

Study Guide

Questions for Individual and Group Study

Publisher's Note: These questions have been designed to help you apply the principles of *Body Life* to your own life and church situation. They are designed to make this material more meaningful either in your own private study or in a small discussion group study, such as a Sunday school or home Bible study group.

The questions are divided into three sections. The first section, *See Your Own Reflection*, is designed to help you "break the ice" and begin to identify with the issues being explored in the chapter. The second section, *Dig a Little Deeper*, is designed to help you wrestle with the specific biblical and practical issues of the body life principles. The final section, *Let's Get Personal*, is intended to help you apply body life principles to real-life situations in a personal, practical way.

We wish to express a special word of appreciation to Mr. Charles Luce, who prepared an initial and extremely valuable draft of this Study Guide. We hope this study enriches your understanding of these concepts and enables you to experience the exciting adventure of Body Life!

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Chapter One

The Most Powerful Force on Earth

See Your Own Reflection:

1. Pastor Stedman observes that not only is every church a mixture of true and false believers, but even every believer has within him or her a mixture of true and false character and behavior.

Look back over this past week. When did you show signs of true Christian character and behavior? When did you show signs of false character and behavior?

Dig a Little Deeper:

2. What are the three major contributions that the church has made in every generation for good, for light, and for moral restraint?

Identify the ways in which your church is demonstrating those contributions.

3. Read Matthew 13:24-30 and Matthew 13:36-43. What does the wheat stand for in this text? What do the weeds (tares) stand for?

Describe the difference between the true and false believers. Why does God say not to separate them in your church?

What has happened when a church has attempted separate them?

4. Pastor Stedman observes that God has designed the church to be a kind of invisible government, influencing and moving the visible governments of the earth. Study Matthew 5:13,14, Philippians 2:14,15, and 1 Timothy 2:1,2, then consider:

What would be the influence of this "invisible government" on the visible governments of the earth?

What does this concept teach us about our responsibilities as citizens?

Let's Get Personal:

5. Does your church demonstrate true Christian character?

If not, why not?

What specific aspects or actions of your church do you base your assessment on?

If not, what do you personally plan to do to help your church become more scripturally Christian, as God intended it to be?

Memory Exercise: Matthew 13:43.

Chapter Two

The Church's Highest Priority

See Your Own Reflection:

1. How do you define and set priorities in your own home or business?

What is God's highest priority for the church? Why do you believe God has set this priority for His church?

Dig a Little Deeper:

2. Compare the first century society of the New Testament with the society you live in. What similarities do you see? How does this comparison help you to apply the truths of Scripture to your life and your church.

3. Read 2 Corinthians 4:18 and John 19:10-11. How do Jesus and Paul illustrate the attitude that God wants to develop in Christians today?

4. What is God's strategy for relieving human darkness and misery in the world?

How does God's strategy differ from the strategy of the world's systems?

5. In the opening chapters of Ephesians, Paul gives clear statements regarding the nature and purpose of the church.

What does Paul mean when he says that we have been destined to be adopted as God's children? For what purpose are we appointed? (See Eph. 1.)

What does it mean that Christians are no longer strangers or sojourners? (See Eph. 2:11-18.)

What is the holy mystery of the church? (See Eph. 3.)

Let's Get Personal:

6. Does your life demonstrate the life of Christ?

If not, why not?

What do you plan to do to demonstrate the life of Christ in a more effective and consistent way?

As you make these changes in your own life, what effect do you think these changes would have on the spiritual health of your church? Can one person make a difference?

If you are studying this book in a group, ask the group (or someone in the group) to hold you accountable regarding the changes you intend to make in your life.

Memory Exercise: Ephesians 4:1-3.

Chapter Three

Not Union--Unity

See Your Own Reflection:

1. Was the home you came from essentially intact or essentially broken? If you came from a broken home, how did that experience affect you?

How do you think God is affected when His family is "broken" by strife and disunity? How are others in the church affected? How are people outside the church affected?

Dig a Little Deeper:

2. Why does Paul exhort Christians to unite? (See John 17:17-21.)

What is God's part in producing oneness in the Christ?

What is the Christian's part?

What causes friction among Christians?

Are there ever times when it is justifiable for Christians to fight among themselves? Explain.

3. Read 1 Corinthians 3. What is the source of division in this passage?

What are some other sources of church division and disharmony that you have heard of or seen? What would it take to heal that division?

4. Explain what faith is. Why is Paul able to say that there is only one faith, and that faith is in Jesus Christ?

5. What is the one true baptism? (See 1 Cor. 12:12-13.)

How is it different from water baptism?

6. Describe a situation where you met someone who was very different from you in some way (culturally, regionally, economically, politically, or even doctrinally), yet in whom you saw the same living Lord who

lives in you?

What did you feel? How did you respond? How did the other person respond?

Let's Get Personal:

7. Read John 17:20-26, Jesus' prayer for all believers which He prayed just before going to the cross. Explain why that passage gives rise to the phrase, "Our oneness is our witness."

What are you consciously doing in your life, your neighborhood, or your career to demonstrate the unity of the Spirit, so that people around you will see the life of Jesus in you?

What could you do to demonstrate the unity of the Spirit, so that you would be a more effective witness to those around you? If you are in a group, ask someone to hold you accountable this week to be a living witness of the reconciling love of Jesus.

Memory Exercise: Ephesians 4:4-6.

Chapter Four

All God's Children Have Gifts

See Your Own Reflection:

1. What was the best gift you ever received as a child? Why was it so special? How did it make you feel?

Now, magnify that gift by a hundred times, and imagine that God Himself has given you this magnificent, wonderful gift--a spiritual gift, a grace of the Holy Spirit. How does that gift make you feel? What would you like to say to God or do for God in response?

Dig a Little Deeper:

2. Who in the church body are responsible for reaching the unsaved?

3. Read Ephesians 4:7. What are two things God has given Christians for their work in ministry?

4. Describe what the words "grace" and "gift" mean. How do you think that these characteristics serve to equip us for ministry?

5. Examine 1 Cor. 12:4-11, Rom. 12:6-8, and 1 Peter 4:10-11. List all the spiritual gifts that are indicated in those passages.

Let's Get Personal:

6. What gift or gifts do you feel the Holy Spirit has given you?

If you are doing this study in a group, select a person you know well, whose life you have observed. What spiritual gift from this list do you see in him or her?

Memory Exercise: Ephesians 2:12 or 1 Corinthians 12:4-6.

Chapter Five

Discovering and Using Your Gift

See Your Own Reflection:

1. How many different work situations or service situations have you had since you finished school?

In which of these situations did you feel most comfortable and confident? Why?

In which did you feel out of your depth and overwhelmed? Why?

Dig a Little Deeper:

2. What is the difference between spiritual gifts and natural gifts (abilities and talents)?

3. Can natural gifts contribute to your effectiveness in the exercise of your spiritual gifts? If so, how?

4. How do you discover spiritual gifts?

5. Explain why the diversity of gifts eliminates all need for competition within the body of Christ.

Let's Get Personal:

6. Name one spiritual gift you are currently using. How did you discover you had that gift?

How has the exercise of your spiritual gifts enhanced your own life and your faith?

Select someone in your group and affirm the ways in which that person's gifts have contributed to your life or the life of the church.

Memory Exercise: 1 Corinthians 12:14,26,27.

Chapter Six

According to the Power

See Your Own Reflection:

1. How did the power of Jesus' resurrection become real to you? Was it a slow, gradual realization--or a sudden, overwhelming transformation of belief?

Dig a Little Deeper:

2. What is the fundamental secret of how the church is to function?

3. What is the inexpressible gift that has been given to every Christian?

4. Why can't we effectively use our gifts without Christ?

5. Describe resurrection power. What is it like? How does it work? Why do Christians need it? How do we know we have it and that it is available to us?

Let's Get Personal:

6. Pastor Stedman used the illustration of appliances using the same electrical power to energize them to perform their various functions. Identify a number of effective Christians in your church carrying out different functions: What kind of "appliance" is each of these Christians?

What kind of "appliance" are you?

How have you seen Jesus Christ supply you with the energizing power you need to minister in your church?

Memory Exercise: Philippians 3:10.

Chapter Seven

How the Body Works

See Your Own Reflection:

1. At what time in your life has your own physical body been in tip-top condition? What factors contributed to your bodily health?

When has your body been in its worst shape? What factors contributed to your poor state of health?

Dig a Little Deeper:

2. Read Ephesians 4:11-12. What lessons are there in the physical body that we can apply to the body of believers, the church?

3. What was the role of the original apostles?

What, if any, is the role of an apostle in the church today?

4. Describe the gift of the prophet.

What, if any, is the role of a prophet in the church today?

5. Read 2 Peter 1:19 and 1 Cor. 14:3. Why are we to pay attention to what the apostles and prophets teach?

6. Describe the role of an evangelist. Are all Christians called to evangelize? If so, what does it mean to have the spiritual gift of an evangelist?

As Christians seeking to reach the world for Christ, what should our message be?

7. Describe the role of pastor-teacher.

8. Describe the role of elder. What is the difference between a ruling and a non-ruling elder?

Is a ruling elder a ruler or a servant? Explain the biblical reason for your answer.

9. Consider the ministry, programs, and "family life" of your church. Do you feel your church is built upon human programs designed to meet God's purpose? Or is it built on programs initiated by Christ to fulfill His purpose for the church? Does it or does it not function as God intended?

Explain your answer with specific examples.

Let's Get Personal:

10. Compare the organization and structure of your church with the organization and structure of the early first century church. How does your church differ from the biblical plan? How is it the same?

Memory Exercise: Mark 10:42-43.

Chapter Eight

Shaping Up the Saints

See Your Own Reflection:

1. Looking back over your life, who is the one person who has done the most to mend, equip, prepare, and shape you up for ministry?

How did that person affect your life? Give examples.

Dig a Little Deeper:

2. Explain what is meant by expository teaching and preaching of God's Word.

Why is it the most effective way of preparing the saints for their work of ministry?

3. What is the required attitude for one to speak the Word of God? Why is this true?

4. What is the biblical balance between evangelism and pastor-teaching of the body?

5. What happens when each member of the Body is not fully engaged in the work of the ministry?

6. Compare the role of elder in the early church with the role of elder in your church today.

Compare the role of pastor-teacher in the early church with the role of pastor-teacher in your church today.

7. What is to be the attitude of the pastor-teacher in his role of training and preparing the saints for ministry?

8. Take another look at this chart from Chapter Eight:

Where do you find yourself and your role on that chart?

How well are you performing your role?

Why do you think God has organized the church this way?

9. Do you have the four equipping roles functioning in your church? Why or why not?

What additional training or equipping do you desire to be better equipped to minister?

Let's Get Personal:

10. Is your prayer life effective in enabling you to perform your role, as illustrated in the above chart?

If you are studying this book in a group, how can the other members of your group support you, pray for you, encourage you, and hold you accountable to effectively carry out your role in the church?

Memory Exercise: Ephesians 4:11-12.

Chapter Nine

The Work of the Ministry

See Your Own Reflection:

1. When you consider "the work of the ministry" that God has called you to, do you feel:

Fearful?

Eager?

Confused?

Confident?

Inadequate?

Ashamed?

None of the above?

Explain your answer.

Dig a Little Deeper:

2. Read Luke 4:17-21. What is the work that Jesus was given to do?

3. Since Jesus has returned to the Father, who has He left behind to carry on His work?

4. Read John 14:12. What are the "greater works" that will be done? Who will do them?

5. There are five divisions of Jesus's work that the church is to carry on. Describe each of them.

6. What is the most important lesson you have learned from this chapter?

Let's Get Personal:

7. Consider for a moment the gifts God has give you. How are you using them to carry on the work of the ministry God has given the church?

Is there an area of ministry that you have never tried that would be a good use of your gifts? What prevents you from getting involved in that ministry?

Memory Exercise: Luke 4:17-21.

Chapter Ten

Keeping the Body Healthy

See Your Own Reflection:

1. What do you do to keep your body healthy?

What do you do to keep yourself spiritually healthy?

What do you do to maintain the health of the body of Christ, the church?

Dig a Little Deeper:

2. What is required to build up the body of Christ into a healthy church?

3. What are the spiritual diseases that cause individuals to become spiritually unhealthy?

That cause churches to become spiritually unhealthy?

4. Pastor Stedman suggests small group gatherings as a way to help build unity in the church. Do you have small groups in your church? Are you in such a group?

If so, how could these groups be improved and strengthened to further the health of the entire body?

5. What does it mean to speak the truth in love?

What would it mean to speak the truth without love? Give examples. What would the result be of speaking the truth without love?

What would it mean to love without being truthful? Give examples. What would the result be of love without truthfulness?

6. What prevents Christians from being open and vulnerable?

How can we help each other overcome the fear of exposure to that keeps us from opening up to one another?

7. List some practical, specific ways we can show love for one another in the body of Christ.

Let's Get Personal:

8. Without naming names or breaking a confidence, describe a time when you had to speak the truth in love by offering correction or a loving rebuke to another person. Was it a difficult experience or a joyful experience?

In light of such passages as Ephesians 4:15, Galatians 6:1, Philippians 2:8, and 1 Peter 5:5, do you feel you did a good job of speaking the truth in love?

Describe a time when someone confronted or corrected you. How did it feel? Do you believe that person's motives were pure, or that he/she was trying to "nail" you in an unChristlike spirit? How could that person have handled the situation better? How could you have handled it better?

Memory Exercise: James 5:16.

Chapter Eleven

The Goal Is Maturity

See Your Own Reflection:

1. Among all the people you know, who would you say is the most mature?

What is the one quality that, in your mind, marks that person as mature?

Are you consciously trying to reproduce that quality of maturity in your own life? If so, what specifically are you doing about it?

Dig a Little Deeper:

2. What the Lord's goal for us as Christians, according to Ephesians 4:13-16?

3. How does the Bible define the concept of Christian maturity?

4. According to Genesis 1:26-27, we were made in the image of God. Now, according to Ephesians 4:15 (cf. Romans 8:29), God wants us to be re-made in the image of Jesus Christ. If we were already made in God's image, why do we need to be re-made in the image of His Son?

Why doesn't God simply produce Christlikeness in us at the moment of conversion?

How is Christlikeness produced in us?

5. What must be known about a Christian before he or she is placed in a position of responsibility or leadership in the church?

6. How does God look at you in this growth process? Is He a slave-master, lashing a whip at your back? A stern teacher standing over your shoulder, glaring at all the mistakes you are making? Or a cheerleader, spurring you on to greater effort and achievement?

How do your fellow Christians view your growth? Are they slave-masters, stern teachers, or cheerleaders?

How do you view your own growth? Are you slavemaster, stern teacher, or cheerleader for yourself and your own progress?

Let's Get Personal:

7. Sometimes spiritual growth is painful, sometimes pleasant. Describe a painful situation in your life that helped you to become more like Christ.

Describe a pleasant situation in your life that helped you to become more like Christ.

Which have you found to be a more effective means of producing maturity--pleasant circumstance or painful circumstances? Why?

Memory Exercise: Ephesians 4:13-16.

Chapter Twelve

Impact!

See Your Own Reflection:

1. In your own words--and, if possible, from your own experience--sum up what the term "body life" means to you.

Dig a Little Deeper:

2. Many people consider America to be a "Christian nation." Why, then, does Pastor Stedman call Christians "a minority group, representing a minority viewpoint in the midst of a hostile, despairing, pagan world"?

As a Christian, do you see yourself as part of a "minority group"?

3. Pastor Stedman lists a number of features of New Testament body life. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your church in the following features:

- o A pervasive spirit of love and unity.
- o A celebration of spiritual gifts.
- o A horizontal rather than vertical "command" structure.
- o A recognition, drawn from Ephesians 4, that all believers are ministers, not just the pastor-teachers.
- o An emphasis on scriptural truth rather than human wisdom, social expectations, or religious traditions.
- o Frequent opportunities for believers to confess their sins and hurts, to share one another's burdens, to care for one another in koinonia-fellowship and agape-love, and to speak the truth in love.

4. What specific actions would you like to see your church take in order that it become more like the New Testament body life pattern?

5. What specific actions are you willing to undertake--giving of your own time, resources, skills, and spiritual gifts--in order to help your church conform to the New Testament body life pattern?

Ask someone to hold you accountable to take these steps or make these changes in your life.

Let's Get Personal:

6. Pastor Stedman warns against "the huddle syndrome"--what he calls "the tendency of Christians to huddle together, avoiding anything but the most superficial contact with worldlings, avoiding close friendships or extensive hospitality with nonChristians." Do you have nonChristian friends, and are you having an influence on those friends for Jesus Christ?

If not, what could you do to start having more contact with "worldlings"?

How could others (for example, friends in your small group) help to hold you accountable to make changes in your life so that you would have a greater impact on the "worldlings" in your neighborhood and your workplace?

Memory Exercise: Ephesians 5:25-27.

Notes

Chapter Two: *The Church's Highest Priority*

1. Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization, Part III, "Caesar and Christ"* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944), p. 566.

2. Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol. 1* (New York: The Modern Library,

Random House), p. 382.

Chapter Three: *Not Union--Unity!*

1. Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* (New York: Bantam Books (reissue edition), 1992), p. 83.
2. Bernard Ramm, "The Continental Divide in Contemporary Theology," (*Christianity Today* , October 8, 1965).

Chapter Ten: *Keeping the Body Healthy*

1. Quoted by John R.W. Stott in *One People: Laymen & Clergy in God's Church* (Downer's Grove IL: InterVarsity Press paperback), p. 88.

Chapter Twelve: *Impact!*

1. Ray C. Stedman, "The Minister's Workshop," *Christianity Today*, Vol. 15, May 21, 1971.

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