

Building A Culture That Combats The Enemy's Schemes

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[0 : 00] I want to talk to you this morning about building a culture that combats the enemy schemes. Building a culture that combats the enemy schemes. Talked about some of these things, or a lot of these things at Bellicose the last couple weeks.

So if you guys heard that, it's going to be some similar stuff, but hopefully specifically to our church, Christ Church. So, essentially, you know, we're in the first few months of this church plant.

And a lot of what we're building into it now will be stuff that will be just caught more in the future than it will be intentionally built.

Culture is caught. And so there's certain things that when we're intentional to build into our culture now, eventually we won't have to try very hard to build them.

And new people will come in and just be, oh, this is normal. This is what you do. And that's the benefit of culture. That's also the drawback of culture. Because when you build the wrong things, people catch the wrong thing.

[1 : 02] Okay? So, this time of our church life, building into kind of the wet cement of our foundation, is really important that we build well. And that verse says, the one that I preached on when we sent you guys all off, that we should be careful how we build.

Okay? Okay? And so, when we're culture building, it's good for us to think, though, too, it's oftentimes we think, oh, the culture of our church will be determined by the culture of our church. Sounds redundant. But really, there's two kind of things that factor into it. One, the culture of our own homes always affects the household of God. Okay?

Does that make sense? So, like, the qualifications for an overseer and elder in 1 Timothy 3. He, speaking of an overseer, must manage his own household well, with all dignity, keeping his children submissive.

For if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care for God's church? Okay? And then he says later in verse 12, when he's talking about deacons, similar thing.

[2 : 09] Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. Later, in verse 15, he says, he speaks of the church as the household of God, which is the church of the living God.

Okay? The household of God, which is the church of the living God. And so, oftentimes, we've gotten into this deception that we can separate the household, our own household, from the household of God.

When in God's economy, in his scriptures, he's saying, if you can't care for your own household, you can't care for the household of God. And so, ultimately, when we're building into the culture of a church, we're always building on those two fronts.

We're building in households and then the household of God. And you can't just build the household of God and not pay attention to your own household.

The household, your personal household comes first in divine order, according to 1 Timothy 3, in order for the culture of the household of God to be what it's supposed to be. You can't care for the household of God if you don't care first for your own household.

[3 : 13] And so, a lot of this starts off with us just saying, okay, we need to make sure we're building these things. There are demonic schemes against us. The devil has a vision to thwart what God is doing.

And one of the main ways we combat it is by having a house in order, both our personal house, and then a household of God in order. Does that make sense?

You follow me on that? Okay. So, but I wanted to go into a little bit more specific of what the schemes of the devil are that I see really coming at us right now. And I think it's important for us. He's not going to be new to you, but I think when we talk about it together, it kind of opens our eyes to see what we're up against and maybe give us a little bit more sobriety. So, 2 Corinthians 10, I mean, sorry, 2 Corinthians 2, 10 to 11, in the NIV says, Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven, if there was anything to forgive, I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order, okay, so answering the question why, in order that Satan might not outwit us, for we are not unaware of his schemes.

[4 : 21] Okay. The devil has schemes. Okay. We shouldn't be outwitted by his schemes. In other words, we should know what his schemes are. We should not be unaware of them. Ephesians 6, 11 says, put on the whole armor of God.

Why? So that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. There are demonic schemes that are against us, and we are to stand against them. Okay. So, the way I kind of envision this and see this is that there's three things that the devil has been throwing at us and our culture big time these days.

First one is trying to get us, all three of them are isolated, fruitless consumers. Okay. The devil is trying to get us isolated. He's trying to get us to not bear fruit. And he's trying to get us to just only think about consuming.

This is kind of an onslaught of our culture. It's coming at us harder than ever before. And if we're not aware of it, it'll come into the church as well. And I'll talk about that in a second as well.

So, first one, isolated. You see this all over in kind of our culture. You see it with social media. You can be in the same room with a bunch of people, and everybody's on their phones, right?

[5 : 27] It just, it isolates us. I'm not saying that means that that's bad in and of itself. In fact, a lot of times what it's really just exposing is what's inside of us rather than the evil of, like, social media.

It's really the evil in our own hearts that gravitates towards that isolation. That's the desire of our flesh, to not care about other people, to only care about ourselves. Social media, you see this in what's happening with the government shutdowns that we had with COVID, all isolation, where it's basically built into us now for us to be used to that.

It didn't really, there wasn't a whole lot of opposition to it because this is our culture now. You see this in entertainment, with our phones, with the epidemic of loneliness.

If you just look up news articles on loneliness, it's at epidemic proportions, where most people are feeling lonely. Most people are feeling isolated.

And this is a demonic strategy. This is not an accident. The devil wants you to feel isolated. And it's crept into the church as well. You have people who are part of churches, but they have no friends. That is absolutely asinine and absurd.

[6 : 33] Like, that makes no sense whatsoever. And that's ipso facto not the church as well, okay? You cannot have a church where you don't have friends. That's not church. You can call it a million other things, but don't call it church, okay?

But this is the devil's strategy. Like, yeah, I'm a part of this church. Do you have any friends there? No. What? Right? Like, this is, and you might think, well, yeah, I would never do that. But I'm telling you, in the name of church, this is happening all over the place.

Elders who aren't friends. You have pastors and elders who are a team of elders, and they don't have a relationship. They're not friends. They're just, they're professionals. Okay, this, it's, comes into the church where we don't act like family, okay?

We're, we're, we want community, so to speak, and that's what everybody says. I've heard so many people that come to church, they say, oh, I'm looking for community. All right? Well, there's nothing distinctly Christian about community.

You can get community anywhere. There is something distinctly Christian about the family of God. God creates family. The devil tries to counterfeit it. He's the father of lies. And his version of church is a counterfeit family where we're not friends and where we're not connected and where we're still isolated, but we call it community.

[7 : 44] That's dangerous. All right? This is the, this is the strategy. We saw this infiltrating the church when the church just played dead and just did whatever the government wanted to do with these government shutdowns and just stopped meeting.

You know? The church you guys were sent out of? I mean, I remember multiple people coming to Bellicose Church, and they were coming from other churches. I'm just like, why are these people coming from other churches? What is going on with other churches?

And they literally say, I remember people saying, I have not heard from my church in any way, shape, or form for three months. How does that even happen? All right? But again, it's a demonic strategy.

Isolated. Get people isolated. Get the church isolated. People who think that church is just an optional thing, that church is, as long as I get a certain level of community or a certain level of preaching, it doesn't really matter what it looks like.

And so I can substitute with podcasts and just make sure I get together with people who are my friends here and there. But that's not the church. Okay? The church is specific things. The church is a family, a body, an army, salt, light.

[8 : 45] The church is a house of prayer. It's many other things. And so we can't just do, you know, kind of our own version of church and say, oh, I have community, and I get some preaching on a podcast, and that's church.

That's not church. And you wouldn't find anything like that in the Bible. But again, that is a demonic strategy to get you isolated and think, oh, I'm fine. I have community. I have preaching. Therefore, I have church.

You absolutely don't have church if you have that. You do not. And I think the Bible is clear on that. You don't see anything like that in the book of Acts or anything in the epistles. It's people being stuck in the same small group for 20 years, right, where it's like they never get any other people. They've hit their friend limit. They've hit their capacity for who they can know. There's no mission. It's just I want to grow old with this group of people, and our kids grow up together, and there's not a desire to be on mission to lost people.

It's a demonic strategy of isolation. This kind of mentality that says I can only get to know so many people. I can't get to know more than that. I only have this certain friend limit that I could get.

[9 : 48] It's all demonic strategy of isolation. Second, fruitless. We see this in the culture. We see this with the scourge of abortion. You see this on social media.

People trumpeting how awesome it is to be a double-income, no-kid family. Saying how great that is, as if not having kids is the new cool thing to do.

Fruitlessness. It's less people getting married than ever before. This is the first time in American history where more people don't get married than do. And it's all the demonic strategy of fruitlessness.

You see this with the rampant rise of homosexuality. Again, what is it doing? Homosexual couples can't have kids. It's fruitless.

It's all a strategy together. The amount of people exalting career over fruitfulness and over family. Exalting making money. You see this even with the trans movement where we're literally, now it's to the point where we're cutting off the actual parts of our body that were meant to bear fruit with children.

[10 : 57] I mean, think about this. It's a demonic strategy. It's a demonic strategy. And it's crept into the church. It's crept into the church as well. Where the church just becomes attenders and observers.

I'm not bearing fruit myself. I just consume the fruit of others. I just attend. I just observe. I don't produce value. I'm not expected to produce value. I'm not expected to bear responsibility.

I just come to the dog and pony show, put my money in the plate and leave. I consume things as products. I'm getting to the next point. Stay focused here. Fruitless, right?

Not producing value. People who can't be counted on. Not having or valuing kids. Not valuing marriage. Not going after marriage.

It's just, it's crept into the church where fruitlessness is becoming more and more normal. Becoming more and more normal. And this is not okay. We can't let this creep in.

[11 : 57] We can't, we have to fight this with everything within us. Okay? He said to us in Genesis, he said, be fruitful and multiply. He said, bear fruit in keeping with repentance. The church should bear fruit.

The church should not be isolated. The church should not be fruitless. And the church should not be marked by consumption. Okay? We see this in our culture. Number three, consumers. Just the

selfish, narcissistic kind of culture.

Some of you maybe heard me say this before, but there was literally someone, I think, in Europe a couple years ago who married themselves. I mean, talk about in the last days, there will be lovers of themselves.

Like this woman literally married herself. Don't even know how that is a thing, but it was a thing. Like we've literally reached that point where someone married themselves. Okay? This is the pinnacle of selfish, narcissistic behavior and thinking, but it's all demonic strategy to just have consumption be what you exist for.

I exist to consume. You exist to consume. That's what the devil's trying to get into our hearts and minds. Okay? Where it's just, I don't exist for another person.

[13:04] I don't even think about marriage. I'm just thinking about what I can consume. You have men, there's women who'd love to marry a guy and these guys are just like, what in the world? Like you literally just exist for yourself.

How in the world could I ever marry you because you're so full of yourself? I would never trust you to be someone who could be in a family. And it's the same thing with women as well, where there's men who would love to get married, but women who just are living for their own narcissistic pleasure.

Okay? Not thinking about what it means to be someone who gives of themselves. It's kind of a culture of permanent adolescence. We're living in Neverland.

Okay? Where nobody grows up. Everybody just continues to stay in this perpetual state of adolescence. We've come up with this new phrase called adultescence, where it's just basically another excuse for people to live like kids while on into their old age.

Right? And this has become normative. A culture basically drunk on entertainment and pornography. Right? We just consume entertainment, consume entertainment, consume pornography. It's like, how many shows can I watch?

[14:06] How many movies can I take in? How many podcasts can I consume? How much pornography can I consume? Whatever. It's just me, me, me. Consume, consume, consume. And it's corrupted in the church as well.

Basically where you have a primarily receiving, not partnering kind of mentality when it comes to the church. I'm not bearing responsibility and I'm not partnering together. Where it becomes normative to complain about the church, to beat up the church.

Everyone thinks it's so fun to say how bad the church is. Well, how about making it better? How about being a group of people that says, I'm not going to complain about the church. I'm going to put my money where my mouth is, so to speak.

I'm actually going to get in the ring and do something about it. It's very easy to criticize people from the stands. It's very hard to get in the ring and actually do something about it. Who are going to be the people who get in the ring when it comes to the church?

It's the kind of people in the church who are upset with change that makes them uncomfortable.

Where worship, preaching, and child care become commodities that you consume. You know, kind of the Holy Trinity of church planting.

[15:08] It's like you have this worship experience that I can consume. And then we say things like, oh, how was worship? Ah, it wasn't very good. You know, it's just like, wait a second.

Worship doesn't exist for you. Worship is for the Lord. It's not a product that you consume and determine whether it's good or bad. It's something you give of yourself.

Okay? And so we determine whether or not I'm church shopping. I'm looking for a good worship experience, good child care experience, and good preaching. And basically, I'm always rating it to see how it is. Instead of saying, the church is people, and I'm not meant to consume, I'm meant to be someone who bears fruit and provides things of value.

And essentially, the church ends up being drunk on the same entertainment and pornography that the world is. This is a three-fold demonic vision. These are schemes that we should not be unaware of.

Okay? We're talking about the devil trying to get us isolated, trying to get us not bearing fruit, and trying to be consumers. All right? Basically, sacrificing fruitfulness for our own desires.

[16:13] Don't be so naive as to think that none of this has touched us. All right? Don't be so naive. It's touched all of us. We are in this culture. It affects us.

Okay? And so you can't just say, oh, that's not me. You're a fool if you say that. You have to be wise enough to say, this has affected me in some way, and I need to make sure that I am on the offensive as the church.

In my own household and in the house of God. All right? Which is why our mission and vision is the kingdom of God and all of life together. Okay?

This is basically an assault against these three things. Right? The kingdom of God is about bearing fruit and producing value. All right? Seeking first the kingdom of God, it will have the fruit of the spirit.

It will have... When you're seeking first God's kingdom, fruit is normative. Okay? Producing value is normative. The actual substance of Christ is normative.

[17:15] All right? When we seek first the kingdom of God. If we don't seek first the kingdom of God, it won't be. We have to seek God's kingdom first. Secondly, we ought to seek his kingdom in all of life.

Which is the kind of combating the selfish kind of mindset. Church gets really weird when Christ isn't all your life. Okay?

It doesn't work. It gets convoluted. We start to kind of butt heads. Because everything that God has built into church requires all your life. When you try to function as if Christ isn't your life and that church is living for Jesus is just a part of your life, it's never going to work the way it's supposed to. It's never going to work the way it's supposed to. Most problems in church can be pointed to that reality. That we've made what's supposed to be an all of life thing into just a part of our life thing. And we're just trying to make excuses for it.

Lastly, together. The kingdom of God and all of life together. Together. Where we share vision. We share priorities. And we share responsibility. Where we don't let people be alone and isolated.

Where we're literally saying, I'm not going to let you go through this alone.

[18:19] I'm not going to let you go through hard times alone. I'm going to seek to make sure that we are seeking the kingdom. We're doing it all of life, but we're also doing it together. It's not, we're seeking the kingdom. We're doing it all of life. But we kind of do it in our kind of compartmentalized separate little worlds.

No, we have to do it together. And the language of togetherness is what you see in the book of Acts. Right? So, how do we build this? How do we build a culture that combats the enemy's schemes?

Well, we have to take care of what we build. You can build wood, hay, and stubble. Or you can build gold, silver, and precious stones. Right? 1 Corinthians 3 says, Let each one take care how he builds upon the foundation of Christ.

For if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and straw, each one's work will become manifest. For the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire.

And the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss.

[19:26] Though he himself will be saved, but only as through the fire. So, we have to ask ourselves, how are we going to build? Okay? How are we going to build? It's a slower pace right now in this small little church plant.

Right? It's a little more chill. A little bit more relaxed. Right? Meeting in a... What would you call this? A shed.

Shed church. Right? We're meeting in a shed. It's just a little bit more relaxed environment. And there's things that are really beneficial about that.

But it's very important that we don't let that be... Like, the... We don't let that keep us from being on our spiritual toes. And that we're not careful how we build.

We have to be careful how we build. And we need to build with costly stones. With gold and silver. Not with wood, hay, and stubble. And if we're not intentional in how we build, we won't build things into the culture in these important days.

[20:24] Like, it's not that what we build later won't be important. It's that what you build on the front end is what people are going to catch on the back end. Okay? And so what you're building now, we have to be very careful how we build.

And this is the time when it's very easy not to be careful because you think, well, there's just so much less at stake. It's just this small group of believers meeting in a shed and meeting in our

homes. It's like, no, you don't understand. That's what the devil would want you to believe. Actually, there's a ton at stake. What you build into the foundation right now, I mean, the church you guys were sent out of, thinking of Bellicose 13 years later, there are so many things that people catch now at that church that were built intentionally in the beginning. You guys are doing the hard work right now of building into the culture what you want to see later on, what God wants to see later on. And we have to be diligent to do those things. So I got, don't worry, I'm going to fly through these, but I got 13 things that I want us to, things to avoid, wood, hay, and straw, and then things to build, gold, silver, and precious stones. [21 : 28] Okay. First one, avoid community without mission and mission without community. Avoid community without mission and mission without community.

Okay. Community without mission is selfish, codependent, and complacent. Okay. It's not okay for us to just say, oh, this is great. We got our nice little group. We got our little mission communities. We're meeting in homes. They're nice and small. We got our small church. Man, I love small church. It's just nice and intimate and fun. And then we forget that there's lost people out there. It becomes selfish, codependent, and complacent.

We cannot have community without mission. All right. That's very important. But also mission without community forfeits one of the greatest apologetics for the gospel. Jesus said, I want to make you fishers of men.

What's the net that you're catching those men into? It's community. It's deeper the community. It's the family of God. So we can't just say, oh, yeah, let's be on mission. Let's be on mission.

[22 : 26] And forget that to be diligent, to cultivate a sense of family in the church so that there's something to adopt them into. God is a father who adopted us into his family through the son, right?

And we need to be that family that people are adopted into. Otherwise, we betray the gospel with our very existence. Okay? Got to be both. We need to build mission and community.

Mission and community that goes deeper than just community, but it's family. All right? We have to build both. And we have to make sure that some of you are going to be better than others at detecting where we're missing that.

And you can't just say, well, oh, someone else will get it. No. If God is putting, if you're seeing that, you have to speak up. You're saying, oh, we have mission, but we're lacking community. We have to, you have to speak up and help insert that.

If we have a sense of community, but we're not on mission, and you're kind of angsty about that, maybe that's because God has put that in your heart to make sure that that's there. Don't assume someone else has that.

[23 : 28] Right? Samir? Avoid community without mission and mission without community and build missional community. Build both. Number two. Okay? Avoid inviting people to your missional community.

Avoid inviting people to your missional community. What do I mean by that? All right? You can't invite someone to your missional community. It's not possible. Okay? Because it's not a weekly meeting.

Right? It's not a weekly meeting. You can't go to it, and it's not a night of the week. You can invite people to a dinner. You can invite people to a hangout. You can invite people to a bonfire, a men's or ladies get-together, a game night, a Bible or book study, a kids' sports game.

You can invite people to play a sport. You can invite people to a park night, a movie night, a camp out, a weekend getaway, a party, a celebration, a missional outreach, but you cannot invite someone to a missional community because a missional community is people.

Do you understand what I'm saying? Like you should, as a church, we should, we function, the smaller groups of people in our church, the way we organize the life of our church, where we do counseling, where we do discipleship, where we do the everyday stuff of life with our church together, where we share meals together, where we watch each other's kids, where we pray together.

[24 : 50] Missional communities are the small family believers where we're doing mission together, all these things. Okay? But you should never invite someone to a missional community. It's not possible. You can invite people to the life of the missional community, and it could be all those things that I just said.

Do you understand the difference? It becomes really weird when you say, hey, come to my MC. First of all, you have that weird, like, acronym language that people are like, why are you talking in acronyms? That's weird.

Okay? Just talk normal. Why can't, the church just needs to be normal and just say, hey, we're having dinner with some people from my church. You want to come over? Hey, we're all getting together in a park and hanging out together with some friends of ours or some people from the church.

Would you like to come? Hey, we're going to hang out and have a bonfire house, make some s'mores. Would you like to come? Or we're going to go, for the next eight weeks, we're going to go through this book of the Bible or we're going to go through this book that someone else wrote with some people from our church.

We'd love for you to come. Do you see the difference? You can build this into the culture of our church right away. It's hard for people to get around that. I don't know at what point in time the church became all about inviting people to meetings.

[25 : 59] Like, look at your, read your Bible. Read the book of Acts. Is there ever a time when someone is inviting someone to a meeting and that, that's what, that's like what the sum total of churches become. Hey, come to a Sunday morning gathering.

It's just, it's like we're, we're basically trading personal discipleship, personal hospitality, and personal evangelism for a meeting invite. At what point in time did Christianity just become about meeting invites?

What we should be doing is sharing our lives with one another. Paul said, I share with you not, not only the gospel, but our very lives. And so we invite people into our lives, not to just a meeting so that someone else can do the work.

You can build that into this culture right from the get-go, or we can get weird and goofy and invite people to acronym language and people are like, what is this? You guys are kind of weird. Like, how about we just be normal and just invite things, people into our lives and get to know people. And then when they do come, and then maybe when they show interest or when they get saved or whatever happens, and then they want to come on a Sunday morning, we can say, oh yeah, come on Sunday morning. You know, so-and-so and so-and-so and so-and-so.

[27 : 07] You're not, it's not going to be weird and intimidating for you. Does that make sense? Build the people. Don't just build meetings, build the people. This is what we need to do. Number three, avoid a one-home-centric missional community.

Okay? It's not a house church. Missional communities are not house churches. Build a happy, joyful hosting among all or most. A community that meets in multiple homes.

Not just one, sharing the load with everyone. Not just one homeowner, always willing to go where the people that it's on mission to are. Okay? We don't just want, these missional communities aren't house churches, so it shouldn't just be one home-centric.

And you might say, well, my home's not big enough. Think of how weird that would sound to someone who's meeting in the church in some third world country who meets in their home that only is one room.

Like, the whole house is one room. Think of how goofy you would sound when you say, I can't meet in my, you know, 1800 square foot home because it's too small and because my bathroom's outdated.

[28 : 10] And their bathroom's in a hole behind the house out, you know, wherever. That's goofy. But that's how we as Americans talk. Don't talk like that. Open up your home.

Don't just let one person be the one who's doing that. And by all means, don't say, well, by all means too, be able to meet in multiple homes and train your children to do as well.

Sometimes we've trained our children to only be able to meet in our home because we've childproof our home. We haven't taught our kids how to function in someone else's home. That's not good. Again, this is something you can build into the culture.

If you can only host people in your home because your kids can only handle your home, you're not training your kids well. You're not training your kids for church and you're not training your kids for hospitality. It's an important thing to get into our kids.

And please don't use the excuse while I'm not just hospitable. Romans 12, 13. Okay? Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

[29 : 09] 1 Peter 4, 9. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. This isn't an optional thing. This is for all Christians. We're all supposed to show hospitality. Yes, there's some people with a gift of hospitality, but everybody's supposed to show hospitality.

Number four. Avoid study-centric missional community. It's not primarily a Bible or book study. Okay? You can and should do studies in the Bible or in other books, but it can't just be that. Okay? We have to build discipleship in all of life. Deuteronomy 6, 6-9 is a great way of thinking about this, which it's talking about the family, but it should be about the family of God as well. It says, All these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children. You shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Essentially, it's saying discipleship should be an all of life thing. It's not just, you know, well, we have this little study here and there.

[30 : 13] We should be looking for opportunities to speak the truth into people's life in the everyday stuff of life. And that's where it's most normal, right? You're going through something and say, Hey, how are you handling that?

How's this going? And if that becomes a normative culture, then our church, when people come into the church, they catch that. Oh, you don't just do discipleship in official meetings. You do do discipleship in official meetings, but you're also doing it in the everyday stuff of life.

I know I can count on rich conversation in discipleship even when I'm not at an official Sunday morning meeting or such. And that should be normative. You have the opportunity to build that. Will you build that? Will you build discipleship in all of life? Number five, avoid leader-centric missional community. Okay, what I mean by this is missional communities where all the leadership falls on one person or one couple, just the lead partners, where you're almost treating them like mini elders or they're viewing themselves as that, but rather building partnership.

Partner-led missional community where multiple people are bearing responsibility, sharing the leadership weight of responsibility among all its partners. Okay, the lead partner is the first among equals, but all the partners carry the weight together.

[31 : 26] Okay, Philippians 1, 3 to 5, I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

It should be partnership. Okay, it's so easy to just have a couple leaders leading the church and having all the responsibility on them. And then it's saying, oh, I want community. There is no such thing as community without responsibility and accountability.

There's no such thing. You cannot have true accountability or true family life together without shared responsibility and accountability. That has to be there. That's absolutely necessary. What are you going to build? Are we going to build it so we just farm it in? We go to a gathering together with our missional community and we go with nothing to bring, nothing on our hearts, nothing, not spirit-led.

We're just consumed with our day and we just show up tired, disinterested and unengaged. We show up on a Sunday morning. It's just, it's the worship team's job and the preacher's job to kind of do everything.

[32 : 31] I'm just here. I'm just consuming. Are you coming? Led by the Spirit saying, hey, I'm going to cultivate a culture of giving, a culture of shared responsibility, a culture of partnership so that everybody who's in this church going forward will understand this is how you do church.

This is normal. For those of you who have never experienced church like that as normal, you can. You can. I've seen it multiple times. I'm not talking about some unicorn here.

I'm talking about normal Christianity. This is what it's supposed to be like. Number six, avoid one-person-centric discipleship, primarily one-on-one discipleship, but instead build discipleship for multiple people.

Okay? Multiple people through multiple gifts who are in multiple different stages of life. That's how discipleship should be. Now, does that mean you can't do anything one-on-one?

No. But it should never just be that. Because 1 Corinthians 12 says all the parts of the body are indispensable. If you only have this one person who's quote-unquote discipling you, and you're not

gleaning from the rest of the body, you are missing out from things.

[33 : 39] And if you think that your part of the body is not that important, and you think, well, I don't have the same role as so-and-so who's really good at speaking, but I'm not good at speaking, you don't understand your gift is indispensable, and who you are needs to bear upon other people in the context of discipleship.

It can't just be one-on-one. It has to be a shared responsibility. You need to build discipleship from multiple people through multiple gifts who are in multiple different stages of life.

It can't just be young people with young people and old people with old people. You've got to mix it up together. There's much to glean from one another, and it goes both ways. Number seven, avoid meeting without meals.

That doesn't mean you can't ever meet without a meal, but I'm talking about building a meal-sharing familial culture. It takes more work to share meals together, but you know what? That's what families do.

Healthy families eat meals together. There's been study after study done of the difference between a family that eats meals together and ones who don't. That used to be a normative part of our culture. It's something that's going away, and it's something that's gone away from church culture as well.

[34 : 44] We should eat meals together. Families eat meals together. Jesus ate meals with people. The disciples ate meals together. Acts chapter 2, 46 to 47 in the CSB says, Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple and broke bread from house to house.

They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. I know it's work to do meals together.

I know it's work to share the responsibility of planning a meal. I know it's work to do our once-a-month meals that we're doing on Sunday mornings like today. I know it's work to do meals in your home.

I know it's work to feed people. I know it's work to feed people when sometimes they don't clean up after, help clean up and help with the responsibility. That's all work, but meal sharing is a way that helps people feel comfortable and where people can open up their hearts to one another.

Very important. It battles that isolation culture. Right? Number eight, avoid heavy, burdensome, missional community. Instead, building joy, comfort, refreshing, and rest.

[35 : 54] Okay? Oftentimes with church we think, oh, I'm part of a church, that means I've got to add a bunch of things to my life. Rather, what about just actually taking inventory? What are we already doing?

What am I already involved with? Like, what are the neighbors I'm already involved with? What are the things I'm already doing with my kids? What are the relationships I already have? What do we already have and how can I just show more gospel intentionality with those things that we have? Instead of adding a bunch of things, are we being intentional to do what we're doing right now with a missional mindset and then doing it together with other people? So often, the church says, well, we've got to add this, we've got to add this program, this program.

No. We don't need to do that. We just need to get on mission together in the everyday stuff of life, the stuff we're already doing. You already have neighbors. You already have a job. Your kids might already be involved with certain things, sports or this or that or school stuff.

You already have all these things. Why not do them with more missional gospel intentionality and then do it together? That's what the church should be.

[36 : 59] We need to build that and that's a lot more restful instead of constantly adding more stuff. Philemon verse 7 says, I've derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.

What if we focused on being a refreshment to one another? Not constantly placing more burdens on one another but just saying, how can we do stuff together? How can we do stuff where we refresh one another?

Where we're carrying the load and we're saying, you know what? We already have a lot going on. We don't need to overwhelm people with all kinds of stuff. Let's just be intentional with what we have. Let's be good stewards of what we have.

Number nine, avoid a busy life. Okay? Lazy, indiscriminate, unintentional, the tyranny of the urgent, always busy but never getting done what you want or need to get done.

You know what I'm saying? Some of us, this is how we feel. We feel like we're on a hill and we're constantly riding the brakes. Our life is constantly busy. We are constantly doing things and people say, what's going on?

[38 : 04] It's like, oh, just so busy. Just really busy. What are you busy with? Ah, I don't know. And you can't even say what it is because you're not doing, your life is busy but it's not filled with the things that you, that are your priorities.

You go to bed at night thinking, I'm so busy, I'm so tired but I'm constantly feeling guilty that I'm not doing what I should be doing. We need to leave that behind. Okay? We need to leave a busy life behind and instead build a full life.

It's not a difference about how much you do but what you do. Not about how much you do but what you do. Doing, being in divine order and doing what God says to do.

Tim Ferriss says, lack of time is actually lack of priorities. Being busy is a form of laziness, lazy thinking and indiscriminate action. Being overwhelmed is often as unproductive as doing nothing and is far more unpleasant.

In other words, a full life plans priorities so priorities are prioritized and accomplished. Right? A full life plans priorities so priorities are prioritized and accomplished.

[39 : 13] Right? The Bible asks us commands us to find out what pleases the Lord. Ephesians 5, 15-17. Look carefully then how you walk. Not as unwise but as wise making the best use of the time because the days are evil.

Therefore do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is. It's very easy. The last thing we want to do we might say, oh, new church plan. It's easy to just be busy. There's not as many people to do the work.

So we're just being busy and being with people and trying to get a mission to this person. Busy and overwhelmed and constantly and your life is flying by. Your kids are getting older. Your life is passing you by and all of a sudden you realize am I even doing what I'm supposed to be doing?

Am I doing the priorities? Do I have a busy life or a full life? A full life plans your priorities. The priorities that God says are priorities. Making the best use of the time.

Okay? That's the difference. It's very important for us not to just be busy consuming but rather be have a full life of planning priorities of how can I be someone who refreshes others gives to others and is intentional with my life so that when I go to bed and I hit the pillow I can say you know what?

[40 : 26] I did what God wanted me to do. Today was a good day. Number 10 avoiding low bar partnership. Partnership is what we call membership in this church. Instead building a high standard of partnership with accountability and shared responsibility.

The strength of our church is very much in the quality of our partnership together. Okay? The partners are the people we count on. If we build that into our church now it's going to have benefit that will reap fruit for years and years and years to say hey it's important that I partner well with the church.

That I can be someone that people count on. And the quality of our church so many people think oh no the quality of the church that's in how good their worship team is and how good their child care is and how good the preacher is.

Those things matter but that's not where the true quality of the church is. Because the church isn't a worship team a preacher and a child care program. The church is the people.

And so the quality of the people the quality of the members of the church and their partnership together will determine the quality of the church as a whole. And if you're someone and everyone is someone who can be counted on now we're talking about a church that is going to bear a lot of fruit together.

[41 : 44] Number 11 avoid the illusion of the kingdom of God as part of your life. Instead build an all of life church okay an all of life life where you're saying I'm going to give God everything I got.

Right? I said it before church gets weird when Christ isn't your whole life. Colossians 3 verse 4 says Christ who is your life. Okay if you ever some of you have had maybe a bad experience of church you've got to ask the question was my bad experience of church because the church was bad?

Which could be true. Or was it because Christ wasn't my life and I tried to fit Jesus into my life instead of losing my life for Jesus and therefore the filter with which I determined what church was

and how it was supposed to function was off from the get go.

Therefore all my church expression and experience was goofy and off because at the end of the day it wasn't maybe as much as that the church was messed up although that can be part of it but that I wasn't believing and living as if Christ was my life.

When Christ is your life and the group of people you're meeting with as church Christ is their life as well it changes everything. Things are cohesive things flow together things function the way they're supposed to when you're just trying to fit Christ into your life and you're holding on to your life you lose it you lose it and you got a bunch of people gathering together in the name of church when their life is lost because they don't truly believe and act as if Christ is their life who they've lost their life for then church gets weird really fast.

[43 : 22] You can determine what that's going to be like in this church you can build it into the foundation 1 Corinthians 15 58 says always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord how often?

Always how much? Fully to what? The work of the Lord 1 Corinthians 15 58 always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain that's why we always give ourselves that's why we give ourselves fully that's why we give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord why?

Because your labor in the Lord won't be in vain. It is labor. It is work. But if we give ourselves fully, always to the work of the Lord, it won't be in vain.

There's a lot of work in the name of the Lord that is vain because it's not always and it's not fully.

And at the end of the day, it's not really the work of the Lord because it's just trying to fit Jesus into our life. And God never meant it that way.

And we blame God for that. We say, God, your church is a joke. God, church sucks. And God, you haven't been faithful. When all along what it is is, no, Christianity hasn't been tried and found wanting, but wanted and not tried, as Chesterton said.

[44 : 37] All right? That's the problem. Well, I tried Christianity. No, you didn't. No, you didn't. You tried some selfish, consumeristic version of Christianity that was not Christianity at all.

It's not that Christianity was tried and it was found wanting. It was wanted, but it was never tried because it wasn't your life. Number 12. Two more.

Avoid closed hearts, closed homes, and closed schedules. Build open hearts, open homes, and open schedules. 1 Timothy 6, 17-19 says, As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty nor to set their hopes on uncertainty of riches, but on God.

Through rich he provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

How do you take hold of that which is truly life? You're generous and willing to share. And if you're saying, well, that's not for me because I'm not the rich in this world. No. If you're in this country, you're wealthy beyond measure, and if you live in the time you do, which you do because I see you and I know you're alive, this is the richest time in all.

[45 : 54] Kings weren't as rich as we are. Okay? 2 Corinthians 6, 11-13 says, We've spoken to you freely, Corinthians. Our heart is wide open. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections.

In return, I speak as to children. This is Paul speaking. Widen your hearts also. And then in verse 2 he says, Make room in your hearts for us. The life, wisdom, and power of God is exchanged through open hearts.

Open hearts. Jesus dwells in your heart through faith. How do you experience Jesus together? It has to be through open hearts. And some of us have closed our hearts because we've been burned by church and we've been burned by other Christians, and we want to get help, but you can't open your...

The same openness that allows you to be helped is the same openness that creates the possibility of being hurt. You can't open yourself to be helped if you don't first open yourself to be hurt.

And know that when you close your heart to other people, it's not just the other people you're closing your heart to. You're also closing your heart to God. Because Jesus lives inside of other people and his love, wisdom, and power is exchanged through open hearts.

[47 : 02] And when you close your heart to people, you're also closing your heart to God. And at the end of the day, you have to ask the question, can Jesus be trusted? And can he be trusted in his people? And you don't get one without the other.

That's not how it works. You can't say, well, I just want... Just give me Jesus. I don't want the church. Just give me Jesus. I don't need the church. Take the church out of the New Testament and what do you have? You got nothing.

There's no context for all of these epistles and for the life of God in the New Testament without the church. You can't say, I just have Jesus. I'm fine. I've been wounded.

I've been hurt. I got Jesus. That's good enough. You can't say that. That's not biblical. It's not right. It's not in any way, shape, or form what God wanted. Lastly, number 13.

I actually think this is a strength of this church right from the get-go. And I encourage you to keep it that way. I actually rebuked Bellicose Church last week because I've noticed that ever since you guys got sent out, the prayer meeting on Sunday morning has gotten really skimpy.

[48 : 01] I showed up there the other day. I'm like, where the heck is everybody? And I realized that all the people who were coming are the people who got sent out for this church. And I was like, good grief.

These guys need to get praying. Those Christchurch people were the ones who were doing all the prayer work and now they're gone. Who's going to pray? Okay. So I'm saying, avoid low-priority prayer and build high-priority prayer.

Which I think you guys are doing. You guys value prayer. And there's many ways that Bellicose has felt the loss of you guys. But one of the things I didn't anticipate and didn't see but I've noticed it on those Sunday mornings is, where'd everybody go?

And it's because it's you guys. And that's encouraging. Please keep that. Keep prayer as a priority. Jim Symbolus says, Prayer cannot be taught by principles and seminars and symposiums.

It has to be born out of a whole environment of felt need. If I say I ought to pray, I will soon run out of motivation and quit. The flesh is too strong. I have to be driven to pray.

[49 : 04] Essentially what he's saying is Matthew 5, 3, Blessed are the poor in spirit. You have to be poor in spirit. You have to see that you're needy. You don't pray because you ought to. You pray because you know that you need to.

And so, Christchurch, keep your neediness. Let's build into the culture a neediness in prayer.

People say, I need God. We sing our songs and say, I need God. We seek counsel and say, I need God.

And then we don't show up at the prayer meeting. Let's not be a people like that. Let's have prayer always as a high priority. Let's make sure that his church is a house of prayer. Okay?

And you might have been, and especially all the more so, living in a city where all the weirdness with IHOP and all the stuff that's happened there. Listen, don't let that keep you from praying. Don't let that burn you out from praying.

Don't let that make it less of a priority because some sinful behavior happened in a prominent ministry in our city. Don't do that. It needs to be a priority. Amen?

[50 : 00] Amen. This is our opportunity to build into the culture of this church. Some of this stuff you've heard me say before, I'm going to keep saying it over and over again because it's so important now to build into the culture of our church.

Amen? Amen. Amen.