

2017 INSPIRE LEADERS CONFERENCE: Session II, “One Heart”

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“Now the multitude of those who believed were of ONE HEART AND ONE SOUL; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with GREAT POWER the apostles gave WITNESS TO THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS. And GREAT GRACE was upon them all.” Acts 4:32-36 (NKJV)

GateWay City Church is a spiritual family on a mission together!

Today I want to tell you a little bit about my family, because when we talk about ONE HEART we are really saying WE ARE FAMILY. My Dad was from a large Chicago Italian Pentecostal family. They ran a music store and were crazy, poor and happy. My Mom was from a small Texas town. Her family was small and broken. They had money but they were not real happy. Alcoholism and a tragic death left a mark on them. These two met at a dance hall in Oakland and married. Mom became pregnant just as my Dad shipped out for Korea for 18 months. He returned, became a plumber and then a business man. They raised our family here in the Bay Area and though we now live in different cities, we carry the same DNA and we are ONE. Out of two very different backgrounds came ONE FAMILY, ONE DNA.

WE ARE A SUPERNATURAL FAMILY!

“I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named...” Ephesians 3:15 (NKJV)

The Greek word for family in this verse is patria, “a lineage of people having common roots and a joint inheritance.” We ARE a family because we have ONE Father, common roots, and by Christ a heavenly inheritance. Awesome!

The church is a supernatural family that God uses to bless the world.

From Abraham on down, this has been our story. The Bible is the story of a supernatural family called to bless the world. God has placed spiritual fathers and mothers sisters and bothers into this family, and it is still his goal:

“Every nation on the earth will be blessed through your descendants. I will do this because you obeyed me.” Genesis 22:18 (ERV)

“If you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:29 (NKJV)

Each of you are important in this family - as a father, mother, sister, brother - Each of us placed here by God:

“God places the lonely in FAMILIES; he sets the prisoners free and gives them joy.” Psalm 68:6 (NLT)

How I rejoice that God has brought us all together into a family. We’ll never be lonely, lack purpose or history.

SO HOW DOES A “ONE HEART” SPIRITUAL FAMILY FUNCTION? Let’s get practical!

When Paul the apostle wrote his epistles, he was writing to family. We see his ONE HEART guidelines in...

Ephesians 4:1-16 (NLT) - “Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always **BE HUMBLE AND GENTLE. BE PATIENT** with each other, **MAKING ALLOWANCE FOR EACH OTHER’S FAULTS** because of your **LOVE**. Make every effort to **KEEP YOURSELVES UNITED** in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is **ONE BODY** and **ONE SPIRIT**, just as you have been called to **ONE GLORIOUS HOPE** for the future. There is **ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM**, one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.

“However, **HE HAS GIVEN EACH ONE OF US A SPECIAL GIFT** through the generosity of Christ. That is why the Scriptures say, “When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people.” ...Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to **EQUIP GOD’S PEOPLE TO DO HIS WORK** and **BUILD UP THE CHURCH**, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such **UNITY** in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be **MATURE IN THE LORD**, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

“Then we will **NO LONGER BE IMMATURE** like children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will **SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE, GROWING IN EVERY WAY MORE AND MORE LIKE CHRIST**, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As **EACH PART DOES ITS OWN SPECIAL WORK**, it helps the other parts grow, so that **THE WHOLE BODY IS HEALTHY AND GROWING AND FULL OF LOVE.**”

Paul paints a vivid picture of how God’s family flourishes for God’s purpose. He calls us to...

1. ONE HEART OF LOVE

Paul said, Always **BE HUMBLE AND GENTLE. BE PATIENT** with each other, **MAKING ALLOWANCE FOR EACH OTHER’S FAULTS** because of your **LOVE**...we will **SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE**...until the whole body is healthy and growing and **FULL OF LOVE**.

In a family, everyone is loved and accepted. We cannot allow pride, roughness or impatience with flaws kill our relationships. Families have imperfect members. Families do fight and have issues. They get offended and bothered. But at the end of the day, families have one heart of love, and that’s how a church family must be.

To truly love, we have to get over our failures and offenses.

When you mess up, you should be loved back into the family. When I flooded the church in the middle of our missions conference, I was loved back into the family. Don’t worry if you mess up. Fix your mistakes!

2. ONE HEART OF UNITY

Paul wrote, Make every effort to **KEEP YOURSELVES UNITED** in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is **ONE BODY** and **ONE SPIRIT**, just as you have been called to **ONE GLORIOUS HOPE** for the future. There is **ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM**, one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.

To truly be united, we have to deal with our divisions.

- **A lot of division naturally comes from the diversity of perspectives and opinions.** We can learn to lay these down for the sake of unity. Diversity doesn’t mean division. We can see things differently without ruining family.

- **Yet much disunity is purely demonic.** It is fueled by human pride and spirits of division that love to stop ONE. We need ONE HEART of unity to defeat division and maintain one heart of unity, just as Jesus interceded...

“I’m no longer going to be visible in the world; They’ll continue in the world while I return to you. Holy Father, guard them as they pursue this life that you conferred as a gift through me, so they can be ONE HEART AND MIND as we are ONE HEART AND MIND...The goal is for all of them to become ONE HEART AND MIND—Just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, so they might be ONE HEART AND MIND WITH US. Then the world might believe that you, in fact, sent me.” John 17:11, 21 (MSG)

3. ONE HEART OF ENGAGEMENT

Paul continued, However, HE HAS GIVEN EACH ONE OF US A SPECIAL GIFT through the generosity of Christ. That is why the Scriptures say, “When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people.” ...Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to EQUIP GOD’S PEOPLE TO DO HIS WORK and BUILD UP THE CHURCH, the body of Christ...EACH PART DOES ITS OWN SPECIAL WORK, it helps the other parts grow, so that THE WHOLE BODY IS HEALTHY AND GROWING AND FULL OF LOVE.

Some people want all the benefits of family but none of the obligations.

In a family, everyone has a vital part to play. Each of us has a gift and a purpose. Each of us is connected to a gift - your leaders are here as a gift in your life, placed there by Christ Himself. Each of us is being equipped to function in God’s House and extend the ministry of Jesus into the world.

Are you using your gift in the church?

To truly be engaged, we have to deal with our tendencies to isolate.

4. ONE HEART OF MATURITY

Paul described the process of growth and maturity in the family: “This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be MATURE in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. Then we will NO LONGER BE IMMATURE like children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, GROWING IN EVERY WAY MORE AND MORE LIKE CHRIST, who is the head of his body, the church.

In a family, everyone grows and flourishes. We love babies, but we’d be concerned if they stayed babies. To flourish as a family, we have to encourage and allow each other to take on greater responsibility as we mature in character. The ultimate goal is to be fully grown and completely adjusted like Jesus!

To truly be mature, we have to set aside our childish ways.

No more childish ways, like selfishness, pouting, whining, resisting responsibility, fighting, not sharing...and no more falling for the lies and tricks of manipulative ministries and fakers. A heart of strong steady maturity!

Paul is giving us the plan for the church and our roles and responsibilities as a family: ITS ALL ABOUT THE HEART...HAVING ONE HEART OF LOVE, UNITY, ENGAGEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE HAVE ONE HEART AND SOUL LIKE THE EARLY CHURCH?

“Now the multitude of those who believed were of ONE HEART AND ONE SOUL; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with GREAT POWER the apostles gave WITNESS TO THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS. And GREAT GRACE was upon them all.” Acts 4:32-33

Great influence will fall on us when we are one heart and soul.

Satan literally hates what is happening in this family. GOD IS MAKING US ONE, AND GIVING US INCREASING INFLUENCE TO REACH PEOPLE IN CITIES. Satan is opposing it, and he will use every trick, but we will resist him because we are a family and we fight together. AND WE WILL FINISH OUR ASSIGNMENT!

The Challenge: Let's treat each other as family, and work together to bless the world!

This has to become our heart and soul —our core—as a church, as a movement. I want each of us to settle in, get cozy, get committed and be of ONE HEART.

My journey into this ministry has been a family journey. My family was great, but for many reasons I never felt completely connected. I was supposed to follow my Father into a family business, but I ended up following my spiritual father into a spiritual family and mission. This house has become my real family home...my place of purpose, connection and mission.

GOD HAS PUT US TOGETHER - HE SETS THE SOLITARY INTO FAMILIES - FOR A PURPOSE.

Now our best days as a family are ahead. As we grow, we won't lose the family feeling. We increase it.

With Phoenix, we are not losing a family...we are building a family.

- Let's pray over our UNITY - Break everything that isolates, divides us
- Commit to being ONE HEART, ONE FAMILY despite our differences