

## IN PURSUIT OF BELONGING

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Hebrews 5:1-4 states " For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin. He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins. And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was."

May I be frank? OK. Disagreements and offenses happen. A dynamic disruptive to the functioning of the family is the elevating of one over another when opposing opinions meet. Judgments are made as to who is the "crazy one". To see another as inferior in perspective or to pass judgment as to the validity of one's perspective is not our place.

When called into the family of God, we all came from the same sinful family of mankind. (Verse 1) There is none who is less sinful than another. The beauty of this is it both equalizes and normalizes our daily struggles.

Secondly, this fact of equality provides us with the opportunity "to deal gently with" those around us who may not know God, are struggling in some way or, more simply, may have a differing opinion. The crucial point as believers is we are the same in our focus to become more like Jesus. We cannot and must not forget this fact. (Vs. 2)

Scripture states, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves". What this requires is for us to allow the Lord to reveal when we go to a place of elevating ourselves over those around us. Consider this: Our nature pursues and demands a place of security or belonging. If this place is threatened in our minds or in reality, we fight for this place in overt as well as covert ways. One of these ways is to deny we are as sinful as others around us. Scripture is clear about this. To elevate or think less of ourselves than others is to go to a prideful place. Verse 4 of our passage goes on to state that no pride is allowed. Any glory received belongs to the Lord.

Friends, make it your choice today to remember that it is only the grace of God that keeps us. We may not be equal in talent or experience but we are equal in the need for belonging. God's mercy and calling for each one of us is a gift that came with a great price. This gift, Jesus death on the cross, never provides a platform for denial, pride, and division. Instead it provides honesty, humility, and bonding together in the process of furthering the Kingdom of God.

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