



## IN FOCUS

### **Community Is . . . A Reflection of God in Us**

Scripture Reading — Genesis 1:1-31

*God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness. . . .”*

*Genesis 1:26*

Matt often wonders why God created us knowing that we would hurt Him in such incredible ways. His conclusion centers on God’s love for us and his hope that one day, in spite of all the hurt we cause God, we will live with Him in perfect, eternal community. In a sense, that is also why we enter into community with each other.

Matt can’t remember a relationship in his life where he hasn’t failed, in one way or another, to live up to the ideal expectations of community. Despite that, Matt has some deep connections with people that he loves very much. And he isn’t alone. We hurt people we are in community with all the time. It is in our sinful nature to fail, to let down, and to hurt others—not always on purpose but as a result of sin in our lives. Yet we all keep entering into community again and again. The hurt doesn’t stop us, because we keep loving others and hoping for everything that community is and can be.

Why do we enter into community? Because God did, and we are created in His image. God loves us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, who laid down His own life for us in order to re-enter community with us, His creation. And we love others so much that we enter into community again and again with love and with the hope of something greater. Community is a reflection of God’s love living in us. It’s what we were created to be.

#### **Prayer**

Father, thank You for entering into community with us. Help us to love others and to look forward in hope to the eternal community that we will share with You. Amen.

By Bret Lamsma from: <https://today.reframemedia.com/devotions/community-is-a-reflection-of-god-in-us>

#### **June 08, Monday**

This is a word of hope to suffering Christians. It’s a word of hope to Christians who hate their own sin and long to be done with sinning. It’s a word of hope to Christians who long for the last enemy death to be overcome and thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14). How is it a word of hope for all these? The age of sin and misery and death is almost spent. The key way it is different is that the day has dawned in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the end of this fallen age. He defeated sin and pain and death and Satan. The decisive battle is over. The Kingdom has come. Eternal life has come. And when dawn happens — as it did in the coming of Jesus — no one should doubt the coming of day. Not even if the dawn draws out 2,000 years. It is certain. The day has arrived. Nothing can stop the rising sun.

**Read: Romans 13:12**

#### **June 09, Tuesday**

God did demonstrate His love for us in giving His own Son to die once for all in the past for our sins (v. 8). But He also knows that this past love must be experienced as a present reality (today and tomorrow) if we are to have patience and character and hope. Therefore, He not only demonstrated it on Calvary, He goes on demonstrating it now by the Spirit. He does this by opening the eyes of our hearts to “taste and see” the glory of the cross and the guarantee that it gives that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:39).

**Read: Romans 5:8**

#### **June 10, Wednesday**

Paul teaches that the death of Christ demonstrated the righteousness of God in passing over sins and vindicated God’s justice in justifying the ungodly who bank on Jesus and not themselves (Rom 3:25–26). In other words, Christ died once for all to clear the name of God in what looks like a gross miscarriage of justice — the acquittal of sinners simply for Jesus’ sake. But Jesus died in such a way that forgiveness “for Jesus’ sake” is the same as forgiveness “for the sake of God’s name.”

**Read: 1 John 1:9**

#### **June 11, Thursday**

Notice that “demonstrates” is present tense and “died” is past tense. The present tense implies that this demonstrating is an ongoing act that keeps happening in today’s present and tomorrow’s present. The past tense “died” implies that the death of Christ happened once for all and will not be repeated. “Christ died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (1 Pet. 3:18). Why did Paul use the present tense (demonstrates)? Paul has just said that “tribulations work patient endurance, and patient endurance works proven character, and proven character works hope, and hope does not put us to shame” (vv. 3–5). In other words, the goal of everything God takes us through is hope. He wants us to feel unwaveringly hopeful through all tribulations.

**Read: Romans 5:8**

#### **June 12, Friday**

The only joy that reflects the worth of God and overflows in God-glorifying love is rooted in the true knowledge of God. And to the degree that our knowledge is small or flawed, our joy will be a poor echo of God’s true excellence. The experience of Israel is a paradigm of how God-glorifying joy happens in the heart. Ezra had read the word of God to them and the Levites had explained it. And then the people went away “to make great rejoicing.” Their great rejoicing was because they had understood words. The point is that if our joy is going to reflect the glory of God, then it must flow from true knowledge of how God is glorious. If we are going to enjoy God duly, we must know Him truly.

**Read: Nehemiah 8:12**

#### **June 13, Saturday**

What is God looking for in the world? Assistants? No. The gospel is not a “help wanted” ad. Neither is the call to Christian service. God is not looking for people to work for Him. What does God want from us? Isn’t there something we can give to God that won’t belittle Him to the status of beneficiary? Yes. Our anxieties. It’s a command: “Cast all your anxieties on Him”. God will gladly receive anything from us that shows our dependence and His all-sufficiency. Our very lives hang on not working for God. Workmen get no gifts. They get their due. If we would have the gift of justification, we dare not work. God is the workman in this affair. And what He gets is the glory of being the benefactor of grace, not the beneficiary of service.

**Read: 2 Chronicles 16:9**

#### **June 14, Sunday**

How does being born of God make the commandments of God a delight rather than a burden? The apostle John says, “This is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.” In other words, the way that being born of God overcomes the worldly burdensomeness of God’s commandments is by begetting faith. This is confirmed in verse 1, which says, literally, “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.” Faith is the evidence that we have been born of God. We do not make ourselves born again by deciding to believe. God makes us willing to believe by causing us to be born again. As Peter said in his first letter, God “caused us to be born again to a living hope”. Our living hope, or faith in future grace, is the work of God through new birth. Therefore, it is faith that overcomes our inborn hostility to God and His will, and frees us to keep His commandments, and say with the psalmist, “I delight to do Your will, O my God” (Psalm 40:8).

**Read: Psalm 40:8**