

Four Insights from the “One Another” Commands

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This whole page could be filled with the “one another” commands in the New Testament. Here are just a few:

“Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.” (Romans 12:10)

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:32)

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.” (Philippians 2:3)

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” (Hebrews 3:13)

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” (Hebrews 10:24-25)

From the “one another” commands, we can gain consequential insights for our lives.

First, faithful adherence to the “one another” commands requires a community. But just attending a church meeting is not enough. We don’t gather to simply watch others and exchange pleasantries, we meet with our brothers and sisters who have life or death needs just like we do. We all need to be loved, and shown honor, and encouraged, and treated as significant, and exhorted, and stirred up to love and good works. We all need to be pointed to the grace of God that is ours because of our union with Christ. Others are called to do this for you, and you are called to do it for others. That’s the Lord’s design, and it’s wonderful when it happens!

And don’t forget—these commands are meant for believers daily, not only on Sunday. It takes effort, but it will be worth it!



Second, some “one another” commands are obeyed “on-the-spot,” whereas others require thinking ahead. As an illustration, a brother may come to you expressing repentance and asking for your forgiveness. You’ll need God’s grace to react right then with a heart of forgiveness.

Alternatively, some of the “one another” verses require forethought. For example, you might think in advance how to “stir up to . . . good works” a sister in in the Lord who already has an active ministry at the crisis pregnancy center. You might even imagine yourself asking her about that ministry, and ways you can pray for her. Your encouragement may be a significant motivation for her to keep serving with even more diligence.

Third, other church gatherings beyond the main Sunday meeting are ready-made opportunities to live out the “one another” commands. Did you ever wonder if you are required to go to the Wednesday Bible study? It’s typically better to think not so much about *what is expected*, but *what is beneficial*. An obvious answer to your question would be that it’s a blessing to learn more Scripture at the Wednesday night meeting, but so also is the interaction with other believers. Think of it — you just might get to “encourage the fainthearted” or “help the weak” if you go (1 Thessalonians 5:14)! On other days, you might be downcast or hurting, leading you to say, “I’m just not up for going tonight.” But those are the very moments in your life when you most obviously need to be there because of what you are meant to receive from your fellow believers.

So, go to the midweek meeting. Go to the church picnic. Go on that retreat. You won’t regret it.

Fourth, our schedules too often keep us from obeying the “one another” commands. Most of us live in areas where our homes are very spread out, and our schedules are so full we barely have time to see the people *who live in our own house*, let alone the people in our local church! Recently, my wife and I had to schedule a day and time to have a “thinking about your future” discussion with my daughter who will be a senior in high school next year. Think about that! The warning for all of us, though, is to beware of falling into unhealthy lifestyle patterns and practices that lead to missing out on one of the central means the Lord has given us to help each other to persevere in allegiance to him — the “one another” commands.