

LESSON NO. 13

DISCIPLESHIP WITH PASSION

DISCIPLESHIP
LESSONS FOR
YOUNG ADULTS

MEMBERSHIP

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LESSON NO. 13

MEMBERSHIP

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Biblical Basis: Ephesians 2:19
Text to memorize: Acts 9:18



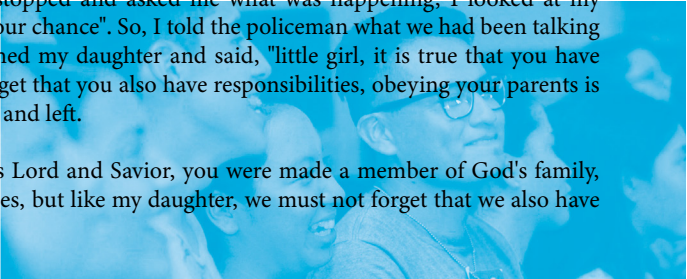
PURPOSE

That the new brothers, who have been baptized, have a learning about their local church, their duties, and rights as members of the congregation.

REAL LIFE STORY

I have received the blessing of being the father of 3 beautiful young ladies. Fatherhood gives us many good, bad, and anecdotal experiences, I want to share one of the latter with you. One afternoon, when my daughters came back from elementary school and we were getting ready to eat, one of my daughters got upset with the food my wife had prepared, so we scolded her. Seeing that she did not change her attitude, I told her that I would have to punish her until she was grateful and respectful to her mother and to God for His provision. In those days at school, they had taught her what were the rights that the law grants to children, so with an authoritarian voice she complained; "I have rights that the constitution supports (I don't think she understood what she was saying), so either you give me what I want to eat or I'm going to accuse you with the police." We were in the front yard of the house, and she was crying when she complained, in the meantime a police car that passed in front of us stopped and asked me what was happening, I looked at my daughter and said, "this is your chance". So, I told the policeman what we had been talking about, he, smiling approached my daughter and said, "little girl, it is true that you have rights, but you must not forget that you also have responsibilities, obeying your parents is one of them," he hugged her and left.

When you accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, you were made a member of God's family, you have rights and privileges, but like my daughter, we must not forget that we also have responsibilities.



WHAT DOES THE SCRIPTURE SAY?

The apostle Paul writes a letter to the group of disciples who lived in the city of Ephesus, the letter is named "Ephesians." In this letter he seeks to explain some key teachings of Christianity, one of which is how we became part of the "family of God."

In verse 19 of chapter 2 the apostle Paul wrote, "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of His household." These words are really beautiful, when we read carefully, we can see how Paul is pointing out how we go from a state of separation to now being "fellow citizens and members", two terms that unite us. The first term indicates that we are part of a group of people who have the same citizenship and are distinguished for being saints, and the second is a term that today is very easily misinterpreted, since there are many types of members, such as membership in a sports club, a business that gives special prices to its members, etc. However, the apostle is pointing out that this membership unites us to God as a family. The term he uses is "oikos", a term used to talk about home and family. Paul says that we belong to God's house, we are part of His home and a member of His family.

The same day that you accepted the love of God through Jesus Christ, by receiving Him as Lord and Savior, He gave you the right to be constituted a member of the family of God, now He is our Father.

Let's read John 1:12; "Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God" (*Strong. New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. Caribe/Bethany Editors. Thomas Nelson, 2002*).

Apostle Paul uses the figure of the family to exemplify the way in which our relationship with God is established. One detail that we must remember is that we are members, not because we deserve it, but because of His mercy, because of His love and grace. Our natural state was one of enmity and separation, but God did what was necessary so that we could be saved and established in His family (read Ephesians 2:1-10).

The language that John uses allows us to see the roles that exist in the family of God; we are His children, and He is our Father. The family of God is called the church, so membership in the family of God manifests itself in your membership in the universal and local church. The universal church is one that is made up of all those who experienced and will experience salvation through Jesus Christ through faith at all times and in all places. While the local church is that group of people saved by Christ in a specific place, at a given moment in history, like the church of the Ephesians, the church of the Galatians, etc.

"Immediately, something like flakes fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized."

- Acts 9:18



MEMBERS?

As we have been pointing out, as a community of faith, through the study of the Bible and dialogue, we have come to have clear expressions of our conviction and in relation to membership.

The Church of the Nazarene Manual states the following: “The membership of a local church shall consist of all who have been organized as a church by those authorized so to do and who have been publicly received by those having proper authority, after having declared their experience of salvation, their belief in our doctrines, and their willingness to submit to our government.” (*Paragraph 23: Manual of the Church of the Nazarene, p. 32-33*).

As we can see, membership implies privileges and responsibilities, not everyone who wants to can be a member of the church, he needs to meet 3 requirements.

First, have the experience of salvation and have declared it (this declaration must be public, in the last lesson we spoke of baptism as the public expression of our faith). Second, be in tune with our beliefs. The expressions of our church are in constant revision, trying to be more and more biblical and clear at the same time, but it needs a commitment on our behalf to know and understand our faith. Third, goodwill must be shown to submit to our government. The idea of submission today is despised, and the opposite attitude is fueled by rebellion and independence, however, a true conversion to Christ leads us to understand that there is a submission that is healthy, especially when authority is committed to God and His Word.

Are you a member of the church? Yes () No ()

What are the 3 requirements to be a member of the church?

Do you have any questions about the importance of membership?



BIBLICAL SUPPORT



Carefully read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 and Ephesians 4:17-32.

We must remember that they are letters that the Apostle Paul wrote to 2 churches. The first is the church of the city of Corinth and the second is the church of the city of Ephesus.

As you read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, what figure does Paul use to refer to the Corinthian church?

In 1 Corinthians 12:26, what should happen to the other members when one is hurt or honored?

In the passage, the apostle Paul mentions the functions of the members of the body and their gifts, how does this truth relate to the life and development of the local church?

According to Ephesians 4:25, what relationship do we have with those who are part of our faith community, our local church?

According to the passage from Ephesians 4:17-32, what are the changes of habits and character that we should seek in our lives?





REFLECTION

As we have seen, we are members of the family of God, members of the body of Christ (the universal church), and members of one another (the local church). God has planned that we live in community, loving each other in such a way that we can express that love through the use of the gifts that He has given us, that is, exercising our function in the body, but He has also established habits and a lifestyle that builds up this community to which we belong.

What changes have you experienced in your life that positively affect your relationship with your faith community?

What do you consider to be the privileges or rights that you receive as a member of the family of God?

As a member of God's family, you now have direct access to Him to converse and share with Him your moments of joy or sadness. Also, the company and support of your community of faith, the exercise of your gifts and the benefits of exercising the gifts of other members, etc.



PRACTICE

Today there is a rejection to the community of faith, it has been accused of hypocrisy and lack of love. Sadly, we must recognize that it is a reality that we urgently need to change, but it will not be achieved by just pointing out what is wrong, we need to start by being members who sincerely love others, also accepting their limitations, defects, and bad habits, and encouraging them to be transformed through our example.

Are you ready to be a member of your faith community? Yes () No ()

Will you seek to cultivate a positive and purposeful attitude in relation to the areas of improvement in your faith community? Yes () No ()

I encourage you to talk to your leader or Pastor about your decision.