

“GREETING ONE ANOTHER”

(Rom 16:16; 2 Cor. 7:1)

Week 19

Central Teaching/Learning Aim: To help the learner maintain a life of holiness enabling him/her to sincerely greet one another in love and compassion as a witness to a watching world.

A. State - Today we are going to discuss the proper way to greet one another. I want to begin by testing your etiquette awareness. Answer the following questions true or false.

Question #1

In a restaurant, you may use your fingers to eat french fries.

True False

Question #2

Name Tags should be worn on the right shoulder.

True False

Question #3

The following is an example of a proper introduction: “Mr. Smith (CEO), I’d like you to meet Mr. Jones (CLIENT).”

True False

Question #4

In a business introduction, a woman should wait for the man to extend his hand.

True False

Question #5

You are taking a guest to lunch in a restaurant. You and your guest are shown to the table you have chosen. You seat yourself and let the waiter seat your guest.

True False

Question #6

It’s appropriate to place your elbows on the table when there is no food in front of you.

True False

Question #7

When meeting an influential individual at a business or social function, always make sure you give your business card.

True False

Question #8

It takes only 5 seconds to make an impression.

True False

Answer Key:

1. False
2. True
3. True
4. False
5. False
6. True
7. True
8. True

Next – Ask members to listen for the proper way to greet one another. In what condition should your life be?

Read – (Rom. 16:16)

State – Although customs have changed and it may not be proper in our culture to kiss others when we greet them, we should still be in a state of holiness when we greet one another.

Today - We are going to discuss the proper way to greet one another and maintain a lifestyle of holiness.

B. Optional Method – Share the following information. Recently Pat Tillman was being lauded as a national hero. Pat Tillman gave up a 3.6 million dollar NFL contract to join the Army. He felt compelled after 9-11 to help his country. People ranging from President Bush to Senators, to the NFL Commissioner, Paul Tagliabue, to fellow athletes praised Tillman as a unique individual who was a step ahead of most people. He was “set apart” as an over-achiever and true American hero.

As Christians we are called to be “set apart” holy in the sight of man.

Ask – In what condition should our lives be as stated in the following passage?

Read – (Rom. 16:16)

We are to be holy “set apart” as we connect with fellow Christians and encounter the lost.

Today - We are going to discuss the proper way to greet one another and maintain a lifestyle of holiness.

C. Optional Method – Movie Clip - “My Big Fat Greek Wedding”

Start: 1:06:17

Stop: 1:08:32

Synopsis:

When Ian's parents (a wealthy couple without any extended family) accept a dinner invitation at Toula's parents' home, they are not prepared for what they experience. As the Millers drive into the suburban Chicago neighborhood, they can't help but notice that the Portokalos garage door has been painted into a huge Greek flag. Even more amazing, they are greeted on the front lawn by nearly 100 people—the entire Portokalos clan. Amid the dozens of cousins, aunts, and uncles (most of whom are named "Nick"), there is a goat hanging on a spit over an open fire.

Toula's father, Gus, addresses the Millers above the boisterous crowd. He smiles broadly and says, "Welcome to my home!" Toula's mother approaches the bewildered couple and gives them the traditional hug and kiss on the cheek. The Millers' deer-in-the-headlights expression relaxes as they realize how much they are loved. Gus and his extended family then warmly welcome the Millers inside the home for an evening of Greek-style feasting and hospitality.

My Big Fat Greek Wedding (Playtone Pictures, 2002), rated PG, directed by Joel Zwick, written by Nia Vardalos

State – Sometimes the customs of one family or culture can be very shocking and strange to another family or culture.

Ask – What is an acceptable greeting in our culture with friends you are very close to?

State – Although customs have changed and it may not be proper in our culture to kiss others when we greet them, we should still be in a state of holiness when we greet one another.

BOOK Getting Into the Word

Utilize the questions in the *Discussion Guide* to examine the Scripture passage.

LOOK Getting the Word into Life

Distribute – The handout “Pursuing Personal Holiness” and guide members to complete it.

TOOK Conclusion

A. Share – The following quote from Stephen Olford:

“We cannot personally reveal Christ until we have received Christ, but if there is a genuine experience of the indwelling Savior, then we have a supreme responsibility to reveal Christ consciously, conspicuously, and continually in every area of life.”

–The Way of Holiness, p. 106

Christians must do more than talk about Jesus; we must reveal Him in our lifestyles. If our actions muffle our words, nobody will hear our message.

State – Let’s work to greet one another with sincere love in the state of holiness so a watching world can see a difference in our lives. Close in prayer.

B. Optional Method – Share the following true account:

A casino in New Mexico ran an ad that offered an interesting solution for those facing financial problems. The Isleta Casino & Resort bills itself as “Home of Albuquerque’s Loosest Slots and Hottest Table Games.” The casino put out a TV commercial showing images of dollar bills floating down to an outstretched hand while an announcer said, “So the holidays have passed, and those credit card bills just keep piling up? Well, Isleta Casino Resort comes to your rescue.”

“Casino Pulls Ad Aimed at Those in Debt,” Reuters.com (3-30-04)

State – How ironic a casino advertising that the best way to get out of debt is to gamble more of your money away. There are few areas of life where doing more of an activity will enhance life. Gambling to earn money to pay debt is certainly not one of them. Maintaining a holy lifestyle is one of them. It takes daily commitment and discipline to live a life that exudes holiness. May we greet one another sincerely in a state of holiness and bear witness to a watching, lost world this week.

C. Optional Method – Share the following illustration:

Nearly 3,000 athletes take part in the summer games of Michigan’s Special Olympics. The Special Olympics slogan is “Caring is more important than winning.” This is especially true of those competitors who are mentally impaired.

The events at the Special Olympics are like any other track meet—with one major difference. At the finish line is a group of volunteers the Olympic Committee calls “huggers.” Their job, in addition to calling out the winners, is to encourage one of the competitors throughout the race and to greet him or her at the finish line with a big hug.

In Romans 16, Paul gives special recognition to the men and women in Rome who had been diligently “running the race” for the Lord. He remembered them by name. Paul would have made a good “hugger.” (Actually the Greek text mentions kissing, but you know how cultures change.) You can be that kind of encourager too. Make those around you feel like winners.

Mart De Haan, Power Up!

State – This is how it should be in a Christian community. We should constantly encourage one another and express genuine love and concern for one another as a lost world watches.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

(Teacher's Copy)

1. What are acceptable methods for greeting other Christians in our society?
2. The word "Holy" is used 221 times in the New Testament, look up the following passages and identify the characteristics of living a holy "set apart" life.
 - a. (2 Cor. 7:1) We are to cleanse ourselves from fleshly desires
 - b. (1 Thes. 3:12-13) We should love one another and have unblamable hearts
 - c. (Rom. 12:1-2) We are not to be conformed to this world and should renew our minds and present ourselves holy to God
 - d. (Eph. 1:4) We are chosen so we should live holy and blameless
 - e. (Phil. 4:8) We should guard our minds to ensure holiness
3. How did Paul warn the Corinthians to protect their holy fellowship in (1 Cor. 16:17-19)?

(We should guard against those who would cause dissensions in the Body. We are to stay obedient before God.)
4. Proper greeting of fellow Christians includes the following characteristics. How well are you doing?
 - a. **Getting beyond surface relationships – is your mask on or off in the Christian community?**
 - b. **Thinking and responding to others – how good are you at listening to one another?**
 - c. **Making a personal connection – how well do you demonstrate proper affection to other Christians?**
5. Even when the giver of a genuine expression of love in greeting has pure motives what influences might affect the receiver?
6. Living a holy life takes constant discipline and pursuit. Look at the following passages to identify what we should pursue.
 - a. (1 Thes. 5:23) Pursue God
 - b. (Heb. 13:12-13) Pursue Christ
 - c. (1 Cor. 6:11) Pursue The Spirit
 - d. (John 17:17) Pursue the Word of God
 - e. (1 Tim. 4:5) Pursue Prayer

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 - d. (John 17:17)
 - e. (1 Tim. 4:5)

Pursuing Personal Holiness

Complete the following self-evaluation/goal sheet and make a commitment to pursue holiness.

Submit – to God

Rate yourself on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being not submitting and 5 being total submission.

My thought life

My marriage

My vocation

My finances

My hobbies

My goals

What needs to change in each area to be more submissive?

Thought life

Marriage

Vocation

Finances

Hobbies

Goals

Resist – the devil

Write down weak areas of your life where you feel the greatest temptations.

What needs to be done to strengthen your resistance in each area?

Draw – near to God

Where/when do you feel the closest to God?

What steps do you need to take to make this happen more frequently?

Cleanse/Purify – your hands

What sins do you need to confess today? Write them down.

Ask God to forgive you of each one today.

Mourn – the condition of your life.

When was the last time you felt broken before God?

Spend time reflecting on His holiness.

Humble – yourself

Record all of the attributes of God that you can think of...

Make God the boss of your life as you praise Him.

The Word for the Week

"Greeting One Another"
(Romans 16:16 ; 2 Cor. 7:1)
Week 19

Monday – Read (John 13:34a)

- Ø Have you ever had those times when people are really hard to love? You may even name a few from the last week.
- Ø What is it that makes loving a difficult thing to do. In other words, what is it that makes us want to limit our distance of nearness to someone?
- Ø What things do people do that turn us away from being intently involved in others' lives?
- Ø Pray about your relationship with them and give God an unreserved YES that you will follow in obedience any actionable steps he leans on your heart.

Tuesday – Read question 1 below

- Ø Before you read the Scripture...how is it that you love. What words would describe how you love the people nearest to your life, the lost, the least, the lonely?
- Ø Read John 13:34b
- Ø How is it that Christ is commanding us to love?
- Ø What does that mean in light of how you rated your relationships?

Wednesday – Read (John 13:35)

- Ø Who is the "everyone" that Jesus is talking about?
- Ø Evaluate yourself through the eyes of those around you, office workers, family members, children, parents, ministry partners, and team members. People who do not follow Jesus? Do they see sacrificial love?
- Ø What is the one thing that defines a follower of Christ to "everyone" around us?
- Ø What needs to change for God to have our full allowance of His change in our lives in the area of love?

Thursday – Read (John 15:12-13)

- Ø As Jesus is giving parting words here, He issues a challenge. But even greater... He models the response to the challenge later in chapter 19 and 20.
- Ø Read John 13:1-20
- Ø How is it that you might take your lists from Monday and apply this teaching?

Friday – Read (John 15:13)

- Ø Has anyone ever laid his or her life down for you? Have you ever laid your life down for someone?
- Ø Servant leadership is a challenging type of leadership? How would you describe servant leadership?
- Ø Ask God to develop and help you see the immense challenge this loving is...but, the challenge is not one we victor over alone, it is his inhabiting and developing of Him in our lives.

EXEGETICAL What it meant to Theophilus back THEN

REAL LIFE

“Greeting One Another”

(Romans 16:16 ; 2 Corinthians 7:1)

(Exegetical . . . What it meant to the Roman/Corinthian believers back THEN)
THE MANNER IN WHICH THE ROMANS WERE TO GREET ONE ANOTHER,
ACCORDING TO PAUL’S COMMAND – IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS EXTENDED
GREETINGS TO INDIVIDUAL ROMAN BELIEVERS AND THE ASIAN AND EUROPEAN
CHURCHES’ GREETINGS TO THE ROMANS – WAS WITH A HOLY (GOD FEARING)
KISS OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.

I. The MANNER in which the Romans were to Greet one another, according to Paul’s command in the context of extended greetings to individual Roman believers (vss. 3-15), was with a holy kiss, (Romans 16:16a).

II. THOSE WHO also Greeted the Roman believers, along with Paul, were all the churches in Asia and Europe, (16b).

NOTE: Paul’s point would be easily understood in the context of first century Rome. Even as many cultures in our world today greet one another with a kiss (including siblings or cousins at family reunions, and European or Middle Eastern men in public gatherings), so first century cultures in generally and the Church (Christ’s master-planned community) in specific greeted one another with a kiss (1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26; and 1 Peter 5:14). A kiss was simply a sign of welcome or pleasure at seeing someone. For those who belonged to the persecuted church, this gesture of kinship and community carried deep spiritual and emotional significance.

NOTE: The word “holy” simply meant, “set apart” or “special.” A holy kiss communicated the bond of Christian unity that existed among fellow believers. Theirs was a unique or “holy” relationship. For a twenty-first century American audience the word “holy” might also signal the spiritual nature of the kiss of greeting as opposed to the sexual nature that kissing almost always connotes to people of our culture.

III. The CONTENT of Paul’s command to the beloved Corinthian believers, based on God’s promise to make them a holy people (see 2 Corinthians 6:14-18) and toward the goal of Experiencing personal and corporate holiness in obedience to God, was that they Cleanse themselves from physical and spiritual defilements, (2 Corinthians 7:1).

NOTE: This verse, among many others that could be noted, reminded the first century Church that God’s goal for them was not sexual gratification (lustful kissing), but spiritual community (holiness before the Lord).

(Theological . . . What it means for believers ALWAYS)
GOD’S MASTER-PLANNED COMMUNITY
GREETS ONE ANOTHER
(WELCOMES ONE ANOTHER IN HOLY COMMUNITY).

(Pedagogical . . . What it means for us NOW)
GREET ONE ANOTHER –
CELEBRATE, ENTER into, and INVEST in
TRUE COMMUNITY.

I. CELEBRATE those who are different than you, (Romans 16:3-15).

Celebrate the diversity that is in this church. Diversity is something to be embraced rather than ignored or looked down upon. This church, just like the church in Rome, is made up of all kinds of people. Some are married; others are single. There are those who have office jobs, and those who do construction. There are those who are rich; there are those who are poor. Some prefer a more traditional worship service, while others prefer a more contemporary worship. We could go on and on about the differences among us. Yet as a church we are committed to Christ. Diversity among the body is something to celebrate.

II. ENTER into authentic (“holy”) relationships, (Romans 16:16; 2 Corinthians 7:1).

Invest your heart and life into the lives of others. Why? Your journey depends on it. You must cling to those you have, and search for those you do not yet have. If you try to make the journey toward Christlikeness alone, you will fail. No one lives the Christian life in isolation.

A. There are many avenues by which you can enter into authentic relationships at church. One of the best ways is to get involved in a small group, whether for mutual support, Bible study, or service. There are community groups available through the various life stages and also through the men’s and women’s ministries here. Perhaps the most beneficial group you could join is a service group, one that shares God’s love according to our Lake Pointe purpose.

B. One of the greatest benefits of entering into real living with other believers is that it will build a true bond of belonging. Those people will become friends that you love dearly, and they will be people who love you dearly. You won’t have to wear any of the sophisticated masks that you have made for yourself because those relationships will be ones where you are accepted and loved just as you are. And that is something that our hearts cry for.

III. INVEST your giftedness and passions in the fellowship of Christ.

Each one of you has a certain set of gifts and passions. It is no accident that you are the way you are. And God has knit us together. He designed us in a specific ways to play unique parts in a growing community of Christlikeness.

Saint Irenaeus, one of the early church fathers, says this, “The Glory of God is man fully alive.” You are never more fully alive than when you are sharing your gifts and passions to build up the Church and advance the greatest message this world has ever heard.

IV. GREET ONE ANOTHER . . . in Celebration of diversity, through Entering into authentic relationships, and by Investing in the fellowship of Christ.

Living in a biblically functioning community doesn’t mean finding self-gratification for our sinful natures; it means welcoming one another into holiness – set apart for God’s glory and our good.