

There is something in the body of Christ, the church, more important than money. In this lesson we will uncover a life changing truth: God values healthy relationships more than he values our sacrifices, our money or our service. Our obedience in doing our part to protect the body of Christ from broken relationships is at the heart of today's study.

1. **READ Matthew 5:22-24**

How do these verses express the idea that God values unity over money and that unity in the community of believers is more important than acts of worship?

2. **COMMENT:** *In 1 Samuel 15, King Saul is told to attack the Amalekites and to utterly destroy everything that remotely resembled them. However Saul made a slight adjustment in his instructions from the Lord.*

READ 1 Samuel 15:9-22

- What did Saul fail to do?
- What were his reasons for doing what he did?
- Why do you think that the Lord is more concerned with obedience than good intentions?
- Where so you see this idea of "good intentions" being more important than obedience in society today?

3. **COMMENT:** *In the book of the prophet Amos in chapter 5 we read of the enthusiastic worship of the nation. However God rejects that worship.*

READ Amos 5:18-24 and Isaiah 1:10-20

- Why did God not accept their worship?
- How upset would you say God is with His people at this point in history?
- What does God want to happen? (Is. 1:17)
- What relationship does God want for his people to have with those around them?
- What promise does God make to his people?
- What relationship do you see between this story in ancient history and the modern day church?

4. **READ Jeremiah 7:21-27 (NIV)**

- Why do you think this is such a sad story?
- Do you see any parallels in today's world and today's church?

5. **RE-READ Matthew 5: 22-24**

- What act of obedience are we told to do in verse 24?

6. **READ Matthew 6:14-15**

- a. What is the consequence written in this verse of our not maintaining unity in the body of Christ?
- b. Why do you think earthly forgiveness is linked to heavenly forgiveness?

7. **READ 1 Corinthians 11:27-30**

COMMENT: *The phrase 'unworthy manner' means without regard to the unity of the body of Christ. Unworthiness here, does not mean what we may feel about ourselves, but rather we make ourselves 'unworthy' to partake in communion when we are at odds with another believer who is also a member of the body of Christ.*

- a. What sin is committed when we take the Lord's supper with bitterness or dispute in our hearts about another believer?
- b. What is it that brings judgement on us?
- c. In verse 30 there are specific issues talked about. What are they? The phrase 'fallen asleep' refers to premature death, or death before they should have died.
- d. Discuss how harbouring resentment, bitterness, anger, jealousy discord and the like can make us sick?

COMMENT: *One of the reasons the Lord gave us this ordinance of communion was to keep us healthy spiritually and thereby keeping us healthy physically.*

- a. Discuss the comment above.
- b. Is there someone in the body of Christ you need to make amends with?

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

STEP 8 in the A.A. program says that we have made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. Please note the word WILLING.

Start by making a list of the people you have harmed. While this may frighten you, remember at this point you are only making a list. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you compile the list. At this stage in your journey you are not randomly trying to make all things right with every one, you are not acting on this list...you are **just making a list.**

During this week begin to pray over your list. Listen carefully to the Holy Spirit. Do not just run out and try to fix things. STEP 9 warns us that we are willing to "Make direct amends to such people wherever possible, **except when to do so would injure them or others**". (others being yourself as well)

It is important that you seek spiritual counsel from a trusted person before you deal with issues of abuse, neglect, abandonment etc.

This week's Journey to Freedom is to just make the list and begin to pray. For now leave the results to God.

Read and meditate and memorise Romans 12:18.