Biblical Christians in Culture. *Looking at the world through the lens of The Word.*Discovering, applying biblical Truth,confronting untruth with Truth.

**Ep.12: We’re In This Together**

The Church is individuality bound by community. God’s people, The Church, live throughout the world, over the past 2000 years, and in our community right now.

*REPEATED THEMES 1. Belief affects behavior and behavior affects belief. 2. Everyone everywhere has assumptions, pre-thinking. 3. Christian thinking is molded by Scripture’s commands, principles, & doctrine 4. Everyone has “doctrine” that forms their thinking. 5. Doctrine influences living.*

The Church Individuals, not individualism, a collective, not collectivism; *Frank Sinatra* “I Did It My Way,” *Fleetwood Mac*, “Go Your Own Way,” *Metallica* “Nothing Else Matters” Bonhoffer, *Life Together.* Colson/Vaughn, *Being the Body.* Bryson *The Body* Brand/Yancey *Fearfully & Wonderfully*. *Casablanca, It’s a Wonderful Life, A Man for All Seasons.* The Meaning of “the Pursuit of Happiness” | James R. Rogers *| First Things* 19 June 2012. “American Christian” warpandwoof.org 7 October 2019

Our Problem The problem is we tend to focus on ourselves. We worship the image in the mirror. Once we “glory” in who we are, we seek what is best for us, our own comfort and ease. “Happiness” = *hedonism*, an exclusive focus on personal pleasure. Francis Schaeffer defined it best by saying that the primary pursuit in the West is “personal peace and affluence.” The attitude says “Leave me alone in the comfort of my surroundings. Don’t ask too much of me. I have to spend time making sure of my own enjoyment.”

“The pursuit of happiness” is a phrase in the Declaration of Independence which has been seared into American consciousness. But almost 250 years ago the word meant “virtue.” The founders suggested that national interest is developed for the benefit of all, committed to goodness & integrity. “’Ultimate happiness,’ *in which sense*it is *qualified with every necessary moral ingredient*, the proposition is no doubt true. But taken in its popular sense, as referring to the immediate addition of property and wealth, nothing can be more false” (correspondence between Madison and Monroe). “The pursuit of happiness” means something like occupying one’s life with the activities that provide for overall wellbeing. This certainly includes a right to material things, but it goes beyond that to include humanity’s spiritual and moral condition. (Rogers *| First Things* 19 June 2012)

Allegiance and Solidarity Both the First and Second Testaments (“covenants”) teach unrivaled devotion to God and solidarity with the people of God. Our allegiance to God is the basis for allegiance to each other. Deut 7:7-9 / 2 Chr 34:31 / Eph 4:1-16 /Heb 9:15-28 “That they may be one” John 17.20-23 / Gal 3:26-28 / “Generosity as Witness” Acts 2:42-47 / Rom 12:3-10 / Deut 15.7-11 / 1 John 3.15-17 / 1 Tim 6.17-19 “One Anothers” (50+ times!) Rom 12:10, 16; 14:13; 15:7, 14 “Kindness & Patience as Witness” 1 Cor 13.4 / Eph 4.32 / 2 Tim 2.24-26 “The Body” Rom 12, 1 Cor 12, Gal 3 Eph 2, 4

Questions What are *individualism* and *hedonism*? How does the Church practice community with individuality? How will your choices for "happiness" affect others? How will the decisions for happiness of others affect you? Identify at least two events—local and/or international—where The Church worked as a community. What were the traits or characteristics of those efforts? [Unity, various individuals contributing their talents, shared vision, common concern].

More Questions Why do young people agree with the advice of their peers ("Do what makes you happy") over the 18 year wisdom of their parents (“Do what pleases God”)? Are things that are easily had easily lost? What isn't hard or difficult that has worth? Is anything in life “easy”? How many hundreds of times do we make decisions that keep normalcy or consistency in life? Is this better or worse than “happiness”? Explain. What would have happened to you had others chosen "happiness" over commitment?  If we are only to please ourselves, why should parents provide stability and security for you?