

COMMUNITY

IS OUR MIDDLE NAME

Connect

Which would you enjoy playing more: a team or solo sport? Why?

Review

Take a couple of minutes to review some of the main ideas from the sermon:

1. **The goal is Christ-like maturity.** Salvation isn't just forgiveness and eternity; it includes total transformation into the "whole measure of the fullness of Christ." Without that growth, we stay spiritually immature, easily tossed around by whatever voice is loudest.
2. **The path is committed community.** Spiritual growth doesn't happen in isolation; God uses committed community as the means by which we grow into Christlike maturity. Community is messy and difficult, but the friction of relationships brings our rough edges to the surface and gives God opportunities to transform us.
3. **The process is honest conversation.** We grow when people who love us are willing to speak the truth in love, helping us see blind spots and make the changes necessary to become more like Jesus. Healthy community holds truth and love together, creating relationships where we can address conflict, receive correction, apologize, and forgive one another.

Read Ephesians 4:11-16

11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. 14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16 From

him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Make Observations: After reading Ephesians 4:11-16 out loud, give your group a few minutes to make observations on their own. Then go around the group and share the things you observed and discuss them.

Discuss

1. Think of one person who has helped you grow spiritually. What about that relationship helped you become more Christ-like?
2. Pastor Clayton compared Christianity to football — you can't play it alone, and trying will leave you bored or hurt. Are there seasons of your life where you have tried to play “spiritual football” by yourself? If so, what were the consequences?
3. *"You don't grow in spite of the mess. You grow because of it."* Can you think of a time when friction or conflict in a relationship actually revealed something in you that needed to change in your life? How might this idea shape the way you engage in Christian community?
4. Pastor Clayton talked about four different quadrants (no truth/no love, high truth/low love, high love/low truth, high truth/high love). What quadrant would you put yourself in most often? What would it look like to move toward the top-right corner?
5. Is there someone in your life who has permission to speak the truth to you, in love, especially when it's hard to hear? If not, why do you think that is? Is there anything stopping you from having those kind of relationships?

Apply & Pray

Break up into smaller groups of three, and silently reflect on this question in prayer: God, in what ways have I tried to grow on my own instead of inviting others in? Are there areas of my life where I need to let others in?

Then, after listening for God's response, respond to this question: What's one small step you want to take to engage more authentically in your relationships (e.g., having honest conversations, being vulnerable, speaking truth in love, etc.)?

Then, after sharing, have one person close in prayer over the group.