Eph 1:18b** the inheritance for Christ and the believer found in the saints)
  - i. More than money, although that is part of God’s provision
  - ii. The spiritual wealth that comes from understanding everything you need to understand
  - iii. This begins with understanding the wealth of what is in the heart of the person next to you.
  - iv. EPH 1:18ff – I pray the eyes of your understanding be opened
    - a. Christ has an inheritance in his church – there is something He benefits from that results from his dying for us.
    - b. There is a treasure on the inside of each of us that is an inheritance of wealth for others In our life.
    - c. God has put “gold” – wealth – in the heart of the saints

who are around us. It is there to be drawn upon.

- d. When we distance ourselves from our brethren, we rob ourselves of the treasure, the inheritance that is found in the heart of the brother next to you.
- e. The enemy wants to use offense to keep the inheritance from one another. We must overcome the offense my brother may have against me due to my behavior so that I may draw upon the wealth of his heart.
- f. When we fail to overcome offense, we miss the inheritance that is ours to draw upon and enjoy.
- g. Don't leave your inheritance to be found in another because you got hurt. The offense may be an indicator of the treasure that is there for you to draw from.

**C. Full Assurance Of Understanding Redemption's Benefits**

- i. Knowing God's Mystery: Christ
  - a. That He was both man and God
  - b. That redemption could only be brought about by Christ's death
  - c. Where we can't figure out the mystery of God, that is where we worship. What we do understand is more than enough to offer worship.
  - d. Where our intellect reaches its limits, where the "mystery" is overwhelming, there we worship.

**D. Jesus commands us to love others as He loves us.**

- i. There will always be mystery, but we are to do what is not a mystery
- ii. Small Groups allow people to love people by allowing us to connect with one another and give time to others.
- iii. Here we learn to struggle, not only for our own lives, but for others.
- iv. Here we can find opportunity to see our lives "stitched" together so we can do something in God that is great.
- v. May we decide to "stitch" ourselves to others so as to draw up the wealth, the treasure of our inheritance in the lives of others.