



We've been journeying through seven aspects of our Stronger series: Praise Victoriously, Pray Continuously, Confess Powerfully, Love Passionately, Think Holistically, Believe Faithfully and Behave Responsibly, now we need to action what we have been studying. Action needs a plan. Whenever we want to achieve something in life, we must have a plan that will get us to the desired result. If we submit a plan to God, He will order and establish our steps.

How is your action plan for one of the topics we have been studying? What are you putting into action?

Read James 2:17-19.

The Bible encourages us that our faith is proven through what we do. To put action on things, we must be disciplined. Discipline is connected to vision. When we have a strong vision in our life, it builds discipline, but we cast off restraint where there is no vision. Throughout this series, we will look at why the Church is so important according to the scriptures.

**1. The Church is God's idea: it's been his plan since the beginning, and it's His plan forevermore
(Read Matthew 16:18)**

God's idea is that His church would prevail. This means a Church that is strong and activating what God has said. The Church is the vehicle God uses to reach and save the lost. Throughout the Bible, we see the Church described as many things which help us to get a better understanding of how God sees it, including:

A) The Bride of Christ: The Church is precious to God.

B) The family of God: It's inclusive!

C) The body of Christ: Each member has a function, specific spiritual and natural gifts that are to be used for the Church.

D) God's House: It's where He dwells and lives, not just somewhere He visits.

How does one of these descriptions help you better understand the importance of the Church?

2. God's people connect with each other when we gather for Church

In the New Testament, there are almost 60 references to "one another." This shows how much value God places on us doing life together as a community of believers! Here are just a few of them:

A) Love one another (Romans 13:8): When we come together, there is the opportunity and stirring to show love and kindness to each other, it's what we are designed for, but we need to put action on our love and encouragement!

B) Comfort one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18): People may come to Church hurting or broken; we have the opportunity to comfort and help others as we gather together.

C) Forgive one another (Ephesians 4:32): We are to be kind and compassionate and release forgiveness on others because we first have been forgiven.

D) Pray for one another (James 5:16): The promise of praying for one another is healing, breakthrough and answers.

What are some of the reasons you come to Church on Sundays? How have you been able to do one of the above when being at Church on Sundays? Or how have you benefited from someone else showing this to you at Church?

This week why not study some of the other 'one anothers' found in scripture and encourage your group with it!



There are many things in life that we need to action, including each part of our Stronger series, but when it comes to action the key is that it becomes consistent. If we only do something occasionally it won't have much effect, but when we become consistent in our action, it produces great results!

Throughout this series, we are looking at why the Church is so important according to the scriptures. In our last study we covered two reasons: firstly, that the Church is God's idea - it's been His plan since the beginning, and it's His plan forevermore and secondly the Church is where God's people connect with each other. Today we will look at two more reasons:

1. God's Word instructs us to be involved in the Church. (Read Hebrews 10:24-25)

When we come to Church we are given the opportunity to hear the Word of God, however it was never God's intention for us just to sit and learn; we must put action on what we are hearing and being taught. This passage in Hebrews shows us how when we gather as the Church, we have the opportunity to have a positive impact on someone else's life through speaking faith, stirring one another and loving each other. It's important to remind ourselves on a regular basis *why* we gather as the Church so that it doesn't just become a habit or tradition with no heart in it.

What are some of the reasons why you come to Church? What ways can you be active in stirring up love and good works with one another when we gather together?

2. The Church is where God's people are taught the Word so they can grow spiritually. (Read 1 Peter 2:2)

The Bible is God's blueprint for our life, it shows us the way to walk and live out our life inline with the will and purpose of God. It's so important that every Christian has a personal devotional time, studying the Word of God for themselves and spending time in the Bible throughout the week, however Scripture also instructs us about the importance of being taught the Word by teachers and preachers. When we gather for Church to hear the Word of God we often gain deeper insight, knowledge and revelation of the Scriptures that we previously may not have had. Being in Church on Sundays helps us to continually grow in the Word and strengthen our understanding of the Bible.

What are some of the messages from our Stronger Series that have helped you the most this year? Share one revelation you've learned or been reminded of through the teaching you've heard this year at Church.

Read Ephesians 4:11-16

Being in Church helps us to stay in line with the Word of God and stops us being taken out by the enemy. As we learned last week, the Church is called the 'body of Christ' - this means that Jesus is the head and each of us are parts of His body. Like a natural body each part is connected to another part; we cannot be the Church and be disconnected from other members. When we are joined together each part brings a supply to the body. The supply is your gift, ability, your talent - if your hand is not giving to someone else you are not producing the growth that God says His Church should have.

What supply (gift, talent or ability) has God given you that you can bring to the body of Christ? What ways can you use this to produce growth in the body?



Throughout our **Stronger Series**, we are encouraging people to get stronger in the five F's: faith, family, finances, fitness and future so that we live strong, holistic lives in God. To do this, we need to consistently action the things of God that we are learning. If we action the right thing, we will produce a harvest of righteousness, peace and godliness. **What have you done to get stronger in the five F's this year? How has this benefited you?**

Over the last few weeks, we've unpacked the importance of the Church. One of the other reasons the Church is important is that it's a place where needs can be met. As members of the body of Christ, we have a function to produce and to receive. We are called to be interdependent, not independent, where we are self-sufficient, nor dependent, where we rely heavily on other people. Instead, as interdependent parts of the body, we give and receive from each other's giftings. That's why when the Church functions in its gifts there is always someone that can meet your needs. You have been given talents and giftings that are designed to add great value to someone else's life. **How have you seen a need met by someone in the body of Christ bringing their gift to the table? Or how have you met someone else's needs by using your gifts?**

There are three main types of gifts defined in the Bible: ministerial (see Ephesians 4:11-15) service and spiritual gifts. In this study, we will cover two of these.

Service Gifts - Read Romans 12:6-8

Everyone in the body of Christ has at least one of these gifts:

- 1. Prophecy:** prophecy brings a direct word to edify, exhort and comfort others
- 2. Serving:** we are all called to serve, but some people have a gift in this area that goes above and beyond
- 3. Teaching:** teachers bring insight and wisdom from the word of God, helping people move forward in life. It doesn't mean to teach from a platform or in a classroom; it can be one-to-one, phone calls and catch ups etc.
- 4. Encouragement:** The Bible regularly tells us to encourage one another - we can all do this, but those with the gift of encouragement go above this, speaking life into others, putting courage in and drawing out the best in them
- 5. Giving:** people with this gift just can't wait to bless people; they give generously on every occasion
- 6. Leadership:** people with this gift are called to lead people into greatness
- 7. Mercy:** this is the ability to empathise and come alongside people, be a listening ear and help them through trouble

Which of these gifts do you think you have been given? How are you using your gifts to help others?

Spiritual Gifts - 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

There are nine gifts outlined within this scripture which fall into three main categories:

- **3 are insight gifts - wisdom, knowledge and the discerning of spirits**
- **3 are gifts of revelation - tongues, interpretation of tongues and prophecy**
- **3 are gifts of power - faith, healing and miracles**

No gift is greater than another; they are each unique, and different moments require the operation of different gifts. The Bible says we should desire spiritual gifts and seek God for them (see 1 Corinthians 14:1, 12) so that we can help the Church grow stronger.

Discuss these spiritual gifts in more detail. What do you know about them, and when have you experienced them in operation? Do you know which of these gifts you possess? Pray that God would impart and increase these gifts on your life.