

Influence Ministries

I LOVE MY CHURCH

LESSON 2

TITLE: KNOCKING DOWN FENCES.

Hebrews 10:19, 24-25

¹⁹ And so, brothers and sisters, we are completely free to enter the Most Holy Place.^[c]

We can do this without fear because of the blood sacrifice of Jesus.

²⁴ We should think about each other to see how we can encourage each other to show love and do good works.

²⁵ We must not quit meeting together, as some are doing. No, we need to keep on encouraging each other. This becomes more and more important as you see the Day getting closer.

Fences.

They come in all shapes, sizes, and styles. Some are short, small, and transparent; others are walls of fortress.

In every case, what is a fence designed to do? Keep something in or keep something out.

The fence was the separation between the two spaces. It was the barrier between the front, which everyone was allowed to see, and the back, which is where we lived.

Let's picture our lives as a yard. If a lot of us were honest, we'd admit that we like a good fence.

What we are comfortable showing people and letting people know about us is our front lawn—and we try keeping a pristine front lawn. Nicely manicured. Beautiful grass.

A nice welcome mat at the front door—for decorative purposes only.

The front yard is what we show people.

But the backyard ... that's different. That's the real us and getting in there is by invite only.

In fact, I'm going to build a fence because I'm not sure I want you to know what's going on with the real me.

I don't want you to see the parts of my life that aren't so pristine.

I'm not sure if we can have a meal together. The backyard is private, the backyard is me.

Everything in the front of the house is perfectly presented, but the back of the house ... behind this fence ... is where the true us resides. This is the yard of our lives.

Here's the deal about fences: God isn't a big fan of them.

As far as being in relationship with Him and being in community with each other, God wants us to rethink our fences.

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If we intend to love our church the way God wants us to, then we must:

Before we even talk about the fence that we put between us and people, we must realize the barrier that exists between God and us.

The first part of our Hebrews passage tells us:

Because Jesus is our Great High Priest and has crashed the fence, the veil separating us from God, we are able to confidently draw near to Him.

We're born building fences—walls, structures designed to hide, protect, or confine who we really are—to keep us separated from God.

We're born into sin—our first fence—which keeps us from true community with Him.

Allow others into your yard.

We come to this building, and we sing songs, and we play games with children, and sometimes we eat and we smile and say good morning ... but we do it all from behind the fence.

So, what do we do? With the fences all of us have erected.

Do not forsake assembling together.

Community means we don't build fences.

Community means we head below the surface.

Community means authenticity—the sharing of ourselves with others—a deeper relationship.

Community means standing in someone's yard and allowing them to stand in mine.

Both of our dirty, stinky, unkempt yards with all the toys strewn everywhere and weeds not pulled and the shed that desperately needs repainting.

Whose yard are you in? Who are you allowing into your yard?

If we are truly going to experience not only the church but also life as God intended it, then we can't live behind a fence.

To truly love your church, you must love someone in your church.

What it means is that we don't live in isolation.

Community is finding ways to encourage one another to love and good deeds—beyond church programming and sermons.

JESUS HAS CRASHED THE FENCE. ALLOW SOMEONE INTO YOUR YARD.