

## **40 Days of Community -# 4 CONNECTED TO GROW.**

### **II Timothy 1:3-14**

Today in our Better Together series  
we were looking at “CONNECTED TO GROW.”

My granddaughter Katrina loves to go to Wal-Mart and look at the fish in the aquarium.  
one of the more popular exotic fish is the shark.

Slide-----If a shark is caught when it is little and put into an aquarium,  
the shark will stay the size proportionate to the aquarium.  
so a six inch shark can be fully matured adult  
But if you turn it loose he would grow to their normal length of eight feet.

Haven't we all seen Christian like that.  
Some of the cutest little six-inch Christians you can find  
Are those who are content to swim around in a little puddle.  
But if you were to put them out into a larger arena, challenge them,  
They can become great Christians.

During the next three years we are being challenged to  
Slide---- -to build a 4 million dollars addition.  
Including a Community life center, nursery, offices,  
Communication center and a place for worship, weddings and funeral receptions.  
We are stepping out of our aquarium  
A facility that we have lived for 50 years.  
And accepting the challenged to work financially and spiritually together.  
To build new ministries and outreach for God.  
And we can do it without indebtedness if were all willing to work together.

Our first challenge was met in the “Growing in Fellowship”  
financial campaign and raised over \$2million in pledges.  
The second campaign in 2007 to “**Accomplishing our Dream**”  
**Will ask God to raise 1.9 million in our pledges**  
**To move us to a clear title.**  
That's going to take every one of you moving out  
To make a difference  
Giving is the key to the third purpose of life.  
It is through giving that we are connected to GROW.  
**First Thessalonians 5:11“Encourage each other and build each other up,”**  
How DO WE GROW BETTER TOGETHER?

Let me introduce you to the A TEAM  
**I. AFFIRMATION --AFFIRMING each other's WORTH.**  
Nothing touches us more than getting a good word from somebody.  
Because everybody is looking for affirmation.  
If you don't believe that,

watch some of the reality shows.  
 People will do anything to get affirmed on TV.  
 They eat worms, get covered with mice,  
 have pants filled with snakes.  
 just so people will applaud you  
 Pretty ridiculous.  
 Yet we all want affirmation  
 and what is amazing is that we can change lives by giving it.

**Little Mary had been born with a** cleft palate and all her little life she had to bear the jokes, stares, and teasing about her misshaped lip, crooked nose, and garbled speech. Mary grew up hating the fact that she was “different.” She was convinced that no one, outside her family, could ever love her until Mrs. Leonard’s class.

Mrs. Leonard the elementary teacher, had a warm smile, a round face, and shiny brown hair. In the 1950’s, it was common for teachers to give their children an annual hearing test. But in Mary’s case, she also was barely able to hear out of one ear, and she had cheated on her tests because she didn’t want the other children to know.

The “**whisper test**” was given by having a child walk to the classroom door, turn sideways, close one ear with a finger, and then repeat something which the teacher whispered. Mary turned her bad ear towards her teacher and pretended to cover her good ear. She knew that teachers would often say things like, “The sky is blue,” or “What color are your shoes?”

But on that day, God gave Mrs. Leonard seven words that changed Mary’s life forever. When the “Whisper test” came, Mary heard the whispered words: “**I wish you were my little girl.**” “**I wish you were my little girl.**”

Maybe your that little girl today- but its been your heart and spirit that has been misshapen by the things that have happened in your life.  
 Jesus wants to affirm you today.

IF you listen you will hear him say: **I want you as my little girl, my little boy.**  
 AFFIRMATION makes a difference in our world.

The second member of the A Team is:

## **II. ACCEPTANCE.**

**Romans 15:7 says, “Accept one another just as Christ accepted you.”**

We live in a put-down world.  
 If I’m feeling bad I’ll try to drag others down to my level.  
 We get good at snubbing or belittling people.  
 Were good at comparing and rating ourselves with everything,  
 Parents, talent, income, looks, skills.  
 When they don’t meet up to our standards.  
 We look down on people

Some people are tidy and clean.

And they love nothing better then getting into your home.  
 Now they don't say anything  
 They just come to see.  
 When your house is messier then their  
 Its just makes you feel better about yourself.

I found it in myself last Saturday at Hardies.  
 I walk past a car that was just piled full of clothes and trash and junk.  
 You couldn't get into the back seat. If you would have opened the door  
 Stuff would have fallen out.  
 It made me feel good about my car.

Now it can also be reversed. We wear second hand clothes,  
 Live in a second class house and drive  
 a second hand, wreck of a car, so we can say:  
 Look at what a good steward I am.

God call us to accept people and lift them up.  
**Romans 14:10, "Why do you look down on another Christian? Remember each of us  
 will stand personally behind the judgment seat of God."**  
 Lets stop doing Satan's work of tearing one another down  
 And start doing Gods work by lifting one another up.

**I Corinthians 12:6 says, "God works through different people in different ways,"**  
 I know of a single mom who life was in a mess had to have some surgery.  
 But it was the young women of our church who was there for her.  
 Bringing her meals and encouraging her.

I know of another person who was trying to get a second start on life.  
 The group didn't judge her it just accepted her and got her clothes and  
 Household items, groceries. Encouraged her to come to church.  
 Even when she didn't they still kept loving her.

**Bible says, "God will send us friends that are closer than brothers." Proverbs 18:24**  
 We have become so close in our men small groups.  
 So that if Bill was in need of a Kidney.  
 I would be the first to volunteer Jeff.

Growing together means we accept one another's burden  
 And share in one another joys.  
 We are **Better Together** when we ACCEPT one another.

**Thrid A is:**  
**III. ATTENTION,**

**ATTENTION** is different then **ACCEPTANCE**.  
 Attention takes more time.

You can accept somebody but still ignore them.

“I accept you, just stay out of my life,”

**Galatians 6:10, “Give special attention to those who are in the family of believers.”**

Two weeks ago we said pay attention to those outside the family.

So we can win them for Christ.

Today we want to give special attention to those inside the family the church.

So we can encourage them to grow in Christ.

If I pay attention to my house **plants** they will grow.

If I pay attention to my **kids**, they’re going to grow.

If I pay attention to my **marriage**, it grows usually.

If I pay attention to my **work**, that’s going to grow.

The only principle where this doesn’t work is when I pay attention to my **hair**.

The greatest gift of love you can give

Its not diamonds or flowers or chocolate.

Its looking people in the eye and saying “**You matter to me.**”

Slide --- --Shut the tv or Computer off and listen to your wife or kids

**Kids** don’t need a **soccer mom**, they need a mom.

They don’t need a **school nurse, or coach** they need a dad.

The average American watches TV or is at their computer over 30 hours a week; that’s 1,560 hours a year.

the equivalent of spending 97 –16 hour days at your television or computer.

Slide -----Whose eyes do they have :

**We’d rather watch Friends on TV then make Friends.**

Lets help our families grow by showing **ATTENTION**.

The Fourth A of BETTER TOGETHER .

#### **IV. AFFECTION.**

**Romans 12:10 “Love one another with brotherly affection as members of one family.”**

I’m talking about physical touch.

You have heard of the “thrive syndrome.“

When babies are not stroked, caressed, touched and held, don’t develop.

They don’t grow the way God intended them to.

Babies are made to be touched.

**Even ugly babies.**

Their so soft you want to nuzzle them.

Hold them. Even kids want to .

Slide--My little Granddaughter Katrina when she first saw Her brother in the hospital she wasn’t too sure about him. As you can see.

Slide----But when we got him home from the hospital she was getting a little use to him.

Slide ---And finally you see even a sister can love a little brother. I’m not sure how the little brother is taking it.

Babies need that stimulation to grow and develop.

**The same is true for the elderly.**

"failure to thrive" has caused weight loss, decreased appetite, poor nutrition, dehydration, depressive symptoms, impaired immune function, morbidity from infection, pressure sores, and increased mortality.

UCLA did a study a while back and discovered that to be a healthy, fulfilled, satisfied adult; you need 8-10 meaningful touches a day.

You say, "Boy, I'm getting cheated."

We all need hand shakes, hugs, pat on the back, a little squeeze.

Were made to be touched whether you ever marry or not,  
Many time the only physical affection people get is in church  
when we greet one another or give somebody a pat on the back.

Everybody stand up right now.

You say, "Oh no!"

Everybody stand up. Come on, stand up. Okay? Stretch.

Everybody stretch.

Go ahead, stretch.

Touch your toes.

Touch your neighbor's toes. Okay.

Turn around and grab a person arm

Give them a pat on the back.

Or a hug.

All right sit down.

Okay, sit down.

There are two reaction to what we just did.

Some of you are thinking, "I'm never going back to that church again,"

the smarter ones are thinking, "Next week, I'm sitting by somebody cute.

I'll be ready next time."

**WE GROW BETTER TOGETHER BY SHOWING AFFECTION**

The last A on the A TEAM:

We GROW BETTER TOGETHER by showing

**IV APPRECIATION.**

When something appreciates it is raised in value.

Buy a car and the moment you drive a car off the lot it depreciates.

Buy a house and it usually appreciated..

***The Bible says, "Brothers and sisters, appreciate those who work hard among you, who lead you in the Lord and teach you."Romans 12:11cev***

We appreciate somebody when we complement them. Affirm them.

**A mother was making a banana bread when her 16-year-old came into the kitchen.**

He said: "That bread smells about done don't you think, Mom?" She said: I set the timer it will be fine. A little later he said it again. "Mom, I really think that loaf is done. Maybe you should check it." Her 13 years old who always quick to come to his mother defense said: "Eddie, Mom's been burning that banana bread for 20 years now. I think she knows when to take it out."

**That's appreciation.**

**When** was the last time, you thanked the teacher, coach, bus driver, usher, greeter, coffee servers, musician, or Media techs, for making worship a good experience.

**When** did you last thank your waitress or the attendant at "Gas and Goodies" or M&H, Mailman or Plummer for their Service.

We need to appreciate one another.

I appreciate you.

There is no more generous church in Aberdeen

There is no more spiritually mature church in Aberdeen

This is the church when I get up and say

1. Wer're going into a 4 million expansion plan."

92% of you said: "Okay, we'll do it."

This is the church where I say,

2. Hey let's help the poor, the sick, the needy, those hit by disasters or the Gideon's, and you say: Ok, we'll do it.

You put your money where your mouth is.

And we in the past 20 years have never ended a year in the Red.

And we have given to mission,

Expanded our ministry,

Involved our laity.

And invited the community.

And reached out in love for the lost.

Because we give out of a heart of APPRECIATION

FOR WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US.

Maturity is more then knowing your bible.

Its putting it into action by living and giving..

That why we can have unity in this body of Christ.

Even when we disagree

we still agree to love and care for one another

.And I'm proud of you.

**Romans 15:5 says this, "May God develop maturity in you so that you all get along with each other as well as Jesus gets along with us."**

Now maybe today there is someone here who feels left out.

You feel outside of the family of God.

Maybe its because you know your life is messed up.  
Or you got some hang-ups, habits, and some bad patterns.  
That nobody would want you.  
But God brought you here because he cares about you.  
He wants to turn that hurt into a healing  
He wants to turn that sin into forgiveness.  
He wants to turn that self depredation into affirmation.  
To let you know he appreciate you for who you really are.  
And he wants to use you in the lives of other people.

But it starts with confession and honesty.  
Will you make that choice this morning to move in Gods direction.  
If you do His Spirit will touch and bring you  
into a deeper fellowship in the Body of Christ.  
And you will discover that we are BETTER TOGETHER

**Dear God, I want to grow up spiritually. I don't want to stay a spiritual baby anymore. So today, I'm choosing to make some serious commitments. First, I commit all of my life to you Jesus. I want to follow your purpose. And I want to join this church, and I want to get in a group and I want to grow and be the person you want me to be. I commit to the journey, and I want you to make your home in my heart. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.**