

Circles Are Better Than Rows

There are things that can happen face-to-face that will never ever happen shoulder-to-shoulder and we are committed to being a face-to-face church, not just shoulder-to-shoulder.

WE NATURALLY DRIFT - You rarely drift in a good direction in any capacity.

If it is good for us, we drift from it. Exercise, diet, our budgets, healthy relationships.

Our relationship with God takes some intentionality. If we're not intentional in our relationship with God, it begins to drift because the gravitational pull of life is generally in the wrong direction.

The current of life rarely takes us in the right direction, in every area of life that's important, we are swimming upstream.

Whether you're trying to have a:

- healthy marriage,
- healthy relationship with your kids,
- overcome bitterness or anger,
- deal with a difficult boss,
- or pursue a relationship with God

You are swimming upstream - in a culture that is not going to facilitate your relationship with God, every area of life that's important is upstream.

Wherever you have made the effort to better yourself, to overcome an obstacle, overcome a relationship, get out of a situation that's dragging you down, it takes a lot of effort. **You're swimming upstream but it is worth it.**

Here is one of the core tenants of Christianity and here is one of the things that is so central to everything we do as a church, when it comes to swimming upstream, we have not been called to swim alone. We have been called to swim together. [Small Group Sign Up](#)

That is the power of community, when you are in community with, when you are in a circle with people who share your values and are trying to get to the same destination you are, it is so much easier. This isn't new.

Hebrews 3:12 - Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God.

Now, who in their right mind, would turn away from the living God? Who would do that? All of us!!! He's saying, "For those of you who are **Christians**, see to it that none of you have a believing sinful heart that turns away."

Paul recognized the fact that we have the capacity to turn away from the living God. The solution is in the verse because this is not an, individual command. This is a group command.

Hebrews 3:13 - You must warn each other every day, while it is still "today," so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God.

This is plural. This is a group thing. You all need to see about each other. to make sure you don't have an unbelieving heart because the heart that turns away from God, this is so important.

When we begin to turn away from God, the drift always begins, not on the outside, the drift begins within. The drift begins within with a temptation. The drift begins within with a doubt. The drift begins within with a question.

The drift always begins within and nobody knows, unless somebody is seeing about you. Nobody knows unless somebody has access to you.

It doesn't show in a row because we're so good at walking in here and looking good.

That's why circles are more important than rows. Otherwise, we swim alone. Otherwise, we struggle upstream alone. Rows don't know.

The Second step in our Journey at Life Church is To Find Freedom / Small Groups - A place to connect, to protect, to grow....

Another Translation of **Hebrews 3:13** (NIV) says, "But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."

Now, the little Greek word translated encourage, does not mean encourage like, "Hey, way to go," or "good job," or "Looking good." It doesn't mean that. In this capacity, in this context, the little Greek word translated encourage, actually means appeal to, **exhort, urge strongly, beg, implore, entreat.**

"Paul is saying, I want you to be in each other's lives. I want you to know what's going on.

I want you to be able to detect when somebody begins to drift. I want you to notice when they don't show up. I want you to notice when their attitude goes south."

It means that it should be an ongoing thing. This is not a once in a lifetime thing. He says, "Encourage each other daily as long as it's called today." This is a reference to the fact that we live in an age where we constantly need this kind of encouraging.

He's saying, "As long as you're alive, as long as we're in the generation of people that struggle with sin and struggle with temptation, you need to be in one another's lives. You need to be in someone else's life."

SIN IS ALIVE: sin deceives you. We think of sin as an activity. We think of sin as something I do. The author and the Apostle Paul in particular, say, "No. It's deeper than that. There is sin residing in you and the problem of sin residing in you and residing in me, is it deceives us."

The way this actually works is we talk ourselves into stupid things. We deceive ourselves. We have all done this self-talk stuff and before long, we start believing the stupid things we tell ourselves.

We is the best defense against the deceitfulness of sin in you. Your best defense against the things that you have a tendency to tell yourself that aren't true is us, not you. Small Groups - so important....

Here's what the author of the text is saying, "The best defense against self-deceit, the best defense against talking ourselves into stupid things and out of wise things, the best defense is not you. The best defense is not me. The best defense is a we."

What is it you're telling yourself these days that if you were to tell someone else, they would think you've lost your mind?

If the drift goes unchecked it leads to unbelief.