



MVCF

April 2025 Newsletter

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Pastor's Pen

“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” -Proverbs 27:17

For the first few months of this year in my newsletter article I have suggested that the biblical pathway to change is not to try harder, but instead to put ourselves in the way of God's grace so that he can change us to make us more like Jesus. The steps we take to put ourselves in the way of God's grace are what theologians call “means of grace.” And so I am using these first few months of 2025 to explore various means of grace, so that we can get in the way and stay in the way of God's transforming grace throughout 2025. So far we have looked at the Bible and prayer as key means of grace. This month, I want to explore another means of grace that is equally important yet often neglected in one's discipleship to Jesus: brothers and sisters in Christ. If we want to be closer to God so that we can be transformed by God, we need other Christ-followers in our lives to make that happen.

Worship Schedule

- 8:30 a.m. Sunday Adult Sunday School
- 9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship Service
- 10:00 a.m. Sunday Children's Bible Adventure

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Why is fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ as a means of spiritual growth so often neglected? Well for one, we live in a highly individualistic society, where we are encouraged to dig down deep within ourselves to accomplish our goals; relying on others for help is often seen as a weakness in our culture. Sadly, the slogan “me, Jesus, and my bible,” reflecting this individualism, is too commonly heard in many Christian circles. But two, many of us have had experiences where we have been hurt by a brother or sister in Christ, making it hard to trust others with the deep matters of our heart. So we may be happy to come to church and enjoy worshiping together and enjoy a meal together, but anything more vulnerable than that is hard for many of us. Thus we default to a highly individualistic, personal relationship with God, and only turn to others for help when we really find ourselves stuck in our walk with Jesus.

But the bible clearly calls us to experience deep, intimate, personal, and vulnerable relationships with fellow Christ-followers as a regular part of our discipleship to Jesus. Jesus clearly intended these kinds of relationships and modeled them in his relationships with his disciples. In the book of Acts we see the early church enjoying deep relationships with one another (Acts 2:42-47). Even the term “brothers and sisters in Christ” gives a key to the depth of relationships we can and should have with fellow believers. In the ancient Mediterranean world, the closest, most intimate relational bond was not between a husband and wife, but between siblings. It is that level of vulnerability and trust that we are called to with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

Why are fellow believers so important as a means of grace for spiritual growth? Why do fellow believers sharpen one another like iron sharpens iron? Several reasons: first, a brother or a sister in Christ can see things in you that you might not be able to see in yourself. Just like when driving a car, we all have blind spots in our own lives, and others can help us see those blind spots so that we can let the Holy Spirit into those blind spots. Second, a brother or sister in Christ can check in with you, and hold you accountable in a loving and supportive way to continue staying close to the Lord. And finally, the more vulnerable and transparent we are with fellow believers about what is going on in our heart, the more transparent we will be with God about what is going on in our heart. Our ability to engage in deep, personal relationships with one another is directly related to how close we are to God.

What this means is that fellow believers are a critical means of grace for the Christian life. This will require a shift for many of us, because we are used to doing the Christian life on our own, seeking God’s will on our own, and viewing fellow believers as the people we worship with and go to bible study with, but not those with whom we truly open up to and share our hearts. This will require a shift from seeing fellow believers as an occasional resource to draw from when we are stuck to a vital resource that we need every day. This will require a shift from being a “lone ranger” Christian to being a “I can’t survive without my brothers and sisters in Christ” Christian.

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How can we begin to open our hearts more to our brothers and sisters in Christ? A few practical suggestions: First, don't feel like you have to share the depths of your heart with everyone, start with a few trusted people in your life who believe in Jesus. Second, if you are not part of a small group or mid-week bible study, talk to me about how you can get involved in one. Being part of a small group during the week can help you grow closer to fellow believers so you can open your heart to them. Third, be open to input and suggestions from fellow believers who know you and love you. And finally, when you are in a small group setting and discussing the Christian life, shift from "we" to "I," and from "us" to "me." It is easy when discussing a biblical truth to talk about how that applies to "us" generally. But be willing to share personally and share how that truth applies to "me" specifically.

I realize that I am challenging us as a church family to experience a level of vulnerability with fellow believers that may stretch many out of their comfort zones. But I promise you that the spiritual fruit that comes from such relationships is absolutely worth leaving that comfort zone for. These kinds of relationships push us to God's throne of grace and keep us at God's throne of grace. And that is the place where real spiritual growth happens:

"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. 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. 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" (Ephesians 4:14-16).

Blessings,
Pastor Steve

p.s. For more on the importance of these kinds of relationships for the Christian life, please see Joseph H. Hellerman, *When the Church Was a Family: Recapturing Jesus' Vision for Authentic Christian Community*. Hellerman is a New Testament scholar with extensive expertise in the family dynamics of the ancient world in which Jesus lived, and this article was derived in part from his work.

February Celebrations



Carl & Marge Demas 04/16
Matt & Ellen Davis 04/16



Hannah French 04/02
Jayson Stone 04/08
Marge Demas 04/09
Michele Quion 04/11
Carl Demas 04/22
Jenn Perez Harris 04/27

Youth Ministry

He is risen! He has risen indeed! Halleluiah! Praise God for his Glory and Mercy for us all!

We are so looking forward to Easter! To celebrate the risen Lord together as a church family. We hope to have an Easter Sunrise Service outside – Morning Service & Easter Egg Hunt!

We are working together as God's team to spread HIS Good News at Easter time! We have been reaching out to the community on Wednesday; will really reach out MORE for Easter!

Reminder: the Youth Group ALL Church Rummage Sale is April 26 – Donations accepted!

The Youth Group has been busy getting their driving permits and licenses: one by one! We are teaching our Youth Group students to incorporate God in daily prayer often! We are still studying the book: The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens by Sean Covey. It pays for them to be Pro-Active! Reminding them to take responsibility for their choices, think and pray before they act or say something to someone else, bounce back when something happens-pray to God for good reasoning skills then always find a way to move forward on God's path. To focus more on things, they can do something about; and don't worry about things they can't. They make these daily decisions and hopefully they make to live their life on God's path so life is 'not such a struggle.' To have the Holy Spirit inside us.

They are learning to be able to control their outcomes and emotions more— to give a second a chance -offer grace to others as they would want grace for themselves, no one is perfect! To learn to control how we respond to what happens to us; turn out set backs into triumphs! Find out who your role models and mentors are – why are they? Ask questions!

We'd like them to take the **'I CAN DO WITH THE LORD'S HELP'** attitude. They are learning to take initiative (apply for jobs and colleges); steer or act toward Godly desired mutual goals.

Paradigms or Principles? Where are you on the circle of life or spectrum of certain moral Principles that must be observed in our community? Do we see these from each other?

Youth Ministry Continued

What Principal should we apply to each of our situations and include God as the center for each category below? (i.e. honesty, love, loyalty, hard work, patience, service, respect, etc.)

Friends

Enemy

Sports-Hobbies

Parent

School

Work

Hero

Self

Boy or girlfriend

Stuff

Take baby steps

The Personal Bank account (PBA)

Be Honest

Renew Yourself

Magnify Your Talents

Keep promises to yourself

Do Random acts of Service or Kindness

Be gentle with yourself and others

Be Proactive

Listen to your Language

Thank you from your Youth Group Leader, Terri Carver. Have a great Easter! GBU!

Mark 11:9-10

The crowd, both those ahead and behind Jesus, shouted "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is to come! Hosanna in the highest!"

April 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 9:30am Bible Study 6:30pm Zoom Prayer Meeting	2 10am-1:00pm SM Food Pantry 6:30pm Youth Group	3	4	5
6 8:30am Adult Sunday School 9:30am Worship Service	7 7:00pm Women's Bible Study	8 9:30am Bible Study 6:30pm Zoom Prayer Meeting	9 10am-1:00pm SM Food Pantry 6:30pm Youth Group	10	11	12
13 8:30am Adult Sunday School 9:30am Worship Service Palm Sunday	14 7:00pm Women's Bible Study 1:00pm Bible Study	15 9:30am Bible Study 6:30pm Zoom Prayer Meeting	16 10am-1:00pm SM Food Pantry 6:30pm Youth Group	17	18 Good Friday	19
20 8:30am Adult Sunday School 9:30am Worship Service Easter Sunday	21 7:00pm Women's Bible Study 1:00pm Bible Study	22 9:30am Bible Study 6:30pm Zoom Prayer Meeting	23 10am-1:00pm SM Food Pantry 6:30pm Youth Group	24	25	26 All Church Work Party
27 8:30am Adult Sunday School 9:30am Worship Service	28 7:00pm Women's Bible Study 1:00pm Bible Study	29 9:30am Bible Study 6:30pm Zoom Prayer Meeting	30 10am-1:00pm SM Food Pantry 6:30pm Youth Group			

The Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13:1 - 9

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

“Hosanna to the Son of David!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

Matthew 21:9

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Col. 3:12

Mission Village Christian Fellowship

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Council Members

Pastor	Steve de Vos
Moderator	Ronda Adams
Clerk	Joanna de Vos
Financial Secretary	Tony DaVee
Treasurer	June McCollough
Children's Ministry	Open
Youth Ministry	Terri Carver
Adult Ministry	Open
Stewardship	Frank Romeo
Fellowship	Jenny Fiori
Service	Open
Missions / Evangelism	Matt & Ellen Davis
Finance Ministry	Open
Worship	Hannah French

Sunday Schedule

Worship & Children's Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.

Nursery & Toddler Care is Available During Worship Service

Service will be live on [YouTube](#) or [Facebook](#)

Elders

Pastor /Elder.....Steve de Vos
Administrative ElderTony DaVee
Elder..... Carl Jensen

Staff

Administrative Assistant.....Judy Jacob
Nursery Attendant.....Hannah French