

# **Bible Studies for Life Series for March 9: Hey yous guys-or, faith in the second person plural**

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### **Hey yous guys-or, faith in the second person plural**

- 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

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Urban slang of the northeast United States is as rich and as different as the two-step cadence of the Texas drawl. In fact, every region of our country has deeply rooted ways of verbal expression. A notable difference is the word used for the plural second person pronoun. For you non-grammarians I'm referring to "ya'll" or "yous."

Allow me to illustrate. When I call all three of my kids to dinner I say, "Ya'll come downstairs, supper's on the table." If I were from Joisey (that's New Jersey), I would say, "Hey yous, get down for da dinner." Either way, all three children know I'm talking to all three of them.

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What in the world does that have to do with today's Bible study? A lot, actually.

In 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, Paul is using the second person plural form of the pronoun "you" to speak to the church about being God's sanctuary. It's extended imagery that essentially says to the Corinthian church member, "All of you (yous/ya'll) are the ones who make up the sanctuary of God, you are the body of Jesus."

In other words, church, we're in this together.

The primary thrust of this lesson has to do with making morally good choices because we play host to the living God with our bodies as God's sanctuary, but an important feature of the choices we make is the work of living the faith together. If "no man is an island" unto himself, this is distinctly so, Paul would argue, among those of us who make up the church.

You might call it a "You Plural" kind of faith. Yous Guys. Ya'll. You'ns.

The church has been criticized fairly by the dominant culture for being hypocritical and divisive. There is, however, a way that you and I as individuals can help overcome our negative reputation. It lies in remembering this: We are the hands and feet of Christ and we are the body of Christ.

While the metaphor may be overused, it is no less accurate due to usage. And if we are the body of Christ, we need to live like we love God. In a

world critical of the church, every act of kindness, every act of inclusion, every way you get to know your neighbor, helps gain ground for the church's reputation.

The church honors God when we live out our inseparable links to one another—faith in Jesus Christ. It's an invigorating idea to know we are not alone in the faith journey. We can draw precious energy and positive support from one another as we study Scripture, worship together and fellowship with one another. Sometimes church life is just a bowl of blissful togetherness.

Other times, it seems to me the faith journey would be simpler and less argumentative if I didn't have to deal with the others in my church family. I've pondered the perfect church on more than one occasion and basically have decided that at certain times the perfect church would have three things: me, a study, and a steeple. That's because sometimes I'm embarrassed, frustrated or confused by the things churches do. There are times when I want to just drop the forms of institution and yell "Abandon ship!" to everyone, thinking every person for him or herself would be the ideal.

But for some mysterious reason unknown to me, I never yell "Abandon ship!" For some reason, I stay plugged in to the church despite the bickering and odd ways of shared life. I suppose it has to do with recognizing that the institution of church has been good to me. More than it has been a place of frustration, the church has been a place of refuge, comfort, safety. More than it has been a place of disagreement, the church has been a place of edification, strength and grace in the Gethsemane moments/days/seasons of life.

After all, I don't think I could teach my preschooler that "God is love" all alone. And I know my teenage daughter wouldn't be the spiritually mature young lady she is without the care of adults and youth ministers who care

passionately about people in the worst phase of all of human development—adolescence. And three weeks ago, when I was stuck on my sofa for six days with the flu, who brought me soup and tissues and oranges? You know who. The body of Christ.

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