



06Koinonia

0:00:00.3 Speaker 1: Are you dissatisfied with your spiritual progress? Feeling stuck without knowing why? Even after deliverance prayers or years of therapy? Recover your dignity, find your purpose and discover the thrill of walking with God once again. Explore spiritual consultations with Sonja at biblestudyevangelista.com. Click go deeper on the homepage, then one-on-one and find out how to co-operate more deeply the Holy Spirit's action in your life with a spiritual consultation. If you like having Bible study in your pocket and you have an iPhone or iPad, why don't leave a review. Search Bible Study Evangelista in iTunes and tell everyone how you're loving and lifting all you've been given. Here's Sonja.

0:00:51.9 Sonja Corbitt: We're in our last show of the series, When God Breathes. The Mystery Of The Holy Spirit. This is the Bible study Evangelista show, and I am your Catholic evangelista Sonja Corbitt. And we are talking today about the Holy Spirit and the church and how to follow the Holy Spirit in the church. And I probably need to do a review of the whole series to sort of wrap the whole thing up for you, but I'm a little bit afraid that I'm gonna run out of time, so I'm gonna skip that part and just say very briefly that the mystery of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit, is always creating, revealing incarnating and resurrecting. The acts of creation and revelation and incarnation and resurrection are the Holy Spirit.

0:01:36.6 SC: He is the act himself or itself. And so we see the Holy Spirit's action by his effects, and that's why Jesus said that he's like the wind. He incarnates within us, He lives in us. Jesus said, I will send the helper and He will abide within you, and when He comes in through baptism and confirmation, he resurrects everything in us that is dead from woundedness and sin. He resurrects that connection of authentic love to God. He illuminates and reveals that connection that has never been broken ultimately, because of the image of God in us. That image of God is love. The center of the human person is the love of God, the Holy Spirit actually. And so the book of wisdom says that the Spirit of God feels the world. Wisdom 1:7. So no one is completely without the Holy Spirit, because no one is completely without that spark of God in them. The book of Wisdom also says your immortal spirit is in all things. Wisdom chapter 12, verse 1, so the Holy Spirit is the animating spirit or the SAP, and we pray, come Holy Spirit, but a better way to pray would probably be Holy Spirit, we're coming to you, because He's always in us, through us, with us.

0:03:02.3 SC: Everything about us is living and moving and having its being pulses in him. And to the degree we learn to follow Him and love Him, He becomes our rule of life, our spiritual director. There are some things that only He can do, particularly Revelation. And Jesus shows us that when we see him at work, it's an invitation to join him. Jesus said, I only do what the Father does. So it's an invitation to work with Him. Now, how specifically does the Holy Spirit work in us? How does he make that stuff in, that's dead in us alive? Well, partly we've already seen, he makes the dead abstracts of the creed and of the Bible, he makes them alive. So he brings them alive to us, we're attracted by something in them, they're illuminated, and then they become personal. Paul says in

Galatians 2:20, I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me. So he speaks in the first person there. He has learned that the truths of his Jewish faith are now personal.

0:04:22.4 SC: This is the work of the Holy Spirit. He makes Jesus present. If you'll notice his wording there, he says, I am crucified with Christ. He is working with Christ at Jesus's invitation. And that presence of Jesus is personal, and it's active. So the Holy Spirit, again, is not a substitute for Jesus, but He is the presence of Jesus. And interestingly, that's actually what the word liturgy means, it means presence. It's not about the ceremonies and the rights as much as it is the presence of Jesus. The third way that the Holy Spirit makes alive the dead teachings or dead abstracts of the creed and of the scriptures is that he infuses them with power. We realize and experience that we do live and move and have our being in God. We're dependent. We belong to Him. We are one with Him. We become more and more aware of that oneness and we give ourselves up to it more and more, more fully, we learn to be rather than do, we learn to listen rather than speak, and yet that does not mean we don't still do the proper things. There's a neat little story in a book called the Daily Readings With The Desert Fathers. Abba Lot went to see Abba Joseph and he said to him, "Abba, as far as I can, I say my little offers, I fast a little, I pray and meditate, I live in peace and as far as I can, I purify my thoughts. What else can I do?"

0:06:03.9 SC: That sort of reminds me of the rich man who went to Jesus and said, "What must I do to inherit the kingdom of God?" And he's thinking these things that he needs to do, he needs to say his prayers, he needs to fast, he needs to give alms, he needs to meditate, and Jesus tells him to go sell everything that he is dependent on and instead follow him. And this story is the same. The old man stood up and stretched his hands toward heaven, his fingers became like 10 lamps of fire and he said to him, if you will, you can become all flame. This is a perfect illustration of the difference between being and doing. It's not that we stop doing, it's that we do within the being. Abba Lot has his little rules and he keeps them all. And he has all these practices. And Abba Joseph, he's not thinking about practices, practices and rules, but he's also fasting and praying. The difference is he wants that fire to burn in him. He understands that the rules and the practices are meant to lead us to the presence, the power and the person of God Himself. That living flame, that love, the living water, the love of the Holy Spirit.

0:07:20.8 SC: The practices and the rituals of the Old Testament tabernacle were mostly what we might call dead, because they had no grace in them. There were a lot of rules and a lot of ceremonies, a lot of stuff, and they were meant to lead the people to God himself, but because they didn't have any grace in them, they didn't have that infusion of the Holy Spirit at baptism, they didn't have the power, they didn't have the presence of God on a daily, hourly, minute-by-minute basis to make God personal and to make him the power of their lives. And so most of it was impossible. But now, the New Testament church is a living organism. It is a body. Paul says, The Body of Christ. It is a living thing. With Christ as the head, we are called living stones built up into a living tabernacle or a body. And that's what I wanna talk about today. We're gonna look at the Holy Spirit and what it means for us to be church, because the church is not the building, it's not the institution. The church is the people. The church is living. It has a living spirit in it, and that living spirit lives in you.

0:08:39.3 SC: And so what does that say to us about how we live and how do we relate to other people? How do we relate to fellow Christians? And we have to take the Trinity as our model and

our basis. So the first thing about the Trinity is that it is a unity. One God in three persons. Father, Son, Holy Spirit. God the Father, the Creator. He gives us security. God the Son, the Savior, He gives us meaning. Which is what the word *logos* means. The word of God. That word word, it comes from the Greek meaning *logos*, it means the meaning of things. What is the meaning of things? The meaning of things is that God loves the world so much that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life. That's the meaning of everything. And the Holy Spirit is the resurrection. The love of God. The Holy Spirit is God's deepest mystery. This fellowship. The biblical word, The New Testament word for this fellowship is *Koinonia*. We hear this at every mass. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, the *Agape*, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

0:10:01.3 SC: The Holy Spirit's fellowship or *Koinonia* be with you all. And then we also say, and with your spirit. This fellowship idea, this *Koinonia* idea is a huge theme of the New Testament, because the New Testament is about the church, the church that Jesus founded. So what is *Koinonia*? This Greek word. It means fellowship. Solidarity, alliance, inter-relatedness. Sharing all things in common. A fullness of love. Look at the Trinity. It's a unity, a fellowship, a solidarity, an alliance, an interrelatedness. Sharing all things in common through the fullness of love, and that fullness of love remember, includes both the *Agape*, the sacrificial love, but also the *Eros*, the emotional, the feeling of love. I am yours and you are mine. I give everything to you, you give everything to me. It's the fullest possible partnership and fellowship with God and others. That's what the idea of *Koinonia* is. And so this unity of the Trinity, it unites without erasing differences, which we'll look at in the next part, the Trinity is community, but it's important to just talk about Unity first. Unity means no divisions. The differences are there, but still in union, so that personality and culture and temperament and age and vocation and hierarchy, all of it operates as one by command of the Father, through the obedience of the Son, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

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0:12:03.6 SC: Let's get social. I'm no longer on Facebook, so come and connect with me in the new Catholic Evangelista community. Visit biblestudyevangelista.com and click community on the menu, or scroll down to the radio notes and click the link to our community. We're sharing pics and prayers, love the word takeaways and insights on the daily readings and everything else social. Come share with me.

0:12:26.2 S1: Sonja created The Love The Word Bible study method just for you. Based on Mary's personal practice and formulated for your personality and temperament, get your Love The Word meditations every Monday morning by signing up at biblestudyevangelista.com. Now here's Sonja.

0:12:53.4 SC: *Koinonia* in the New Testament is usually translated fellowship. And so this fellowship idea is really, really important for us to understand and know what it means. Everything that each person possessed or that belonged to each person, it belonged to the other people through love to the others. They had everything in common, the book of Acts said. Now, it's really important that we keep in mind this is about the church. It's not a mixture of the church in the world, which is important to make this distinction because the church is one, the church is one because the Trinity is one, and we're all in dwelt by the one Trinity, through the power of the Holy Spirit, because of Christ and His salvific sacrifice under the command and will of God the Father.

We all live under the one head, Christ. The Sap, or the spirit that we all live under is the Holy Spirit. The world does not live with that spirit or under that head. So we're not talking about the world and the church here, we're talking about the church, where there's no division, where there are lots of differences but still unity, and where everything I possess belongs to you too. And on that note, I'm gonna just...

0:14:19.6 SC: I wanna take a moment to thank out loud my friends of the show. It's been a while, so the list is long. Laura B, Dana G, Mandy W, Karen P, Barbara C, Cynthia C, Samantha L, Jill E, Jennifer H, Morgan J, Monica H, Savanna A, Jessica S, Ellisia or Ellisia G, Jessica S, Savanna A, Katherine P, Yolanda J, Celeste C, Carmen L, Lynn A, Anna B, Angelica A, Karen C, Margaret J, Glenn McDole, Arlene R. Claire M, Gena K, Missy K, Michelle R, Laurie K, Janus S, Aaron B, Sarah S, Michael T, Sheilla I, Roger L, Dianne S, Jim and Bella OH, Bonnie C, Mary McGie, Don M, Jean F, Gay C, Carlene G, Alison K, Madison T, Aileen N, Sarah R, Katie R, thank you because what you possess, you have shared with me. You are an example of Koinonia, whether that's financially or in prayer, or your knowledge and your spiritual gifts, whenever we're sharing the things that we possess or that are ours with our church members, our church family, our Christian brothers and sisters, we are operating under the Koinonia of the Holy Spirit, this perfect love that draws us all into one. There is this reciprocity, this mutuality. I give you what I have, which is my geekiness with the scriptures and the church and theology, and all that stuff, and you give me part of what you have. It's that Koinonia.

0:16:04.6 SC: So thank you for being part of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit with me. And I want to just mention that we have completed our monthly friends of the show, monthly friends of the show or monthly donors, and we completed our Romans study and are going to begin the Book of John, which I can't wait to do. It is probably my favorite book in the whole Bible, except for The Song of Solomon. We're gonna start that in August. I have a trip to Australia that I'm getting ready for right now, I'll be leaving next week, and it's almost a whole month, so we won't be meeting in the month of July, but we will come back together as monthly friends of the show in Koinonia with one another and we'll be studying the Book of John. So if you wanna get involved in that, those monthly donors who are friends of the show, I offer that monthly Bible study for them as a thank you gift. And so you can see this idea of reciprocity and mutuality. So you can see why the Trinity, why marriage is an image of the Trinity, because there has to be this reciprocity, this mutuality, the solidarity, this fellowship, the inter-relatedness where we share all things in common. And if there's no mutuality, if there's no reciprocity, then there's no authentic love. There's no fullness of love, there's no Holy Spirit.

0:17:30.7 SC: So where the Holy Spirit is, there is unity. And without the Holy Spirit, there's only division. And remember that division was the sin of Satan. Spiritual gifts lead us all. They'd almost drive us toward a perfection of life, a reflection of Jesus both in ourselves and in other people, because they help build the other up. I did a whole series on spiritual gifts, I had posted in the Community two quizzes that you can take, because my own quiz is defunct. It's no longer works, but there are two in the community that you can take. You need to know what those are, because God has given spiritual gifts to each of us in order to build up this Koinonia, this fellowship, the solidarity, so that what I have, my gift is used for your benefit, and what you have, your gift, is used for my benefit. So that is a way in which everything we have in common, we're sharing, and it's interesting that Paul is very clear that these gifts comes specifically from the Holy Spirit. That He decides what the gifts are and what the roles are, so we don't just decide we're gonna go do something for Jesus...

0:18:48.0 SC: We wait until we know what our spiritual gifts are, and we start to look for those opportunities, those open doors that the Holy Spirit is showing to us where it's an invitation to get involved, particularly in using our spiritual gifts. This is a main way that the Holy Spirit builds Koinonia and builds unity in the church. And that brings up another point. We don't create unity.

0:19:15.3 SC: We say, sometimes I want to work towards unity in the church, and that's fine, but the real truth is it's already one. The church is already one, most of the time. If we simply focus on what we have in common, particularly baptism, if we just focus on that, what all Christians have in common, we would discover that we have a lot more in common than we do differences. And that was one of the things that I really appreciated coming into the Catholic church was the whole finger pointing thing of us, Protestants that we did against Catholics was completely absent in the Catholic Church. Catholics don't do that, they don't look at Protestants and say they're not even Christian, they don't even... They just don't. We don't do that, but Protestants look at Catholics that way and think, we're not even Christian, that we're some kind of cult, but the church is already one, we don't create unity, we are taken up into the unity that already exists in the Holy Spirit, in the Trinity, Paul appeals to this unity in Ephesians Chapter 4:1, I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord beseege you to walk worthy of the calling or the vocation with which you were called with all humility or lowliness and gentleness, with long suffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

0:20:43.3 SC: There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called. In the hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of all, who is above all and through all, and in you all. And then he goes on to talk about spiritual gifts, so the point is that the Unity already exists in the Trinity, we are taken up into that unity, as each of us finds and uses our spiritual gifts and develops that relationship of loving obedience to God, each of us grows into that more fully, and we bring others along with us because we're of that Koinonia idea, so we don't work to create unity or we don't create it, I should say. We can work toward it. Yes, but we don't create it. We are actually participating in the unity of the Trinity that already exists, and that's why the apostles always go back to love. John, just read the first epistle of John. So this is not the Gospel of John. These are the letters, but in the very first one, the whole book is this idea. He says, Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness.

0:22:02.0 SC: Whoever loves his brother lives in light, and there's nothing in Him to make Him stumble, But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. This is how we know the children of God and who the children of the Devil are. Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God. Nor is anyone who does not love his brother. We know that we have passed from death to... I can't even read them all. There's just so much from the very beginning of this letter all the way through to the end, the Apostle John is very clear that love is the uniting principle, it connects all things, particularly in the church. So when he talks about our brother, he's not talking about our blood physical brother in our family, he's talking about your Christian brothers and sisters, Christian people. If we don't love other Christian people, if we have divisions in our parishes in between other Christians, then we have divisions in God, if we are divided from our Christian brother and sister we're divided from God. Now, I know that's a big statement, and I know it makes us all feel really responsible and I'll get to that, I promise, but I just want to keep making the point that we are one. We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord, there was a song, Little camp song when I was a kid that we used to sing that way, division then from other Christians is division from God.

0:23:30.0 SC: I cannot be in fellowship in Koinonia with God and his son and not live in that fellowship with other Christians, so you can't say, I don't need to go worship, because you must. You must have that Koinonia.

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0:25:15.0 SC: When the Holy Spirit rules me, when the Holy Spirit rules the parish, when the Holy Spirit rules the family, man-made barriers are gonna fall. So broken fellowship with Christian brothers or sisters in Christ indicates broken fellowship with God. That's why Paul says, If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. And then he talks about not to take vengeance or have revenge in our hearts, but particularly he's speaking about Christian brothers and sisters and our responsibility through the Holy Spirit in that Koinonia to reconcile wherever we can with our Christian brothers and sisters, and Jesus told the parable of, if you come to the altar and you remember something that your brother has against you, go to him and reconcile, he's talking about Christian brothers and sisters, he's not talking about the co-worker who is not Christian at all, he's not talking about them, he's talking about the fact that we live in Koinonia under a head, Christ who obeys God the Father and his will. We live under the head with the same spirit, we have a common belief, a common spirit, that's the people he's talking to here, he's not saying go reconcile with the atheist co-worker because they don't have...

0:26:32.0 SC: A Common set of beliefs, they don't have a common spirit, there's no fellowship. It says, between light and darkness, Paul says, 2nd Corinthians chapter 6, there's no Koinonia between the darkness and the light. There, you can't find it, it doesn't exist. But there is a Koinonia between Christian brothers and sisters, and wherever the Holy Spirit is calling you to unity in Communion, particularly the Eucharist, but also the Catholic liturgy, which is the presence of Christ, remember, and the Church of God under the hierarchy, I'll get to that, I promise in the next section, but whenever God is calling us to that, He is calling us to Koinonia, he's calling us to the fellowship, that is the Holy Spirit. And without that, we cannot live the Christian life, we say all the time, I'm gonna go to communion, but when we receive the body of Christ, we go to Koinonia, it's above all in and through the Eucharist that the church becomes herself, the communion of saints. We are called to communion, and it is a person, Jesus doesn't divide himself into pieces and give us each a piece of himself, he divides the... Or he draws the pieces, me and you, into the unity of communion,

the one bread, the one cup, the one loaf, the one body.

0:27:58.9 SC: When you are being called to the one body, you are being called into that koinonia, it's that same idea of the one set of common beliefs, the one cup, the one loaf, and so maybe you can see why the church is very careful about inter-communion. It doesn't make any sense to receive the Eucharist in the Catholic Church, where we're entering into this communion with the Church in the most radical way possible, and then at the same time, protest against her by rejecting her authority through the Pope and the shepherds. So before the Eucharist, which is the most intimate fellowship of all, you must be one in communion with the Church, and why would you even want to receive communion if that's what it means? And see, most people don't realize that's what it means, and that's why the church does not typically allow communion to non-Catholics, but through the Holy Spirit through that Koinonia, He will draw people to the Eucharist. It's Him who gives them the desire to be nourished by the body and the blood of Christ, it's the Holy Spirit that draws. And another thing that I find very interesting is it's the unity of the apostles that almost called down the Holy Spirit in the upper room in Acts Chapter 2...

0:29:15.8 SC: Well, verse, chapters 1 and 2, the Holy Spirit could have descended on the apostles individually and in different places, wherever they were, but he did it, he was poured out over them when they were assembled together in the same place, the words actually mean in the same place, unanimously united, and because they were unanimously united in the same place, which is what the mass is, they received the Holy Spirit, every single one received the Holy Spirit because He was united with the others, why? Because the Holy Spirit is the spirit of unity, he builds on the unity that He is and that He has already begun in the church, and that unity is a fruit of his action, and so if one is not willing to be reconciled and united with the church then he can't have a full share of the Holy Spirit, it's just impossible, especially because of communion. Oh, every single form of division and schism stands in direct opposition to the Holy Spirit. He arouses this desire to be peacefully united with the church in a manner, however, Jesus determines as one flock under one shepherd, He is the one who opens the path to Christian unity, we can work toward it, but the Holy Spirit is the one who brings that to life, it's him and only him who can restore the unity of the churches, and we need to pray for that because to create unity and fellowship...

0:30:35.1 SC: That is the Holy Spirit's charism. Now we know that the Holy Spirit, of course, He works in denominations, and how does he further that unity? Well, mostly by making us all aware of the unity that's already exists, and as I said, the foundation for that is surely baptism, 'cause we all share that or the church instructs us. "Catholics must gladly acknowledge and esteem the truly Christian endowments from our common heritage, which are to be found among our separated brethren, it is right and salutary to recognize the riches of Christ and virtuous works and the lives of others who are bearing witness to Christ.

0:31:10.6 SC: Sometimes even to the shedding of their blood, nor should we forget that anything wrought by the grace of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of our separated brethren can be of help to our own edification, but it also says in the same Council, this is the Second Vatican Council the decree on Ecumenism, it also says that Catholics in their ecumenical work must assuredly be concerned for their separated brethren, praying for them, keeping them informed about the church, making the first approaches toward them, but their primary duty is to make a careful and honest appraisal of whatever needs to be done or renewed in the Catholic household itself, in order that its life may bear witness more clearly and faithfully to the teachings and institutions which have come to it from Christ through the apostles, so that has been the guiding principle for my own ministry, my heart

aches and aches for our Protestant brothers and sisters, I was one, and I love them dearly, and I want to share with them the...

0:32:10.3 SC: Particularly the Eucharist, right. And Jesus prayed that prayer for unity, and it's super powerful because it's his prayer, he prayed it in the Holy Spirit, and we should pray it as well, that prayer for unity is in John chapter 17, that they may all be one. Even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that You have sent me. Unity is Koinonia. And it is the particular charism of the Holy Spirit, and you can see how there are diverse gifts and diverse... Lots of stuff in even the Christian community. Right, and what is the difference between Protestant community and Catholic community? Well, as a protestant, I can say our country church, it was a very tight-knit little community, and we had meals together a lot, and we had Bible study, it felt like a family. I don't necessarily feel that in my own parish, but that's really because of my parish, my particular parish, it has this sort of very independent child feel to it, we're all just very independent people, but even more than that, the difference in the community of the Catholic is that it's enormous.

0:33:24.4 SC: Protestant denominations, they're very broken, and then each church, each local church is often very divided too, but the Catholic Church is so huge, the thing that draws us into that Koinonia, into that community, is it the liturgy, the liturgy is one, the mass is one... No matter where you go, anywhere in the world, it may be a different language, but the mass itself is the same, and communion, the Eucharist, it's communion with union, and then the communal life through the feasts, the liturgical year, and the feast days of the Church, all of that draws us into the universal church, the spiritual gifts. This is all more universal than it is local, which is... It's not better or worse. I'm just showing the difference, and which is, maybe this is just me, but I could see it very clearly because I was a denominationalist, and I could see the difference in how our... Well, the local churches, they just seemed very separated from one another, except like on missions, things like that, but you know, the Catholic church has so many of those too, and then you have particular orders and ways in which this universal humongous church draws itself into these little communities which leads me into the second thing I wanna talk about as far as the Holy Spirit and the church, so the Trinity is a unity, but the Trinity is a community.

0:34:55.3 SC: It is a unity of three persons, but they're all distinct, they're all distinct, they each have their own roles, and those roles are very diverse, and there's also a distinct hierarchy, God is the father of... He's the father of creation, and He offers security. The Son gives us meaning, he is the Savior, the Holy Spirit brings resurrection, He is love, the fullness of love, Koinonia, each of them is distinct, each of them has his own role, and there is a hierarchy, God the father sends the son, and together from them precedes the Holy Spirit. There's a hierarchy there. So distinctions, obedience and hierarchy are all part of community, and community is the work of the Holy Spirit.

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[music]

0:36:44.1 SC: I left off saying that community is the work of the Holy Spirit, but it's more accurate to say that community is the Holy Spirit, community is the Trinity, and sin breaks that Koinonia. It breaks that unity. And that is why discipline and boundaries are expressions of love. They help us to respect the diversity in unity, they help us to respect the hierarchy. Jesus said, If you love me, you will keep my commandments. The Holy Spirit creates community, he brings together again, almost every prayer in the Catholic liturgy ends with... In the unity of the holy spirit, it's the Holy Spirit that incorporates us all into the body of Christ and makes us one, for by one spirit, we are all baptized into one body, Jews or Greeks, slaves are free, whether we're white or black, or priests or laymen or men or women, or natives, or foreigners, or Conservatives or Liberals, whatever we are, we are one. And so we must forgive one another when there is a broken Koinonia, we must forgive one another, we can't bear a grudge, and of course, we look at this as some sort of command as a rule, and if we do that, it's gonna be very dead, very dry.

0:37:52.0 SC: Instead of thinking about forgiveness as a rule, we have to just simply be conscious of this community idea. If you know that together, we make up one body, then we can't be angry at each other or jealous of one another. The ears aren't jealous of the eyes, and the eyes aren't jealous of the hands. When one part of the body suffers, the remaining part doesn't feel pleasure. Rather, the whole body mobilizes to help the suffering part. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12, if one member suffers, all suffer together. If one member is honored, all rejoice together. And that's because of this connection, this koinonia. We belong to the same family. 1 John, in Chapter 5, it says, Everyone who loves the parent loves the one begotten by him. But the reality of community is even greater than that. It's not necessarily commandment. We're bound together in the blood of Christ, much more than siblings in a family, and that's a hard truth to come to realize, that sometimes the blood of your family is not nearly as close as the blood of your church family. But in a body, everything is dependent on everything else, and then it becomes very simple. To forgive is not something this big thing you do that you can feel proud of, it's obvious, the arm does not forgive the leg because it's broken. [chuckle] Does it? I mean, who falls and gets hurt and looks at his feet and says, "I forgive you. I'm so sorry that you tripped, that you don't know what you're doing and can't walk?"

0:39:19.2 SC: The same is true in the parable of the prodigal son. He comes back to the father, and the father doesn't say, "My son, I forgive you." He didn't even give the son a chance to say his confession. The father saw him and had compassion, and he ran and embraced him and kissed him. He immediately brings him back to the level where they were with one another. 'Cause love covers a multitude of sins. Love makes sins invisible. 1 Peter 4:8, Forgiveness isn't necessary because it's already forgotten. It's already been hidden. Now, how does this look practically? Right? 'Cause I can hear you screaming at me on the other end there. Here is the important piece. And I mentioned this earlier. But the body of Christ is a family, a family of Christians that all live by the Holy Spirit, in a common set of beliefs, and that's why we correct one another in love, and we erect boundaries with other Christian brothers and sisters.

0:40:14.2 SC: Years ago as a protestant, I was a part of a clown ministry where we dressed up and painted our faces and stuff, and we did clown skits that were evangelistic. And I had this great idea for a skit, and I called a meeting and we all met, and I presented the idea, and everybody loved it. The problem was the leaders of the clown ministry didn't come to the meeting. And you know, I was young. I didn't know anything about anything, so I just kind of plowed in with my big idea and I presented it and everybody was excited, and we did it, and everybody loved it. Well, turns out it really offended the two people who were doing clown ministry. And of course, I understand that... I didn't have any idea... I promise, I was so young. I really had no idea [chuckle] how to go about the

hierarchy. And to be fair, this couple, they had created a sort of kingdom, and they were very proud of it. And it was offensive to them that I had just plowed in and sort of taken it over. And when I realized my mistake, I went to God and I was like, "Oh boy, I'm really sorry."

0:41:15.7 SC: I mean, I was offended that they were offended, to be honest, because we were all trying to do something evangelistic, and I didn't really see why they were so upset. 'Cause they were very upset. But now, I can kinda... I know better. But it was my mistake. And I saw that it was my mistake. So I went to them, and I apologized. They never forgave me, and it was a rift from that point forward. They weren't ugly to me, but they never forgave me, to this day, actually. We saw them recently. And I've been out of the Protestant church for 16 years now. And we saw them out for lunch on a Sunday, and they turned their backs and walked away. [chuckle] And of course, that probably has more to do with being Catholic than it does even that clown ministry. But still, my point is I had to go... Because it was my error, I had to go to them and apologize and ask for their forgiveness. But they just as easily should have come to me... Because of this common set of beliefs and our common Holy Spirit, they should have come to me.

0:42:11.7 SC: Jesus lays out, in Matthew 18, exactly how this should happen. You go to your Christian brother and sister and you give them... You tell them the offense. You tell them the offense, and hopefully, you can reconcile. If they don't listen to you, take another party. I could have taken my husband, I could have taken another person that was in the clown ministry, whatever. You take another party and you present the case. You ask for forgiveness, or you ask them to apologize, or whatever, whatever needs to happen. If they don't listen then, you take them to the full church. But this is only for other Christian brothers and sisters. This is why Jesus says, "Do not cast your pearls among swine." If you go to a co-worker and you apologize for being wrong, that's great. But if they never forgive you again, if they remain your enemy, if they work against you, you can't keep working toward reconciliation because they are not operating under the same set of beliefs that you are. They're not operating under the same head you are, Christ. They're not operating in the same spirit that you are, the Holy spirit. So you have no koinonia with them, is my point.

0:43:17.1 SC: I'm not saying not to be charitable, I'm just saying you don't have to reconcile. And sometimes it's impossible to try to reconcile with a Christian brother and sister, just because we're all at different places and we have different temperaments and personalities, and we're all wounded to one degree or another. So sometimes it is impossible, which is why Paul said, "As much as is possible, you live in peace." I had this come up... Actually, there are two examples I want to share. On the community, we were talking about Deliverance Ministry. And someone posted a video. It came out of Encounter Ministries, but it was Dr. Healy and Fr. Boniface Hicks, and they did a video that talked about how every Christian is called to pray for one another in deliverance and in healing. And they were specifically... Probably, they didn't say this, but it seemed that they were specifically contradicting what they believed Fr. Ripperger had been teaching and talking about in his book, particularly in the book Dominion, where he talks about how we have to be careful. Not that we shouldn't pray deliverance prayers, he gave us a whole book of those, right? And not that we shouldn't pray for healing for other people, but that we should be careful to observe the proper hierarchy. And he says so because of retaliation.

0:44:31.3 SC: Fr. Ripperger is an exorcist. Dr. Healy is not, although I love and respect her deeply, and Fr. Boniface Hicks as well. Here is an example of sort of what I think is a misunderstanding. I'm not sure that Healy and Hicks understand exactly what Fr. Ripperger said. And Fr. Ripperger, I

don't think is trying to contradict that you should pray for deliverance and healing for other people, I think he's just trying to be very precise. So what would be beautiful is if Fr. Ripperger and Healy and Hicks all got together and really hammered out the precise nature of what they're both saying. And that way, they can present this koinonia, they can present the truth to us in a way that has this koinonia reality to it, the unity of the Holy Spirit, rather than it feeling like, this party is against this party. And I'm not saying that's what's happening, I don't know, but I know that it seems that way. So if we have a beef with someone in the church, a fellow brother and sister, go to them directly.

0:45:31.7 SC: This happened to me this week where I felt compelled, and I think it was partly my fault because I sort of put myself in this position, whether consciously or subconsciously, where I needed to call my dad for Father's Day, and I did. And he texted me back, 'cause he didn't answer the phone, and he texted me and said, "Thanks." So I'm like, "You know what? [chuckle] What is the point? What is the point?" He says he is a Christian. And so on the community, someone made the observation that perhaps you just need to say to them, "This feels one-sided. I'm not gonna contact you again unless you contact me. Not as a condition or as an ultimatum, but just, look, this is how I'm feeling about this. And here's my boundary. And if you really want a relationship, if you want to reconcile, the door is open, but I'm not gonna keep plowing through it. There's no reciprocity. There's no mutuality. There's no koinonia."

0:46:24.4 SC: And if my dad is a Christian, then perhaps he will take the steps necessary to reconnect with me. Maybe he won't. I don't know. We'll see. But we have a duty as much as we can with other Christian people because we live by a common set of beliefs, and we live under the same head, we live under the same hierarchy, we live by the Holy Spirit. We have a duty then to work toward that koinonia in our relationships, because unity and community is the Holy spirit. The fullness of the love of the Trinity, and where we can, we need to try to re-establish that koinonia. And where we can't, we don't cast our pearls among swine. We don't try to reconcile with people of the world who do not have our set of beliefs, who do not have that same Holy Spirit. We can only go so far with them. It cannot be a true sense of koinonia in most cases, so don't feel guilty if that can't happen. And where another person cannot respect your diversity and your differentness, then you might have to just cut them off. If your eye offends you, pluck it out. If your hand offends you, cut it off. So these are the sorts of boundaries that help us respect one another, the differences without trying to erase them. It's a mark of unity, a mark of community, a mark of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

[music]

0:47:52.3 S4: Thank you for listening to the Bible Study Evangelista show. Find out more at biblestudyevangelista.com.