

Engagement Project - Tour 9 Articles

Articles: [*EP-Tour 9, Engagement - The Band of Brothers, Part 1 - ~400 words, ~1000 words*](#)

The Engagement Project

Tour 9: Engagement - The Band of Brothers

Themes & Further Study

We come now to the end of our quest – and the beginning of our shared task.

Up to this point, each Tour has been designed to lead participants into a deeper experience of “gazing upon the face of God”: encountering Him in a new and profoundly personal way. As Dr. Tackett points out, we can revisit these Tours as often as we need to. Like Moses, we can go back to the Mountain or the Tent of Meeting whenever we want to refill our tanks and speak with the Lord “face to face.” But as we’ve said many times over the course of this journey, these divine encounters are not an end in themselves. They point towards something else. Like Isaiah’s vision in the Temple, they’re supposed to drive us to the place where we’re compelled to cry out, “Here am I, Lord! Send me!” Their purpose is to equip us for our work and help us to bear fruit in our encounters with other people. And those encounters, to an important extent, are meant to flow out of the relationships we share with one another as a “band of brothers.” That’s what this final Tour is all about.

Themes

When Moses came away from a meeting with the Lord, he had to veil his face so that the people would not see the divine glory fading from his countenance. Our position as Christians is very different. Unlike the saints of the Old Testament, we experience the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit as a constant and permanent reality. Since the Day of Pentecost, all who trust in Jesus Christ have been filled to overflowing with the fullness of God’s Triune nature. Our job now is to let that fullness spill out over our brothers, sisters, and neighbors by loving others as we love ourselves.

“As ourselves” is the key phrase here. Until we understand what that’s all about, we won’t be able to love others in strict accordance with the mandate of the Royal Law. To arrive at this understanding, we’ll have to plug in the definition of agape that we nailed down in Tour 3: “A sacrificial zeal that steadfastly seeks the shalom, or true good, of others.”

Loving ourselves is a question of seeking our own true good. But we can’t do that until we understand what our true good is. Fortunately, Dr. Tackett has told us many times: human shalom consists in fruitfulness. In order to seek this true good effectively, we must do two things. First, figure out what fosters and promotes fruitfulness and cultivate it. That includes developing deep relationships, good physical and mental health, and a strong walk with the Lord. Second, pinpoint obstacles or hindrances to fruitfulness and eliminate them. That means getting rid of pride, fear, isolation, dependency, gloom, apathy, lack of vision, and a tendency to believe that “it’s all about me.” This in turn will entail learning how to say no to ourselves when it’s appropriate – something our culture doesn’t encourage us to do.

Where are we going to find the strength and determination to do all this? That question brings us to the conclusion of our journey and the central message of Tour 9: the importance of being part of a “band of brothers.” The ability to stay on track and love ourselves with true agape love is something we derive from one another. “As iron sharpens iron,” says the Scripture, “so one man sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17). This implies that we can only fulfill the Royal Law – “Love your neighbor as yourself” – as a body, a family, a group with a shared identity and a shared mission. When pride, depression, anxiety, doom, gloom, and a preoccupation with my own script prevent me from bearing fruit, it is my brothers and sisters who have the power and authority to set me straight again. This is why Dr. Tackett believes it is so crucial for every Christian to be part of a small “life group” – a group of dedicated disciples who are committed to go the distance together come what may.

Points to Watch For

During the course of this episode, Dr. Tackett cites more than thirty passages of Scripture that corroborate and flesh out the deeper meaning of Jesus’ “New Commandment:” “Love one another even as I have loved you” (John 13:34). Included on this list are such verses as John 15:12; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 4:7, 11, and 12; Romans 12:10 and 16; Ephesians 4:32; and Philippians 2:3.

Josiah’s rediscovery of the Torah scroll (2 Chronicles 34:14-19) is used to highlight the modern church’s desperate need to rediscover the Royal Law. “How could they ever have lost it?” asks Dr. Tackett. Indeed, how could we? It’s time for us, like the ancient king, to come a place of conviction and re-dedicate ourselves to the fulfillment of the Vision.

Another key biblical quotation comes from 2 Corinthians 2:14-16, where Paul writes:

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?

The truth is that we are not adequate and never can be in and of ourselves. And yet, as these verses assure us, we may be certain of success and victory in the Lord’s service as long as we are marching in the train of His Triumphal Procession. For through the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit and the Fruit He produces in our lives (Galatians 5:22, 23), we have everything we need to carry out our mission. We exude His fragrance wherever we go. Besides, if we ask God to use us in this way, we know He will be zealous to answer.

In the end, we come back to the idea that captured our imagination all the way back in Tour 0: the concept of being a “Remnant of Hope” in a “Land of Nought.” In this world, we are surrounded by grieving, hurting, and dying people. Some of them live just next door or right across the street. Let’s pray that the Lord will stir us up to become the salt and light they so desperately need us to be. That’s what Jesus left us here to do.

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The Engagement Project

Tour 9: Engagement - The Band of Brothers

Tour 9: The Band of Brothers summarizes the purpose of the entire journey and issues a call to action.

The previous Tours have guided participants into deeper, personal encounters with God—gazing upon His face, much like Moses spoke with the Lord face to face. These experiences, which can be revisited anytime to refill our spiritual tanks, are never the final goal. Like Isaiah’s vision in the Temple, they propel us outward: we are compelled to cry, “Here am I, Lord! Send me!” Their ultimate purpose is to equip us to bear fruit in our relationships with others.

As Christians, we differ dramatically from Old Testament saints. We enjoy the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit since Pentecost, filled with the fullness of God’s Triune nature. Our calling is to let this fullness overflow, loving others as we love ourselves—this is the Royal Law.

The phrase “as ourselves” is pivotal. To love others rightly, we must first understand **agape** love (defined earlier as “a sacrificial zeal that steadfastly seeks the shalom, or true good, of others”) applied to ourselves. Human **shalom** means **fruitfulness**. Loving ourselves biblically therefore involves two key actions:

1. Actively cultivate what promotes fruitfulness: deep relationships, physical/mental health, and a strong walk with God.
2. Ruthlessly remove obstacles: pride, fear, isolation, dependency, gloom, apathy, lack of vision, and self-centeredness. This requires learning to say “no” to ourselves when needed—something our culture resists.

Where do we find the strength to do this consistently? The answer lies at the heart of Tour 9: we need a **“band of brothers”** (or sisters)—a committed group of fellow disciples. As Proverbs 27:17 declares, “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.” We fulfill the command to “love your neighbor as yourself” not in isolation, but as a body with shared identity and mission. When pride, depression, anxiety, or self-focus derail us, it is our brothers and sisters who can lovingly correct and restore us.

Dr. Tackett stresses that every Christian should be part of a small **life group**—dedicated believers committed to journey together through life’s highs and lows.

Ultimately, Tour 9 returns to the vision from Tour 0: we are called to be a **Remnant of Hope** in a broken **“Land of Nought.”** Surrounded by grieving, hurting, and dying people—some right next door—we are to become the salt and light they desperately need. Through the indwelling Spirit and the fruit He produces, God equips us to exude the fragrance of Christ, marching in His triumphal procession.

This is the mission Jesus left us here to fulfill.

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