

Open Invitation

**Life Together**

<sup>1</sup> Jesus said to his disciples: “Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. <sup>2</sup> It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble. <sup>3</sup> So watch yourselves.

“If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. <sup>4</sup> Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.”

<sup>5</sup> The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”

<sup>6</sup> He replied, “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you.”

<sup>7</sup> “Suppose one of you has a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, ‘Come along now and sit down to eat’? <sup>8</sup> Won’t he rather say, ‘Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink’?”

<sup>9</sup> Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? <sup>10</sup> So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'"

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Every temptation is an opportunity to practice contentment.

“The Enemy wants them to learn to walk and must therefore take away His hand; and if only the will to walk is really there He is pleased even with their stumbles.”

(C.S. Lewis in *The Screwtape Letters*)

Don't expect there to *never* be strain, tension, or disappointment within the community of faith.

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“Make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.” (Romans 14:13)



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Here in Luke 17, rebuking is part of a relational system which includes communal practices that *protect holiness while preserving fellowship.*

To “rebuke” properly, with compassion and clarity:

“I value you, and I value our relationship, and I need you to know what you’ve done that is putting tension into a relationship that we both care about.”

“if they repent, forgive them”

“if they repent, forgive them... seven times in a day”



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The Church will be a flawed community, but it will be a forgiving community.

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"faith as small as a mustard seed"

Living with this level of obedience and forgiveness doesn't make you special. It doesn't make you a spiritual all-star. You're just doing your *duty*. It's what's simply *expected* of you, since you are a *servant*.

## Homer Jones - 1965



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“When you go into the end zone, act like you’ve been there before.”

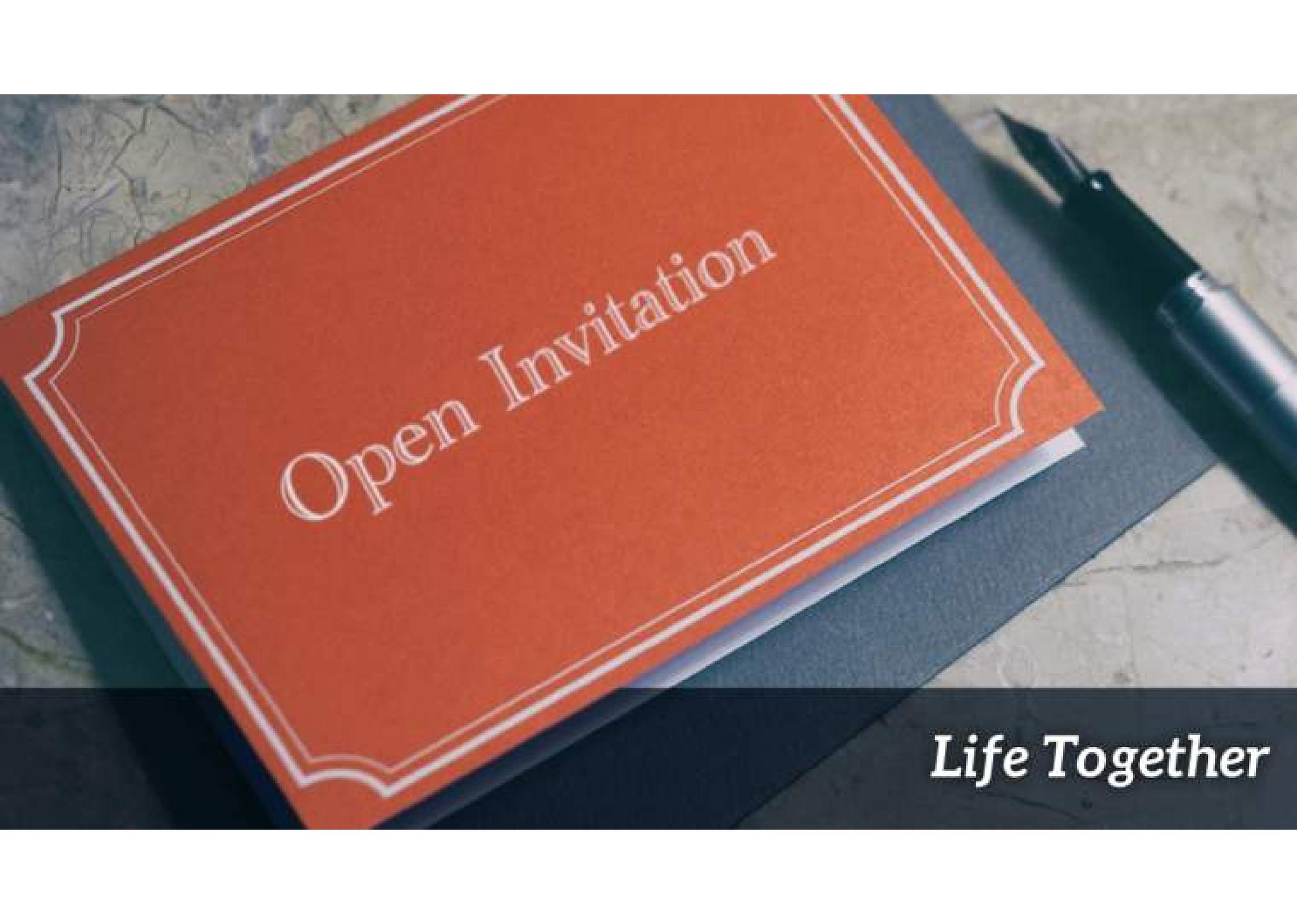
(Vince Lombardi)

Do you struggle with perfectionism when it comes to growth in Christ-likeness? Do you trust that, when the will to walk is truly there, God is pleased with your stumbles?

Invite the Spirit to help you discover if you are placing stumbling blocks or obstacles in the pathways of brothers and sisters in Christ.

Is there someone you need to rebuke because of hurt they have caused? Is there someone you need to forgive?

Ask the Spirit to keep you humble in your growth toward obedience, to regularly recall that you are merely doing your duty.

An orange envelope with the words "Open Invitation" written in white, serif font. The envelope is placed on a dark grey folder. A black fountain pen is visible on the right side of the folder. The background is a textured, light-colored surface.

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