

Body Building - Part One
“Caught by God” – Dealing with Intimacy
Pastor Dale Campfield - May 1st, 2011

Intro:

Matt 28:19 “Go and make disciples of all nations...”

ECC Process of Discipleship: Making an IMPACT...To Love...To Grow...To Serve

We have 3 priorities – To love...which is expressed in our Sunday morning celebration and connection groups. To grow...which is expressed in our Path to Discipleship. To serve...which is expressed in our daily lives in the places we live, work and play; as well as through the local church. The vision of E.C.C. is to gather together weekly for corporate worship, loving God and each other; then to come together in small Connection Groups for discipleship and fellowship, and are regularly involved in reaching out to others with the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ through community outreach. To Love...To Grow...To Serve!

Premise of Series: To Build up the Body of Christ in Order to Make a Kingdom IMPACT.

Thoughts: Why does the church exist? What is our purpose? I am convinced that the first & most important part of our purpose as a church is to seek to win the lost.

And I'm certain that as long as we recognize that as our ultimate purpose, the reason we exist, is to reach the lost, then as a congregation we will continue to grow. And I tell you unashamedly, "We plan to continue growing."

In the 2nd chapter of Acts, the church in Jerusalem began on the Day of Pentecost with 3,000 members, & by the 4th chapter it had grown to 5,000 men, not counting women & children. The Bible tells us that the Lord was adding to the church daily "those who were being saved." It was a growing church, & they had a concern. "How do we take care of all these new Christians?"

One of the most exciting times in life is when a baby is born. The parents rejoice, & we all "ooh" & "ah" over it. Then they take the baby home, & reality sets in. They're changing diapers & losing sleep & trying to figure out what's wrong with the crying child. The joy of new birth is followed by the responsibility of caring for & raising that child.

It's the same way in the church. People come to the Lord & we rejoice. But then comes the responsibility of bringing these baby Christians up in the Lord. Who is going to nurture them? Who is going to teach them & pray with them? Who is going to counsel them? Who is going to encourage them?

The early church evidently did a fairly good job of that, because we read in Acts 2:42 that these early Christians "continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching & fellowship, in the breaking of bread & prayers." You see, there is a second part to our purpose, & that is to make disciples, to nurture, to build up the Christians, to help them be all that they can be in this life. Thus we need, "Body Building"; so that the body of Christ can go forth, in unity, making an IMPACT for the Kingdom of God in making disciples of all in the path of their lives.

Illus: Have you ever seen a professional Body Builder?

- Muscles rippling and bulging, every part in sync, his whole body a perfect specimen of health. Today, I want to talk to you about becoming a Body Builder.
- Not the Body Builders we see on TV, but the Body Builders in the Church who work hard to make this Church Body a perfect specimen of health.

Theme Verses: Eph. 4:11-16

Key verse 12

"Prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."

Question: Why is this important?

Answer: Because the return of Christ is coming soon, and we, as the body of Christ, must do everything we can to make as great of an IMPACT for the Kingdom of God in the hearts of the people in the path of our life that we can. (Show our path to Discipleship here)

Series Overview: Here is what we will be dealing with during this series...

Part 1 – “Caught by God”... ...Dealing with Intimacy

Part 2 – "Caught Red Handed"... ...Dealing with Sin

Part 3 – “Caught Empty Handed”... ...Dealing with Giving

Part 4 – “Caught Loose Lipped”... ...Dealing with Strife

Part 5 – “Caught without Excuse”... ...Dealing with Confusion

Part 6 – “Caught Silent Lipped”... ...Dealing with Worship

HERE WE GO.....

Part 1 – “Caught by God”... ...Dealing with Intimacy

The Inspiration for this message came to me through Pastor Howard Bunch. I only read books that are recommended to me by people that I trust. I don't have time to waste to read a book that I'll not gain Kingdom Impact through. Pastor Howard is one my guys. He recommended to me, "Enjoying Intimacy with God" by j. Oswald Sanders. I read it on the flight to and from the Philippines this last week.

Question: How intimate are you with God?

Have you ever noticed how some people just seem to be closer to God? Some people just seem to have that relationship with Him that is truly intimate; more than others. Are there secrets we

may discover that would admit us to a similar intimacy? Our aim will be to answer that question this morning.

As I have found, both scripture and experience teach that it is we, not God, who determine the degree of intimacy with Him that we enjoy.

We are at this moment, as close to God as we really choose to be.

True, there are times when we would like to know a deeper intimacy, but when it comes to the point, we are not prepared to pay the price involved. The qualifying conditions are more stringent and exacting than we are prepared to meet; so we settle for a less demanding level of Christian living. Everything in our Christian life and service flows from our relationship with God. If we are not in vital fellowship with Him, everything else will be out of focus. But when our communion with Him is close and real, it is gloriously possible to experience a growing intimacy.

Today, we're going to look at **Four Circles of Intimacy with God** as found in examples in both the Old and New Testaments. If you're like me, you can't help but think of MOSES in the book of Exodus as our first example. We'll not have time for the NT. But it's with Jesus and His disciples if you want to do your own study.

O.T. Example - Moses on the mountain

The Outer Circle - Exodus 19:10-12 The General Population of Believers

As the Law was about to be given, God told Moses to prepare the nation for His manifestation on Mount Sinai. They would see His visible presence, but there were limits beyond which they must not pass.

¹⁰ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. ¹¹ And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. ¹² You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, 'Take heed to yourselves *that* you do *not* go up to the mountain or touch its base. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death.

The people could approach the mountain, but they could not ascend it, on pain of death. Barriers were erected to keep them at a distance from God.

Exodus 24:2

"Moses alone, however, shall come near to the Lord, but they shall not come near, nor shall the people come up with him" was the divine dictum.

Why the exclusiveness? The subsequent reactions of the people clearly demonstrated that they were neither qualified for nor desirous of coming too close to God. There were obviously conditions for a fresh revelation of God.

They did have a vision of God, but to them "The glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire on the mountain top" (**Exodus 24:17**)

The Second Circle - Exodus 24:9-11 The 73 Elders of Israel

(Notice how the group gets smaller. Those who truly desire intimacy with God are far and in-between.)

⁹ Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, ¹⁰ and they saw the God of Israel. And *there was* under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in *its* clarity. ¹¹ But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they ate and drank.

That group pressed past the barriers that excluded the rest of the nation and had a much more intimate vision of God than the people. They had a limited vision of God in His transcendence, a glimpse of the Eternal. It was probably a theophany. “They beheld God, and they ate and drank.”

They must have felt a very real and conscious sense of the divine presence. Their experience was far in advance of that of the people, but it effected no permanent transformation. Only a short time later, they were found worshipping the golden calf. They had a vision of God but showed that they were not qualified to ascent to the top of the mountain into deeper fellowship with God.

The Third Circle - Exodus 24:12-14 Moses and Joshua

¹² Then the LORD said to Moses, “Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them.” ¹³ So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God. ¹⁴ And he said to the elders, “Wait here for us until we come back to you...”

How quickly the numbers dwindled as the mountain path grew steeper! Of all Israel, only two qualified for inclusion in the third circle of intimacy. What was Joshua’s special qualification for that privilege? A clue is given in **Exodus 33:10-11...**

¹⁰ All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing *at* the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man *in* his tent door. ¹¹ So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

The tent was the place where the Shekinah Glory rested, and where God manifested Himself to His people. “Joshua...would not depart from the tent.” As Moses’ servant, he would have many errands to go on and services to perform, but whenever he was free from those duties, he made his way to the tent. He wanted to be where God manifested Himself. He would have been present on many occasions when the Lord spoke to Moses face to face; thus he enjoyed an intimacy with God excelled only by that of his leader, Moses. Although he fell short of the vision granted to Moses, he ascended higher on the glory-covered mountain than any of his contemporaries. The lesson for us does not need to be spelled out.

The Inner Circle - Exodus 24:15-17 Moses

¹⁵ Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain.
¹⁶ Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. ¹⁷ The sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. ¹⁸ So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

The divine summons must have filled Moses with awe as he climbed alone. The people in the outer circle saw only the consuming fire and feared. Moses saw in it the Glory of God and worshiped.

Exodus 33:11

¹¹ So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.

Exodus 33:18

¹⁸ And he said, "Please, show me Your glory."

Exodus 34:29-30

²⁹ Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. ³⁰ So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.

Conclusion:

Question: Which circle do you want to be found?

The Outer Circle - Exodus 19:10-12	The General Population of Believers
The Second Circle - Exodus 24:9-11	The 73 Elders of Israel
The Third Circle - Exodus 24:12-14	Moses and Joshua
The Inner Circle - Exodus 24:15-17	Moses

Psalm 24:3-4

Who may go up the mountain of the LORD? Who can stand in his holy place? The clean of hand and pure of heart.

Matt 5:8

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

It's time to get into the INNER CIRCLE with God, true intimacy, allowing Him to IMPACT our lives so that we can IMPACT those in the Path of Our Lives!

And as you do.... You wait, you watch, you'll see!