

# Family Business, Our Members

By: D. Karl Thomas

## “Transforming lives to IMPACT their world.” Benefits and Opportunities of Participation

### VIDEO — Marcia

“Communion is strength; solitude is weakness. Alone, the fine old beech yields to the blast and lies prone on the meadow. In the forest, supporting each other, the trees laugh at the hurricane. The sheep of Jesus flock together. The social element is the genius of Christianity.” – **C.H. Spurgeon**

“The level of sacrifice that an environment requires will determine the size of people that will follow. Vision gives pain a purpose.” **Kris Vallotton**

### Rick Joyner (The World Aflame) — Welsh Revival

"However, it was their strength in being so open to the Holy Spirit that the enemy used to push them too far, so that they actually prohibited the organization that was needed to help preserve the great advances that were made ... Because of this just a couple of years after the revival evidence of it was scarce, and the whole nation quickly drifted back to its former depravity." **STRUCTURE IS IMPORTANT**

**For beauty and clarity to be revealed you need context. Example: Diamond in setting.**

**The Family of God is the context where the Nature and Kingdom of God are best displayed.**

**Matthew 6:9** “**Our Father** in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.”

**Ephesians 3:14** “For this reason I bow my knees to the **Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,…”

**Psalms 68:5-6** “A **father** of the fatherless, a defender of widows, Is God in His holy habitation. God sets the solitary in families; He brings out those who are bound into prosperity; But the rebellious dwell in a dry land.”

**Romans 8:15-16** “For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “**Abba, Father.**” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

**1 Peter 1:3** “All praise to God, the **Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation,…”

**Christopher Knight** — North Pond Hermit, lived almost without human contact for 27 years in the woods in Maine “**I became very introspective ... without others I found no need to define my self ... I became irrelevant.**” He did not find himself he actually lost himself!!!

**Vance Havner** says: “Snowflakes are frail, but if enough of them get together they can stop traffic.”

## Benefits:

### 1. Safety

#### Philippians 1:3-11

“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,…”

Feeling safe is vital to authentic community. If you don't feel safe you will always be guarded and fake. Adam and Eve were naked and unashamed.

Paul had some very healthy relationships that helped him be and do everything God called him to do. Every believer needs healthy relationships if they are going to be everything God calls them to be.

#### **4 Keys To Joyful Relationships**

##### **Plenty Of Affirmation**

*"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you..."* vs. 3

Hard to enjoy those you are constantly critical of. Mindful ... Prayerful ... Hopeful

##### **Plenty Of Confidence**

*"...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you..."* vs. 6

Misplaced confidence ruins relationship. Proper confidence frees relationships. Confidence in GOD

##### **Plenty Of Heart Space**

*"...because I have you in my heart,..."* vs. 7

Takes effort to get people in your heart. Takes effort to keep people in your heart. You have to fit people in ...  
**MAKE SOME ROOM!**

##### **Plenty Of Affection**

*"...how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ."* vs. 8

Only those who have a genuine love relationship with Jesus can express genuine affection.

You only love to the degree you have been loved.

#### **You don't love because a person is lovable but because you have been loved.**

"We love Him because He first loved us." 1 John 4:19

"...the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." Romans 5:5

## **2. Support**

### **In This Family We LAFH A Lot.**

#### **A. Love Unconditionally**

**John 13:34** *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another."*

**Trying not to sin does not lead to loving others. Loving others leads to less sin.**

**59 One Another Commands In New Testament. 21 Involve "Love."**

**Love** :- Sacrificially ascribing infinite worth to another. **CONNECT ... It's not optional!**

#### **B. Accept Completely**

**Romans 15:7** *"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."*

"You can safely assume you've created God in your own image when it turns out God hates all the same people you do." Anne Lamott

#### **C. Forgive On Purpose**

**1 Peter 4:8 {AMP}**

*"Above all things have intense and unfailing love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins [forgives and disregards the offenses of others]."*

**Max Lucado** (Shaped By Grace) "What disturbs me most about Jeffrey Dahmer is not his ax, not his trail, and not his punishment but his conversion."

**William Arthur Ward** "Thoughts of a Christian Optimist" wrote: Most like beasts when we kill. Most like men when we judge. Most like God when we forgive.

### **A story tells that two friends were walking through the desert.**

During some point of the journey they had an argument, and one friend slapped the other one in the face. The one who got slapped was hurt, but without saying anything, wrote in the sand:

#### **TODAY MY BEST FRIEND SLAPPED ME IN THE FACE.**

They kept on walking until they found an oasis, where they decided to take a bath. The one who had been slapped got stuck in the mire and started drowning, but the friend saved him.

After he recovered from the near drowning, he wrote on a stone:

#### **TODAY MY BEST FRIEND SAVED MY LIFE.**

The friend who had slapped and saved his best friend asked him, "After I hurt you, you wrote in the sand and now, you write on a stone, why?"

The other friend replied "**When someone hurts us we should write it down in sand where winds of forgiveness can erase it away. But, when someone does something good for us, we must engrave it in stone where no wind can ever erase it.**"

### **D. Honour Everyone**

**Proverbs 20:5** *"The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out."*

I believe in you. God believes in you. God had a dream and wrapped your body around it.

Let's work it out together.

**Vance Havner** says: "Snowflakes are frail, but if enough of them get together they can stop traffic."

## **3. Stretching**

"The easiest kind of relationship is with ten thousand people. The hardest is with one." **Joan Baez**

"If your mind grows faster than your heart you will lack understanding and discernment ...your heart will shrivel up." **Allen Hood**

### **STRETCH!**

When our muscles are active, their constant contractions and extensions aid in the process of moving blood through the capillaries, the microscopic vessels that service most of our bodies' cells. When the muscles are inactive for long periods, the blood has a harder time moving through the capillaries; this results in a decrease of oxygen in the muscle tissue and an increase in the waste products that the blood normally carries away.

During sleep, most of our skeletal muscles are normally "switched off" by the brain to prevent potentially harmful motion, and blood pressure gradually drops. Upon awakening, our muscles are oxygen-starved and loaded with irritating waste, and the brain needs a blood pressure increase to prepare the body for activity, especially standing up. All of those issues are addressed by a good stretch. The simultaneous elongation or contraction of almost every major muscle group flushes out waste, brings in oxygen, and boosts blood pressure. Notice what happens to your heart beat next time you have a good morning stretch; the rate temporarily increases as does the force of the beat, all to handle these changes in the blood supply.

"Upon awakening, our muscles are oxygen-starved and loaded with irritating waste, ..."

When you surround yourself with people who approach every aspect of life and faith just like you do it can lead to very dull experience. Nothing to challenge you or add any contrast to your life. **A dull monochromatic existence.**

The opportunities to be stretched in the typical Impact Group: Generationally, Ethnically, Socioeconomically, ...

**Colossians 4:6** *"Be gracious in your speech. The goal is to bring out the best in others in a conversation, not put them down, not cut them out."*

**1 Corinthians 9:22-23** *"I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you."*

**Luke 19:9-10** *“And Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.’”*

**Acts 16:3** *“Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek.”*

### **Characteristics of Narrow Minded People:**

1. See through single key hole with both eyes
2. Easily Offended
3. Slave to Assumptions
4. Know It All — Own Agenda
5. Fear all Unknowns
6. Trust Issues
7. Judgemental — Quit on people

## **4. Sharpening**

“Get your friends to tell you your faults, or better still, welcome an enemy who will watch you keenly and sting you savagely. What a blessing such an irritating critic will be to a wise man, what an intolerable nuisance to a fool!”

**Charles Spurgeon**

“A knife cuts because it has a narrow focus.” **Cleddie Keith**

**Proverbs 27:5** *“Open rebuke is better Than love carefully concealed.”*

**Ecclesiastes 10:10** *“If the ax is dull, And one does not sharpen the edge, Then he must use more strength; But wisdom brings success.”*

**Proverbs 27:17** *“As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.”*

Sharpens (khaw-dad') :— to be sharp, be alert, be keen, be fierce, to be swift

Metal on metal, sword on sword, on a wheel, anvil with hammer from fire

Countenance (paw-neem') :— face, before and behind, toward, in front of, forward

a. How You **Look**

b. How You **Look At Things**

c. How You **Look At Things Ahead Of You**

**They're Intentionally Intrusive**

**Celebrate each other without reservation. It should be our Natural impulse!!!**

**Criticism is cowardly self praise.**

**Speak the truth in love. (You have a piece of lettuce on your teeth.)**

Paul cared too much for the community they were building. It was authentic. There was no room for any form of bigotry or racism. He loved Peter enough to confront his public sin in public. He had a public face to face encounter with Peter to guard the quality of community they had worked so hard to forge.

**Galatians 2:11-13** *“...Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and*

*separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him,...*"

A young man who was raised in a Jewish home. His dad was zealous in attending worship and religious instruction. When the family was forced to move to another city in Germany, there was no synagogue in the city. All the pillars of the community attended the Lutheran church. The dad announced one day that the family was simply going to become Lutheran. When the stunned family asked why, the dad said, "It will be good for my business." The young man became confused and bewildered and his disappointment became a deep bitterness that would plague him all his life. He left home to study in England. The young man wrote a book in which he conceived of a whole new worldview. In that book, he called religion the 'opiate of the masses' and reduced the influence of religion to purely economic terms. **The young man was Karl Marx.** The system developed by this bitter man has condemned countless thousands. The influence of the hypocrisy of his father has been felt around the world. Tell me that integrity doesn't matter.

## 5. Satisfaction

### **Pslam 133**

*How wonderful and pleasant it is when brothers live (DWELL) together in harmony!*

*For harmony is as precious as the anointing oil that was poured over Aaron's head, that ran down his beard and onto the border of his robe.*

*Harmony is as refreshing as the dew from Mount Hermon that falls on the mountains of Zion. And there the Lord has pronounced his blessing, even life everlasting.*

**Abiding in community is wonderful and pleasant. So many benefits of real community!!!**

For over 75 years, Harvard's Grant and Glueck study has tracked the physical and emotional well-being of two populations: 456 poor men growing up in Boston from 1939 to 2014 (the Grant Study), and 268 male graduates from Harvard's classes of 1939-1944 (**the Glueck study**).

The conclusion? According to Robert Waldinger, director of the Harvard Study of Adult Development, one thing surpasses all the rest in terms of importance:

"The clearest message that we get from this 75-year study is this: Good relationships keep us happier and healthier. Period."

**You don't have to create it!!!**

**Ephesians 4:3-4** "...eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit."

**It's like the anointing oil that was poured out!!! Huge Spiritual Blessings!**

**It's like the refreshing that comes from the dew of Mount Hermon!!! Huge Physical Refreshing!**

### **Opportunities:**

1. Provide Safety
2. Provide Support
3. Provide Stretching
4. Provide Sharpening
5. Provide Satisfaction

Real Community or fellowship is "**hanging out with a spiritual purpose.**" Saying fellowship is important for spiritual growth is like saying oxygen is important to breathing.

KOINONIA:-- fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse, the share which one has in anything, a gift jointly contributed, a collection, a contribution, as exhibiting an embodiment and proof of fellowship.

**Ephesians 4:14-16** Real maturity can only happen in genuine relationship.

**Laminin:** cell-adhesion molecule It tells the cell what its job is in the body. It's like the 'rebar' of the human body...it's the glue

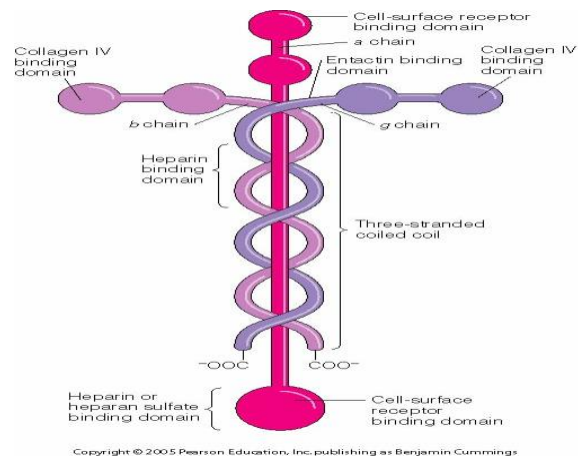
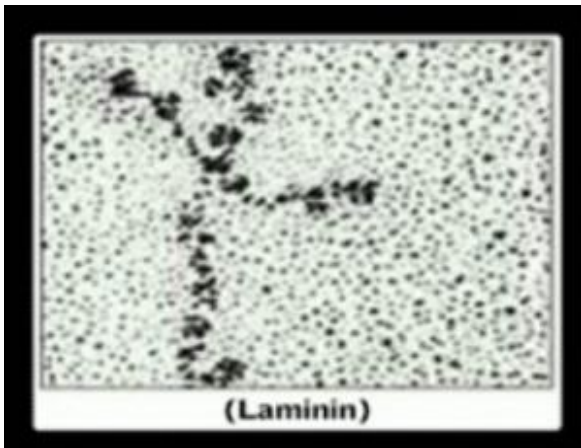
**Acts 2:42-47** "A deep sense of **awe** came over them all,..." (NLT)

"continued steadfastly" (NKJV) "devoted" (NLT) Proskartereo :- to be devoted or constant to one, to give unremitting care to a thing, to persevere and not to faint, to show one's self courageous for.

Impact Church manifests a community that causes awe!!!

### "One Another" Commands

John 13:34 - 35 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one



another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Romans 12:16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Romans 14:13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.

Romans 15:7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Galatians 5:13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 5:19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord,

Ephesians 5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Colossians 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.

1 Peter 4:9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.