



## Thin or THICK Community

Living in community in the way of Jesus

### THICK COMMUNITY: THIN OR THICK COMMUNITY

From Covenant to Commission: What does Jesus actually want us to do?

<b>Commandment</b>	Genesis 1:26-28	We are God's Image Bearers, therefore....
<b>Covenant</b>	Genesis 12: 1-3	We are a Blessing to all the Nations, by....
<b>Commission</b>	Matthew 28:18-20	We are and make Disciples of Jesus, and we show this by....
<b>Community</b>	John 13:34-36	We are known as Disciples of Jesus by loving on another

#### Commandment

*Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."*

*So God created mankind in his own image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.*

*God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.*

[Genesis 1:26-28]

**The starting point** is that we were created to be God's image bearers — that's what we are actually supposed to do and be. Be a reflection of His goodness and love and joy and peace and creativity, and to create culture around us that shows our whole-heartedness to Him.

#### Covenant

*Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.* [Genesis 12:1-3]

**Therefore**, if we are God's image bearers, God specifically makes a promise, a covenant, to us that He will make us to be a blessing to all the nations. We are meant to bring blessing, everything that God is — goodness, love, joy, peace, creativity — to all the families of the earth.

### Commission

*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."* [Matthew 28:18-20]

**And we do this by** doing something very specific — to live as and make Disciples of Jesus - the only way to bring about blessing, everything God is, to all the nations, is actually to connect them to the source, Jesus.

### Community

*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.* [John 13:34-36]

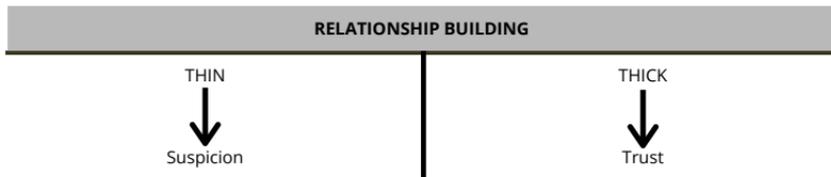
**And the way to show this**, that we are actually Disciples of Jesus, is to do community well. Jesus says that community, loving one another, is the way by which the world, all the families of the earth, all the nations, will know who He is.

**What does having love for one another look like practically?** In what way of loving one another makes the world know that we are Jesus' Disciples?

### Thin vs Thick Community



It's in the moments when we experience the tension of wanting to move in opposite directions, whether in differing opinions, preferences, or relational conflict that we need to choose how to have love for one another. Think of the analogy of a tug-of-war game: the thinness or thickness of the rope doesn't have any bearing on the game if the game was about moving towards one another; the thickness of the rope only really matters when we play the game properly and it's in the setting of moving away from one another. A piece of thread will not make one tug before it snaps in half, while a thick braided rope will stay together despite opposite forces moving in opposite directions. If we live in a thin community, the bond will easily break as we move away from one another, but, if we live in a thick community, the bond will not so easily break as we move away from one another. And Jesus' way in doing life together, in using community to show the world who He is, is to fight for a bond that will not easily break.



When we are building relationships and conflict occurs, do we choose to be suspicious of the other person, or will we trust them because of the community of Jesus' love we are striving for and living in?

TRUTH TELLING	
<p>THIN</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Hiding</p>	<p>THICK</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Honesty</p>

When it comes to telling the truth and differences occur, do we choose to withhold information or feelings from the other person, or will we be courageous and speak honestly with the grace and love that abounds in Jesus' community?

PEACE MAKING	
<p>THIN</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Division</p>	<p>THICK</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Dialogue</p>

When it comes to making peace and tension is present in the community, do we choose to breed thoughts and feelings of division, whether great or small, or will we invest in the other person and create environments of safe and freeing dialogue?

How we love and how we live in community — in the way of Jesus — really matters to Him. It was the last thing He told his closest friends, His disciples, before He laid down His life for us, and His Kingdom is built upon having love for one another.

SELF RELECTION	
5: Exceptionally Mature	A consistent way of life, where if everyone in MKAO imitated this, our whole community would flourish
4: Commendable	A strength in this person's life, where there is little need for improvement
3: Competent	Acceptable, reliable, capable in the <i>doing</i> , where there is still need for minor improvement (there is probably a head knowledge about the theme, but a need for inner heart/motivation change)
2: Growth Needed	There's an awareness and acknowledgement of this needed growth, but is a place of weakness, stagnation, or struggle
1: Poor	There's a lack of awareness or acknowledgement that spills over into our whole community that can block flourishing
N/A: Not Available	Unable to reflect on this due to unobserved theme

Using the Self Reflection chart above, what number would you say you were at for each of the following pieces in Thick Community? Why? How do you see that evidenced in your life?

1-5	THICK COMMUNITY
	<p><b>Relational Building: Trust vs. Suspicion:</b> when conflict/tension occurs, I choose to trust the other person instead of being suspicious of that person</p>
	<p><b>Truth Telling: Honestly vs Hiding:</b> when conflict/tension occurs, I choose to speak honestly with grace and love to address it instead of withholding information or feelings from that person</p>
	<p><b>Peace Making: Dialogue vs Division:</b> when conflict/tension occurs, I choose to invest in the other person and create environments of safe and feeling dialogue instead of breeding divisive and resentful thoughts and feelings about the other person</p>