***November 18, 2018***

***Today’s Lesson: Survive Together!***

**From Mike:**

Several years ago it dawned on me—through study and prayer—that much of the religious world has completely missed what God wanted the church to accomplish, at least from a togetherness stand point. Our perspective and our expectations have been formed by centuries of history, tradition, and institutionalization of church. God never intended for His family to be seen as a building, a place, a time, or a corporate entity. It’s a family. In the New Testament, those first Christians got together in homes to encourage, equip, and edify one another in an atmosphere of love. **The church gathered, was never an institution but a support group!** From the very beginning, God wanted us to help one another grow in love and service and thus grow into the likeness of Jesus! That is our only goal! “*We live to help one another develop a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ,”* and He said the way to do that was by developing a loving relationship with each other. (Read 1 John 4)

 The traditional view of church and what it is supposed to do does not come from God but from man’s traditions. It’s so ingrained in our thinking and language that it’s very difficult to change it. Church is not something you do or a place you go, it’s who we are! BUT, we are only **HIS CHURCH** when we are helping each other grow. We get together to build up the Spirit flame in each other! The Bible is clear, “encourage one another,” (Heb.10:24-25) “equip God’s people,” (Eph.4:11) and “...so that the church may be edified” (1 Cor.14:5 & 26). And “Above all, love one another…” (1 Pet.4:8) is the umbrella for all three.

 Yes, I’ve said these things many times before over the years, but I’m saying it again because we are looking at things Paul tells us to do in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18 that prevent putting out the Spirit’s fire (vs.19). We must be in the business of helping each other survive the challenges of Satan and an evil world. We are one another’s support group—and we must SURVIVE!

**\* Join us for the Root Family Devotional Wednesday at 7:0**