

WE ARE MEMBERS OF ONE ANOTHER #1

By Bill Walton

At a church in Lawrenceburg, TN there was a death in one of the families in the congregation.

- a. One of the women in the church called 5 other women in the church asking them to prepare food to take to the grieving family.
- b. All 5 women turned her down!

At a church in north Georgia a gospel preacher was brought in for a weeklong gospel meeting.

- c. During the course of the week not one family in the church invited him to their home for a meal. . .or a cup of coffee. . .or anything else.
- d. He stayed with the local preacher and his wife and ate all of his meals with them!

At a church in Birmingham, Al (the old Berney Points congregation) the church got into a turmoil over whether or not they could withdraw from some members who had quit attending.

- a. The situation became so bad, and so ugly, that on one Sunday morning they had 2 song leaders leading 2 different songs at the same time!
- b. They had 2 servings of the Lord's Supper.
- c. Tempers flared and some of the men came to blows in the parking lot.

At another church in Birmingham, Al (the old Midfield congregation) 2 of the elders wanted to change preachers, but the other elder (who was also the preacher) wanted to keep the preacher they had.

- a. The other 2 elders brought in another preacher (Roy Cogdill) to work with the congregation.
- b. The first Sunday, when the new preacher got up to preach, somebody tried to physically remove him from the pulpit. . .and somebody else physically restrained that somebody from doing it!!!
- c. That church split right down the middle, too.

These "horror stories" happen because some Christians do not have the slightest idea of what Paul teaches in Rom 12:4-5.

- a. They do not understand the relationship that they have with other Christians.
- b. And they do not understand what God requires of them in that relation- ship.

In Rom 12:4-5 Paul says, For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

- a. The lesson this morning will introduce a series of lessons which will be an in-depth study of Paul's teaching in this passage.

- b. Your understanding and acceptance of these lessons may very well determine where you spend eternity!
 - it is just that important!

1. The Bible teaches that Christ died in order to reconcile us to God and restore our relationship with God.

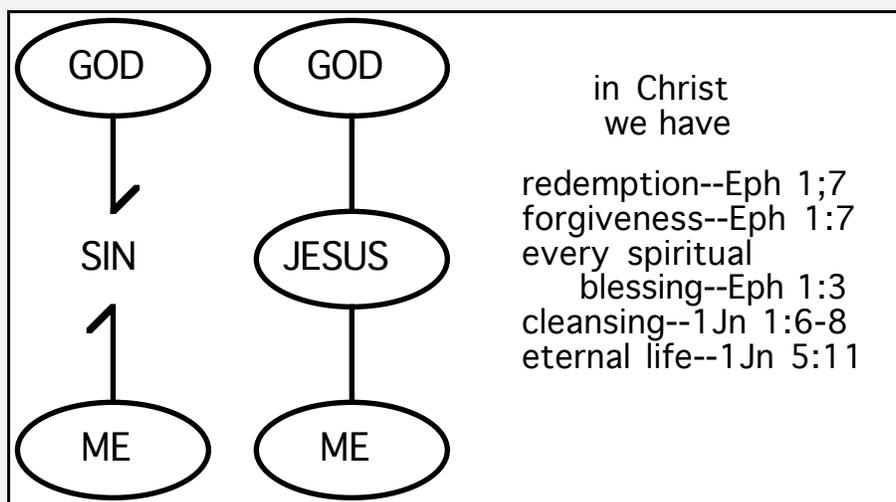
The Bible teaches that our sins have separated us from God.

- a. Sin. . .whether due to ignorance, indifference, or rebellion. . .is (1) doing what God's law forbids -- 1Jn 3:4, or (2) not doing what God's law requires -- Jas 4:17.
- b. And the Bible teaches, and human experience confirms, that all have sinned, and are guilty before God, and are without excuse to offer any defense for ourselves -- Rom 3:9; 3:19.
- c. And the terrible consequence of sin is spiritual death, which is separation from God -- Jas 1:13-15; Is 59:1-2.

But the gospel, "the word of reconciliation," makes known that there is a way to be reconciled to God thru Jesus Christ -- 2Cor 5:17-20.

CHART # 1

The Bible teaches that Christ died, and the gospel is preached, to reconcile us to God . . . to restore our relationship to God -- 2Cor 5:17-20.



So, sin separates us from God. But Jesus reconciles us to God and restores our relationship with God.

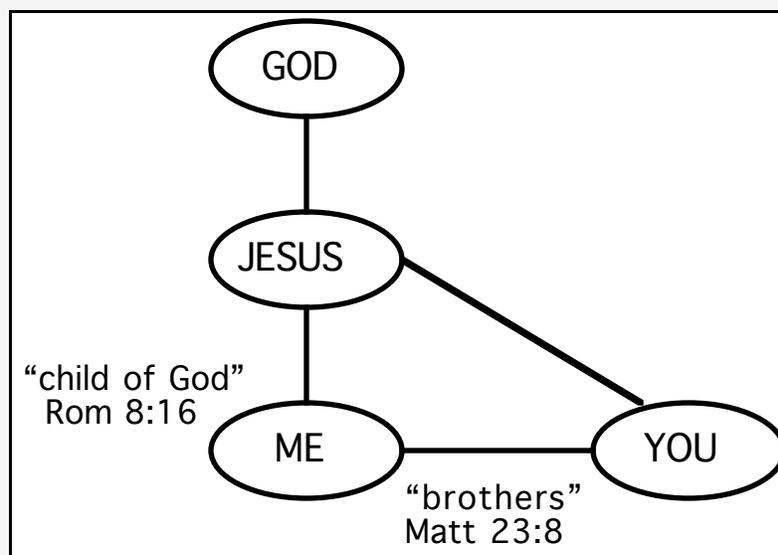
So, sin separates us from God. But Jesus reconciles us to God and restores our relationship with God.

a. But there is much more to the religion of Christ than that.

2. The Bible teaches that our special relationship with God brings us into a special relationship with all others who are reconciled to God --1Jn 1:3-7; Rom 12:4-5.

CHART #2

**The Bible teaches that our special relationship with God creates a special relationship with all other reconciled people –
1Jn 1:3-7; Rom 12:4-5.**



So, everyone who is reconciled to God becomes a child of God and has a special relationship to every other child of God.

One who is reconciled to God is a child of God: “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God” -- Rom 8:16.

- a. And all children of God are brothers and sisters to one another: “But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren” -- Matt 23:8.

One who is reconciled to God is a member of Christ: “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?” -- 1Cor 6:15.

- a. And all members of Christ are members of one another: “so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another” -- Rom 12:5.

One who is reconciled to God is a servant of God: “as free, yet not as using your liberty as a cloak for vice, but as servants of God” -- 1Pet 2:16.

- a. And all servants of God are fellow servants: “And a white robe was given to each of them, and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed” -- Rev 6:11.

- Note: “fellow” is from a Greek prefix meaning “together with”

One who is reconciled to God is a worker in God’s house: “Be diligent to pre-sent yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”--2Tim 2:15.

- a. And all of God’s workers are fellow workers: “And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life” -- Phil 4:3.

So, everyone who is reconciled to God becomes a child of God and enters into a special relationship to every other child of God.

- a. That the relationship between Christians is a special relationship is made clear in such passages as Gal 6:10.

3. The Bible teaches that our special relationship to one another involves responsibilities to one another.

The New Testament sometimes likens our relationship to God and to one another to that of a “body”. . . with Christ as head of the body and every Christian as a “member of the body”-- Rom 12:4-5; Eph 4:14-16.

- a. Describing the church as a “body” emphasizes 2 basic ideas:
 - One: each Christian is a living part of Christ’s spiritual body, the church, and each has a spiritual work to do -- 1Cor 12:12-19; 1Pet 2:5.
 - Two: as Christians, and members of the same body, we belong to each other and need each other -- 1Cor 12:20-27.

Looking up the phrase “one another” in a Bible concordance, and reading every N.T. passage where it is used, will go a long way toward helping us to understand and appreciate the responsibilities we have to one another.

- a. Consider the following “one another” passages:

CHART #3

The Bible teaches that our special relationship to one another involves responsibilities to one another.

- Love one another--Jn 13:34
- Be kindly affectionate to one another--Rom 12:10
- Be submissive to one another--1Pet 5:5
- Be of the same mind toward one another--Rom 12:16
- Have the same care for one another--1Cor 12:25
- Let each esteem others better than himself--Phil 2:3
- Consider one another to stir up love and good works--Heb 10:24
- Be hospitable to one another--1Pet 4:9; Rom 12:13
- Pursue the things that make for peace and the things whereby
- One may edify another--Rom 14:19
- Always seek after that which is good for one another--1Th 5:15
- Teach and admonish one another--Col 3:16
- Exhort one another daily--Heb 3:13
- Comfort one another and edify one another--1Th 5:11
- Bear one another's burdens--Gal 6:2
- Through love serve one another--Gal 5:13
- Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving--Eph 4:32
- In honor giving preference to one another--Rom 12:10
- Confess your trespasses to one another and pray for one
- Another--Jas 5:16
- Receive one another--Rom 15:7
- Greet one another with a holy kiss--Rom 16:16

So, the responsibilities we have to one another are many . . . and vitally important.

b. These things require your interest, your effort, and your time.

- You have to really care about one another.

So, the responsibilities we have to one another are many, and they are vitally important.

c. The series of lessons to follow will involve us in a close study of many of these responsibilities.

4. The Bible teaches that fulfilling our responsibilities to one another is vital to our relationship to God.

I suppose one of the biggest misunderstandings we have about the religion of Christ is thinking that we can get along with God and not get along with one another. . .that we can serve God and not serve one another.

- a. But listen to Jesus in *Matt 25:40, 45-46*.

CHART #4

The Bible teaches that our continuing relationship with God requires our continuing fulfillment of our responsibilities to one another.

Matt 25:31-46

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.”

³³ “And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’”

³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? ³⁸ When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? ³⁹ Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ ⁴⁰ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’”

⁴¹ “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’”

⁴⁴ “Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ ⁴⁵ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’”

⁴⁶ “And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

- *vs40 -- Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me*

- *vs45 -- Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me*
- *vs46 -- And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life*

Conclusion.

It is a fact that in many congregations brethren are fighting and warring among themselves. This is evidenced by . . .

- a. The multiplying of small churches.
 - Brethren get to fighting among themselves in a church, so a bunch of them just leave and start another church a few blocks away.
 - Example: 5 Missionary Baptist churches on a 5 mile stretch of road in Kingsport, TN (but it's not just Missionary Baptists who can't get along with one another)
- b. The many preachers who are quitting full-time preaching work.
 - Many preachers are becoming discouraged by the constant bickering, pouting, and fighting among brethren
- c. The stagnation of churches.
 - Many churches are not growing because they aren't working . . .

And they aren't working because their attention and energy have been diverted to their own internal problems

It is also a fact that in many congregations the members do not have any real involvement with one another, show little interest in one another, and know little about each other.

- a. Many Christians have over-committed their time and energies to every- thing except the Lord's work.
 - No time for the Lord or the Lord's people
 - No real commitment to the Lord or their brethren in the Lord
- b. The result is "church building religion."

I don't know which is worse: the enmity among brethren, or the indifference.

- c. But I do know this: both are opposite to true religion.

Brethren, we being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another, and we had better start acting like it.