

# Culture Making | A Community of Interdependence

## Romans 12:3-8

## INTERDEPENDENCE

A community following Jesus with a mutual dependence on Jesus and one another.

## WHAT FIGHTS AGAINST INTERDEPENDENCE (v.1-2)

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

“If righteousness is to be dependent on God for righteousness —to be god ruled, then wickedness (sinfulness) is to be fundamentally self-ruled.”

—Barbara Brown Taylor.

The primary philosophical and spiritual problem in the West is the lie of individualism. Individualism makes church almost impossible. It makes community almost impossible. It makes compassion almost impossible. We've overdone this notion of the private self; it has become the only game in town when it's not the game at all. I need to recognize that I'm in a river that is bigger than I am.

The foundation and the flow of that river is love. Life is not about me; it is about God, and God is about love. When we don't know love, when we don't experience love, when we experience only the insecurity and fragility of the small self, we become restless.

—Richard Rohr

ANTI-COVENANTAL  
SELF-DEFINED  
EROTICIZED THE STRANGER  
EXPERIENCE OVER STABILITY

# WHY WE SHOULD FIGHT FOR INTERDEPENDENCE

## **Interdependence Stabilizes our Identity**

Romans 12:4-5

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we..

“To be righteous is to trust that your life fundamentally depends on God.”

—Barbara Brown Taylor

## **Interdependence Strengthens Community (v.5)**

“...So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”

## **Interdependence Offers Healing to Humanity**

“The whole idea of compassion is based on a keen awareness of the interdependence of all these living beings, which are all part of one another, and all involved in one another.”

—Thomas Merton

“A person is a person through other persons.”

—Desmond Tutu

## HOW WE FIGHT FOR INTERDEPENDENCE

Romans 12:3-4

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you...

Make his mind flit to and fro between an expression like "the body of Christ" and the actual faces in the next pew. It matters very little, of course, what kind of people that next pew really contains. You may know one of them to be a great warrior on the Enemy's side. No matter. Your patient, thanks to Our Father below, is a fool. Provided that any of those neighbours sing out of tune, or have boots that squeak, or double chins, or odd clothes, the patient will quite easily believe that their religion must therefore be somehow ridiculous. At his present stage, you see, he has an idea of "Christians" in his mind which he supposes to be spiritual but which, in fact, is largely pictorial.

—C.S. Lewis, Screwtape Letters

Work hard, then, on the disappointment or anticlimax which is certainly coming to the patient during his first few weeks as a churchman. The Enemy allows this disappointment to occur on the threshold of every human endeavour... It occurs when lovers have got married and begin the real task of learning to live together. The Enemy takes this risk because He has a curious fantasy of making all these disgusting little human vermin into what He calls His "free" lovers and servants — "sons" is the word He uses...

Desiring their freedom, He therefore refuses to carry them, by their mere affections and habits, to any of the goals which He sets before them: He leaves them to "do it on their own". And there lies our opportunity. But also, remember, there lies our danger. If once they get through this initial dryness successfully, they become much less dependent on emotion and therefore much harder to tempt.

—C.S. Lewis, Screwtape Letters