

THE CHURCH IS SACRIFICIAL

YEAR: UNITE / FOCUS: I AM PART OF A FAMILY
SERIES: GOD IS FATHER - I AM PART OF THE FAMILY

BIG TRUTH: THE CHURCH IS SACRIFICIAL

1 Corinthians 12:22-26; Philippians 2:3-8, 17; Hebrews 13:15

BIBLE VERSE: ROMANS 12:1

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

BIG IDEAS

- We worship with our hearts, minds, and lives.
- We use our gifts for the good of others.
- We love God's family over ourselves.

BIBLE PASSAGE: ROMANS 12:1-21

UNITE - I AM PART OF A FAMILY

The Unite Year is an exploration of what it means to be united in Christ as the family of God (Romans 12:5). When we are saved, we are given a spirit of adoption as sons (Romans 8:15-16), are made a child of God, and we are also saved into a family- the Church. The Unite Year explores how we are to live as a part of a family, and to live in light of our calling as servants and disciples of Christ. We use our gifts to build up the church as we pursue unity, humility, and gentleness with our brothers and sisters in Christ (Ephesians 4:1-2).

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know that...

- The church is a family.
- The church is given by God.
- The church exists for God.



Every student should feel...

- Thankful for the unique ways God has gifted them and their church.
- Appreciation for the elders and leaders that God has gifted their church.



Every student should strive to...

- Prioritize gathering to worship each week with their church family.
- Learn more about membership in their local church.
- Do something to intentionally serve someone in their church family each week



Every student should want...

- To devote themselves to pursue holiness with their church family.
- To have their lives be marked by love for the church.
- To live in a way that is sacrificial and generous for the good of others and the glory of God

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week's Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.

THE CHURCH IS SACRIFICIAL

BIBLE VERSE: ROMANS 12:1

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

The believer's life is not his or her own.

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice..."

- In Paul's letter to the church in Rome, he reminded them that their lives were not their own. Throughout Paul's writings, he reminded believers of the price that Christ paid to redeem them. Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf. He did this for people who rejected Him and didn't deserve His sacrifice on their behalf.
- Believers are called to die to themselves and to do so completely every day. Dying to ourselves means we are willingly presenting our lives and bodies as sacrifices to be used by God for His will. Jesus is the example that we follow in this. Just as He willingly gave up His life for God's purposes, we are to do so, too.

The believer's life is a life of sacrifice.

"...to present your bodies as a living sacrifice..."

- Living for Christ involves sacrifice. A believer's life is to be lived for the glory of God and in order to do that, one must sacrifice his or her own purposes. This involves committing our lives to Christ every day. We do this by setting aside our desires and pursuing what pleases God first and foremost.
- Living a life of sacrifice is an acknowledgement that we know and understand the sacrifice that Christ made on our behalf. It's also an acknowledgement of the purpose God has for believers and our position as His sons and daughters. It shows our gratitude and thanksgiving.

The believer's life is a life of worship.

"...holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

- Living lives that are holy and acceptable to God is a result of our growing understanding of what God has done for us and what He expects of us. As we grow in our knowledge of God, we will grow in our desire to pursue holiness and to be holy.
- Living a life of sacrifice is an act of worship. When we understand the sacrifice Christ made for us, we will willingly submit our daily lives to the Lord to be used for His purposes. This is a way in which we worship God for His redemption of us.

THE CHURCH IS SACRIFICIAL

BIG IDEA #1: WE WORSHIP WITH OUR HEARTS, MINDS, AND LIVES.¹**[THIS]**

Worship is part of the believer's life. Right worship is placing our attention and affection on God. The believer is reconciled for God's glory and a believer glorifies God by worshiping Him. Worshiping with our hearts is setting our affections on God above all else. It's actively removing idols from our hearts. Worshiping with our minds is aligning our intellect with God's truth. Faith in God can exist with science. We worship with our lives by living whole-heartedly for Him. As a body, believers are to worship God sacrificially, giving of their time and resources for His glory. As individuals worship God with all of their being, the body will do so because individuals will come together with hearts ready and prepared to worship the one true God.

[THEREFORE]

What are some idols or distractions that you can remove in order to more fully worship God?

Colossians 3:5 teaches us that we should put to death what is worldly in us. This means we should take extreme actions in putting away the things that displease the Lord. Any idols we have in our hearts, we must remove. 1 Corinthians 10:14 reminds us to flee idols. It's important that we do whatever is necessary to remove the things, attitudes, behaviors, and actions that keep us from worshiping God with all of our being.

[THIS]

God's people are commanded to love Him with their minds, hearts, and souls. Our worship is affected by our love for God. If we are only half-heartedly loving God and we are pulled away from Him by other things, we won't fully worship Him. As believers seek to love God sacrificially, they will worship Him sacrificially as well. In Romans 12:1, Paul instructs believers to think of and live as if their bodies are given to them to serve God. When we have a right view of our ransomed lives and the purpose God has given us, we will worship Him with our whole lives. A right view of ourselves results in worship because in order to understand ourselves, we have to understand God and have a right view of Him. We worship God as a body of believers when the focus of our time and ministry together is God. We worship Him with our hearts when we remove idols and keep His purpose as the purpose of our coming together.

[THEREFORE]

What are some ways the church can worship God sacrificially?

Ephesians 5:1-2 teaches us that we are to imitate Christ and the way He sacrificed for us. The church can worship God sacrificially by collectively dying to self and focusing on God as a body. When the church sets aside personal desires and ideas in order to promote unity, she can fully worship God and will do so in a sacrificial way.

How can the church make sure the main focus is the pursuit of God and His will?

Because we all have our own thoughts, ideas, and opinions, we can easily insist on our way over being unified in the church. In order for the church to worship God fully, she must be unified. Unity comes when believers set aside their own desires and choose the greater good of the body. Philippians 2:2-3 and John 13:35 show us the importance of dying to self and pursuing unity within the body.

1. Deuteronomy 6:5: God's people are commanded to love Him with all of their being. When we love God, we will worship Him.

BIG IDEA #2: WE USE OUR GIFTS FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS.²**[THIS]**

When we become followers of Christ, we receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit serves as our Helper. Believers also receive spiritual gifts. Romans 12:6-8 speaks of some of these spiritual gifts, such as prophecy and teaching. These gifts are imparted to us by the Holy Spirit. They are not talents and abilities that we are born with. They are not things that we acquire by working hard or training. They are supernaturally given to us by God's Spirit when we believe that Jesus is the Savior. These gifts are for God's glory and our good. As we grow in our spiritual maturity, our understanding of our gifts and how we can use them for God's glory grows. All of this happens as our focus is less on ourselves and more and more on God.

[THEREFORE]**What do you think your spiritual gifts are? How can you use these gifts in the church?**

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 and Ephesians 4:11-16 help us understand what spiritual gifts are. To know which gifts we possess as individual believers, we need the wisdom and discernment of Scripture and the guidance of older believers. As we serve alongside other believers in the church, we gain an understanding of how we are gifted. If we are encouragers, then we can encourage other believers. If we have the gift of mercy, we can help with benevolence ministry. Regardless of our gifting, we can and should use these gifts within the church for the good of the church.

[THIS]

The family of God is connected by His Spirit. We all have the same Spirit and should have the same mind. Romans 12:9-13 gives us a list of ways that we can put others before ourselves. As we use our spiritual gifts for the good of others, we will fulfill God's Word and bring Him glory. Our hearts should be others- focused and not self-focused. We should seek out ways to help others and to join with the church in living sacrificially for the glory of God. Our interconnectedness as believers means we are one body that relies upon one another. Our spiritual gifts are for the building up of the body of Christ. To use our gifts for others requires sacrifice. The church is called to be sacrificial so that God will be known in all of the world.

[THEREFORE]**How does using our gifts for others help the church live sacrificially?**

When we use the spiritual gifts that God has given us, we will build the church up. The church will grow stronger. It will have more resources and abilities. The church will look more like Christ and be positioned to carry the gospel to the world. The church will also be able to meet the needs of the poor in their community. Philippians 2:3-4 and 1 Corinthians 13:7 show us that when the church lives in unity and humbly uses its gifts for others, it will live sacrificially.

Do you live sacrificially?

Matthew 16:25 teaches that if we want to gain our life, we must first lose it. When we die to ourselves and have saving faith, we gain eternal life and we become new creations. This positions us to live sacrificially for Jesus. Ephesians 4:22-24 teaches us to sacrifice our old selves in order to live for Christ. This also helps us live for Jesus sacrificially.

2. Romans 12:6-8: The body is equipped with gifts to use for the good of the church.

THE CHURCH IS SACRIFICIAL

BIG IDEA #3: WE LOVE GOD'S FAMILY OVER OURSELVES.³**[THIS]**

In Romans 12:9-21, Paul teaches what our life of sacrifice should look like. We are to reject what is evil and choose what is good in the sight of God. As God's children, we are to love His body because they are our family. This means we love the church above ourselves. We choose to overlook wrongs and we practice forgiveness. We love one another with brotherly and sisterly affection. We live with other believers knowing that we will spend eternity together. Our relationship with other believers is eternal in the sense that we will live together as God's children in eternity. We look out for one another and make sure God's family is taken care of. We pray for one another and give up our time and resources to benefit the family of God.

[THEREFORE]**How can you better love members of God's family in your local church?**

Romans 12:9-21 helps us understand the ways we can practice a godly love toward our fellow believers. When we seek to do good and put away earthly things, we will love His people as we should. Loving our local church means showing up faithfully and participating in the ways the church is seeking to make Jesus known in the world.

How has the local church loved you and helped you grow in your journey with Christ?

Ephesians 4:16 and Colossians 3:14-16 help us understand the ways believers help one another. As we collectively pursue Christ, we can help believers grow spiritually. Believers seeking to live in unity and to supply the needs of other believers helps them grow more Christlike.

[THIS]

To truly live like Christ, we must live sacrificially. If we want to love God's family above ourselves, then we will have to sacrifice. We will have to sacrifice our desires, our time, our resources, and our comforts in order to love God's family. Loving God's family is more than loving our local church. God's family is all of His people worldwide. To love His family is to love His church everywhere. This is where our sacrifice will be required. To love the body everywhere, we will need to participate in relief programs and other programs that meet the physical needs of the church worldwide. We will need to set aside extra things and deny ourselves in order to love His family sacrificially. When we count others as more significant than ourselves, we can do this.

[THEREFORE]**What does it look like to love God's family over yourself every day?**

Mark 12:31, 1 Corinthians 10:24, and Philippians 2:3 help us understand how to love others over ourselves. In order to count others as more significant than us, we must humble ourselves before the Lord. This means that we think of God and others more than we think of ourselves. We can love sacrificially when we aren't thinking of ourselves so much. When we aren't focused on our own needs, we can truly notice and take care of the needs of others.

3. Romans 12:10: We are to love one another boldly and above ourselves.