

## How People Change

### Chapter 5: Change is a Community Project

#### CPR preview:

*Central Point:* God's work of personal transformation is intended to take place within the community of God's people.

*Personal Application:* I need to be committed to a lifestyle of mutually helpful relationships.

*Relational Application:* I want to help others pursue relationships that promote biblical growth and chance.

#### The Big Question:

What daily resources are yours because you are part of the community of Christ? Are you taking advantage of these resources? What resources and gifts do you bring to the body of Christ?

#### Discuss:

**Q:** Can anyone give an example of a time when you experienced the love of Christ through your church, small group, or Bible study?

**Q:** Can anyone share an example of a time when God used someone to expose, grow, or change you?

#### Study:

“When Christ brings us into the family of God, no matter how much we have messed up, we are never alone again. Yet many believers latch onto the hope of personal change while clinging to the individualism of our society. They have a “Jesus and me” mentality as they battle sin and seek to become more like Christ. At first we might think, *Why not? After all, getting involved with people is complicated and time consuming. Who needs it? It's not very efficient when we have a lot of personal changing to do.*

But God has a bigger – and, frankly, messier – plan. Change is something God intends his people to experience *together*. It's a corporate goal. What God does in each of us as individuals is part of a larger story of redemption that involves all God's people through the ages. You are part of the story and part of the family already, and that is the context in which personal change takes place in your life ... **Change within community is counterintuitive to the way we often think, but Scripture clearly presents it as God's way of making us more like Christ**” (HPC Facilitator's Guide p. 49).

#### Ephesians 4:1-7:

*1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that*

*belongs to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. 7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.*

- “one” = 7 times!
- Our Triune God (the three are one) and our own community (the many are one)
- “God is community and this is stamped on all he creates” (HPC FG p. 50).
  - Examples: Adam and Eve, Ark, Abraham, Old Covenant/Israel, New Covenant/Church

### **Ephesians 2:14-22:**

*14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. 17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

- **Q:** In this passage, what is God seeking to produce in us, his people?
- **Q:** What has God done to make this possible?
- **Q:** How does this vision impact you? Does it surprise you? Intimidate you? Annoy you? Encourage you? How much does your life currently allow you to develop relationships that are deep enough to help you grow and change? What are some of the obstacles to such relationships?

### **Ephesians 3:14-21**

*14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

- **Q:** What is Paul praying for in this passage?
- **Q:** What language does Paul use that shows he believed these things would come from God through community?

## 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

*12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves[d] or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” 22 On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, 24 which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, 25 that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. 26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. 27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.*

**Q:** How are your gifts meant to serve other members of the body as they seek to reflect and honor Christ?

**Q:** What gifts do you need from others to help you do the same thing?

**Q:** Apply these ideas to a specific situation in church life: a sudden death in a family

“What is the point of all this? God’s work of change has relationships both as a necessary means and a wonderful goal. Humble, community is not the icing on the cake of Christianity. In a real way, it *is* the cake. These relationships of love are a means of personal growth, a mark of God’s people being purified, and a clear argument to the world for the truth of the gospel” (HPC FG p. 54).

### Review CPR

#### Make it Real:

- So, what gets in the way? Business of life (relationships stay distant and casual)? Friendships that are exclusively activity/happiness based? Conscious avoidance of close relationships? Formal commitment to church meetings and activities but no real connections? One-way ministry relationships that serve others but never allow others to minister to you? Self-centered, self-absorbed relationships that always receive but never give? A private, “me and God” approach to the Christian life? Theology as a replacement for community – knowing God as a life of study rather than the pursuit of God and his people in community?
- Who really knows you? Who speaks into your life? What is their name? When was the last time they helped you see yourself?
- What opportunities for redemptive relationships are already in your life that could be fostered?
- What concrete steps can you take to build these relationships? Will you? When?

1. **Mark 9:50** Be at peace with one another.
2. **John 13:34** A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another
3. **John 15:12** You love one another as I have loved you
4. **John 15:17** These things I command you, so that you will love one another.
5. **Romans 12:10a** Love one another with brotherly affection.
6. **Romans 12:10b** Outdo one another in showing honor.
7. **Romans 12:16** Live in harmony with one another.
8. **Romans 14:13** Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another
9. **Romans 15:5** Live in harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,
10. **Romans 15:7** Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you
11. **Romans 16:16** Greet one another with a holy kiss.
12. **1 Cor. 12:25** The members may have the same care for one another.
13. **1 Cor. 16:20** Greet one another with a holy kiss.
14. **2 Cor. 13:11a** Comfort one another,
15. **2 Cor. 13:11b** Agree with one another,
16. **2 Cor. 13:12** Greet one another with a holy kiss.
17. **Galatians 5:13** Through love serve one another.
18. **Galatians 5:26** Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.
19. **Ephes. 4:2** Bearing with one another in love,
20. **Ephes. 4:32a** Be kind to one another, tenderhearted,
21. **Ephes. 4:32b** Forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
22. **Ephes. 5:19** Addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs
23. **Ephes. 5:21** Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.
24. **Col. 3:9** Do not lie to one another
25. **Col. 3:13a** Bearing with one another and
26. **Col. 3:13b** Forgiving each other
27. **Col. 3:16** Teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom
28. **1 Thess. 3:12** Increase and abound in love for one another
29. **1 Thess. 4:9** You yourselves have been taught by God to love one another,
30. **1 Thess. 4:18** Therefore encourage one another with these words.
31. **1 Thess. 5:11** Therefore encourage one another and build one another up
32. **1 Thess. 5:15** Always seek to do good to one another
33. **Heb. 3:13** But exhort one another every day
34. **Heb. 10:24** And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works
35. **James 4:11** Do not speak evil against one another
36. **James 5:9** Do not grumble against one another
37. **James 5:16a** Confess your sins to one another
38. **James 5:16b** Pray for one another
39. **1 Peter 1:22** Love one another earnestly from a pure heart
40. **1 Peter 4:8** keep loving one another earnestly
41. **1 Peter 4:9** Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.
42. **1 Peter 4:10** As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another
43. **1 Peter 5:5** Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another
44. **1 Peter 5:14** Greet one another with the kiss of love.
45. **1 John 1:7** If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another
46. **1 John 3:11** We should love one another.
47. **1 John 3:23** Love one another, just as he has commanded us.
48. **1 John 4:7** Beloved, let us love one another
49. **1 John 4:11** Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
50. **2 John 1:5** Love one another.