

American Decency Association

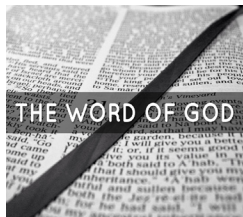
PO Box 202, Fremont, MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org

Encouraging Christians to guard their hearts

March 2016

The Orthodoxy of Community

By: Burk Parsons



The love language of all marriages is self-denial. When both husband and wife are consumed not with their own immediate happiness but with the happiness of one another, they will enjoy a happy marriage. The same is true for enduring friendships and for authentic community.

With the disintegration of marriage has come the dissolution of community. As such, community has fallen on hard times. What every generation in every society in all of history has enjoyed, the rising generation will have to fight for. With the rise of online communities, online church, and online everything, face-to-face, eye-to-eye, shoulder-to-

shoulder community has become increasingly difficult to find. Moreover, many don't know what real community is and thus don't know what to look for. Real community doesn't happen on its own—it takes time, patience, repentance, forgiveness, and love that covers a multitude of sins. The church community is not just a crowd of people on a Sunday morning; it is the gathered, worshiping people of God in a congregation where masks aren't needed and where real friends help bear the real burdens of one another. Community is not just getting together; it is living together, suffering together, rejoicing together, and dying together.

Although many Christians claim to want genuine community, many want it only on their own terms, when it's convenient, and when it demands nothing from them. What they want isn't the church community, but a country club where they pay their dues for services rendered. They want to be served without having to serve anyone else. Real

community forces us to die to ourselves and get over ourselves so that we might love one another as ourselves. Francis Schaeffer observed that “the early church practiced two things simultaneously: orthodoxy of doctrine and orthodoxy of visible community.” Such orthodoxy of visible community is grounded in the “one another” passages of Scripture, which provide us with the essential elements of authentic community. They strike at the root of our self-centeredness, and they lead us to take our eyes off ourselves and to deny ourselves so that we might love one another, encourage one another, confess our sins to one another, forgive one another, and not slander one another, gossip about one another, devour one another, or envy one another. In so doing, our Father in heaven is glorified as we manifest the beauty of the gospel of Christ through the power of the Spirit, who has united a bunch of repentant sinners like us.

[Used with permission from Ligonier Ministries, March 2016]

American Decency Association

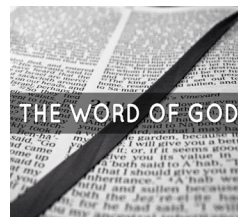
PO Box 202, Fremont, MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org

Encouraging Christians to guard their hearts

March 2016

The Orthodoxy of Community

By: Burk Parsons



The love language of all marriages is self-denial. When both husband and wife are consumed not with their own immediate happiness but with the happiness of one another, they will enjoy a happy marriage. The same is true for enduring friendships and for authentic community.

With the disintegration of marriage has come the dissolution of community. As such, community has fallen on hard times. What every generation in every society in all of history has enjoyed, the rising generation will have to fight for. With the rise of online communities, online church, and online everything, face-to-face, eye-to-eye, shoulder-to-

shoulder community has become increasingly difficult to find. Moreover, many don't know what real community is and thus don't know what to look for. Real community doesn't happen on its own—it takes time, patience, repentance, forgiveness, and love that covers a multitude of sins. The church community is not just a crowd of people on a Sunday morning; it is the gathered, worshiping people of God in a congregation where masks aren't needed and where real friends help bear the real burdens of one another. Community is not just getting together; it is living together, suffering together, rejoicing together, and dying together.

Although many Christians claim to want genuine community, many want it only on their own terms, when it's convenient, and when it demands nothing from them. What they want isn't the church community, but a country club where they pay their dues for services rendered. They want to be served without having to serve anyone else. Real

community forces us to die to ourselves and get over ourselves so that we might love one another as ourselves. Francis Schaeffer observed that “the early church practiced two things simultaneously: orthodoxy of doctrine and orthodoxy of visible community.” Such orthodoxy of visible community is grounded in the “one another” passages of Scripture, which provide us with the essential elements of authentic community. They strike at the root of our self-centeredness, and they lead us to take our eyes off ourselves and to deny ourselves so that we might love one another, encourage one another, confess our sins to one another, forgive one another, and not slander one another, gossip about one another, devour one another, or envy one another. In so doing, our Father in heaven is glorified as we manifest the beauty of the gospel of Christ through the power of the Spirit, who has united a bunch of repentant sinners like us.

[Used with permission from Ligonier Ministries, March 2016]

True Christianity is a Fight

By: J.C. Ryle



“Fight the good fight of faith.” 1 Timothy 6:12

It is a curious fact that there is no subject about which most people feel such deep interest, as fighting... all feel a deep interest in wars, battles and fighting.

But there is another *warfare* of far greater importance than any war that was ever waged by man... *spiritual* warfare. It is the fight which everyone who would be saved, must fight...

It has *consequences* which are solemn...unchangeable and eternal...

If we would be holy — we must fight!

The true Christian is called to be a *soldier*, and must behave as such from the day of his conversion to the day of his death...If

the Bible is the rule of his faith and practice, he will find his course laid down very plainly in this matter. He must “fight.”

With **whom** is the Christian soldier meant to fight? Not with other Christians...the cause of sin is never so much helped as when Christians waste their strength in *quarreling* with one another, and spend their time in *petty squabbles*. ...

The principal fight of the Christian is with . . . the world, the flesh and the devil. ...

Unless he gets the victory over these three, all other victories are useless and vain...

He must fight the **FLESH**. Even after conversion, he carries within him a *nature prone to evil and a heart weak and unstable* as water...

There is need of a daily struggle and a daily wrestling in prayer. “I keep my body under control,” cries Paul, “and bring it into subjection.”...

He must fight the **WORLD**. The subtle influence of that mighty ene-

my must be daily resisted, and without a daily battle can never be overcome. ...

”The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” “If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”...

He must fight the **DEVIL**. That *old enemy of mankind* is not dead...

This mighty adversary must be *daily resisted* if we wish to be saved. But “this kind goes not out” but by watching and praying and fighting and putting on the whole armor of God...

You are secretly saying to yourself that men and women may surely get to Heaven without all this *trouble* and *warfare* and *fighting*...

What says the Scripture? “**Fight** the good fight of faith, **lay hold** on eternal life.”...“**Strive** to enter in at the strait gate.” “**Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; ... be strong!**” “**War a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience**”...

[<http://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/holiness5.htm>]

True Christianity is a Fight

By: J.C. Ryle



“Fight the good fight of faith.” 1 Timothy 6:12

It is a curious fact that there is no subject about which most people feel such deep interest, as fighting... all feel a deep interest in wars, battles and fighting.

But there is another *warfare* of far greater importance than any war that was ever waged by man... *spiritual* warfare. It is the fight which everyone who would be saved, must fight...

It has *consequences* which are solemn...unchangeable and eternal...

If we would be holy — we must fight!

The true Christian is called to be a *soldier*, and must behave as such from the day of his conversion to the day of his death...If

the Bible is the rule of his faith and practice, he will find his course laid down very plainly in this matter. He must “fight.”

With **whom** is the Christian soldier meant to fight? Not with other Christians...the cause of sin is never so much helped as when Christians waste their strength in *quarreling* with one another, and spend their time in *petty squabbles*. ...

The principal fight of the Christian is with . . . the world, the flesh and the devil. ...

Unless he gets the victory over these three, all other victories are useless and vain...

He must fight the **FLESH**. Even after conversion, he carries within him a *nature prone to evil and a heart weak and unstable* as water...

There is need of a daily struggle and a daily wrestling in prayer. “I keep my body under control,” cries Paul, “and bring it into subjection.”...

He must fight the **WORLD**. The subtle influence of that mighty ene-

my must be daily resisted, and without a daily battle can never be overcome. ...

”The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” “If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”...

He must fight the **DEVIL**. That *old enemy of mankind* is not dead...

This mighty adversary must be *daily resisted* if we wish to be saved. But “this kind goes not out” but by watching and praying and fighting and putting on the whole armor of God...

You are secretly saying to yourself that men and women may surely get to Heaven without all this *trouble* and *warfare* and *fighting*...

What says the Scripture? “**Fight** the good fight of faith, **lay hold** on eternal life.”...“**Strive** to enter in at the strait gate.” “**Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; ... be strong!**” “**War a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience**”...

[<http://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/holiness5.htm>]