



A Fraternity of Faith



*"Brothers in Christ seeking a life of faith in the paradox of grace"*

**CONCEPT CHARTER**

Accountability ▫ Discipleship ▫ Brotherhood ▫ Allegiance

# What is the Bronx?

*BronX* stands for “Brothers in Christ.” At its most basic level, *BronX* is an accountability group for guys. At its most mystical level it is an endeavor to launch a brotherhood of faith and partner in the life of paradoxical Christianity. Known as a “fraternity of faith,” the *BronX* takes fellowship to the next level of active partnership.

## The Fraternal Motif & Objectives

As an accountability and brotherhood group, *BronX* is a forum for a wide variety of discussions, debates and discourses. While the day-to-day subject matter will be collectively dictated by corporate convictions, shared struggles, trials of life and present needs, an over-arching motif is derived from two passages of Scripture—Galatians 5 and 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22. These two passages capture the chief objectives of this fraternal order.

### Galatians 5

- Freedom in Christ (X)
- Expressing faith through love
- Living by the Spirit
- Cultivating the fruits of the Spirit
- Destroying the “yoke of slavery”
- Running a “good race”
- Being led by the Spirit
- Crucifying the sinful nature
- Keeping in step with the Spirit

### 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

*Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.*

## The Bronx Charter Principles

To understand the purpose and functional strategy of the *BronX*, it is necessary to identify and flush out what are agreed to be key principles. These principles have shaped the model of *BronX*:

### Brotherhood — Creating a Spiritual “Phalanx”

The imagery of brotherhood chosen is that of the ancient Greek fighting formation known as a *phalanx*. Used extensively by Alexander the Great, the *phalanx* consisted of highly armored and equipped soldiers fighting in a shoulder-to-shoulder manner. It is said of the *phalanx* that, “Fighting shoulder to shoulder, the *phalanx* became a lethal porcupine that could skewer opposing troops before they could get close...through constant drilling the *phalanx* was capable of executing highly complicated maneuvers.” The *BronX* takes scriptural direction on the purpose and merit of brotherhood as highlighted in the following passages:

~ Proverbs 27:17

*As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.*

~ Ecclesiastes 4:10-12

*If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.*

~ Hebrews 10:24-25

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

## Quests — Setting Out on a Journey of Faith...A “Good Race”

Throughout Scripture, the Christian life is compared to an athletic event. Never a sprint or single show of strength—but a cross-country marathon for which extensive training/conditioning is advised and through which we are transformed. Much of the Xtian life is about seeking, running, asking, and partnering together in the “quest” for increasing intimacy with the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit. The BronX draws from the following passages as highlights of these principles in Scripture:

~ Hebrews 12:1-2

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

~ 1 Timothy 6:11-12

*But you, man of God, flee from all this [evil], and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*

~ 2 Timothy 1:6-7

*For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline.*

~ 2 Timothy 2:22-24

*Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.*

~ Matthew 7:7-8

*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.*

## Action — Static Faith is an Oxymoron

Sir Isaac Newton came to a conclusion after much study in the laws of motion, and summarized his findings in a statement known as *inertia*, “Objects at rest tend to remain at rest until acted upon by an outside force; objects in motion tend to remain in motion until impeded by an outside force.” A BronX principle is that the universal law of motion, *inertia*, applies doubly to the faithful Xtian—if action is not being taken, it will likely never happen. Static faith is absurd. The faith described by Scripture is one of action, as evidenced by these select passages:

~ 2 Timothy 3:1-2,5

*But mark this: there will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love... lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.*

~ 1 Thessalonians 5:14

*And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.*

~ 2 Thessalonians 3:11-13 [3:6-10]

*We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat. And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right.*

~ Proverbs 27:1 and James 4:13-14,17

*Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth...Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes...Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.*

## Radical Discipleship — Anything Short of Radical is Pointless

Discipleship is a critical component to the Xtian growth process as modeled and instructed by Jesus. When Christ came, He came to “seek and save the lost,” but also to call unto Himself a holy people. The New Covenant was to be “written on their hearts...They would be My people and I will be their God...They will know Me.” This revolutionary language refers to a radical discipleship—a call, a leaving and a changing into new. Discipleship must be approached with this understanding.

~ Matthew 4:19-20, 21b-22

*“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” At once they left their nets and followed him...They (James and John) were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.*

~ Matthew 10:37-39

*Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*

~ Mark 3:13

*Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him.*

~ Luke 9:60, 62

*Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God...No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the service in the kingdom of God.”*

~ Luke 14:26-27, 33

*If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple...In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.*

~ John 6:53, 57

*Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you...Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of Me.”*

## Active Accountability — Pick Up Your Brother...Don't Condemn, Redeem!

Accountability is more than being source of self-righteous condemnation for the stumbling brother. Accountability is active, it is redemptive and it is aggressive. The Bronx attempts to model an active, Christ-like accountability model by which the spiritually-handicapped brother is treated with spiritual triage. This means speaking truth to the sin in a brother's life, leading a brother through Scripture and prayer to repentant confession, and partnering with the brother to “flee from all evil” which is creating the temptation. Some passages of Scripture which illuminate this strategy include:

~ Luke 17:1,3-4

*Jesus said to His disciples, “Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come...So watch yourselves. If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.”*

~ Colossians 3:13

*Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

~ Luke 10:30, 33-35, 37

*...A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead...[A] Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. “Look after him,” he said, “and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.”...Jesus told them, “Go and do likewise.”*

## **Allegiance — Devotion and Loyalty to the Power of X**

Webster defines “allegiance” as a devotion or loyalty to persons, groups or to a cause. Within the BronX, allegiance is the shared devotion to purpose and loyalty to each other. Interests are communal—for all brothers to grow in their knowledge of grace and strength in the spirit. Self-interest and self-advancement must be checked at the door, the same as Christ calls those who seek to follow him to participate in the crucifixion of self so that we might share in His resurrection. When a brother is stumbling, it is an alarm at which we all will run to help avert. When a brother conquers barriers of flesh or grows in the Spirit, it is a victory for which all should rejoice. “All for one and one for all” may seem an altruistic cliché, but in the context of brotherhood is an essential theme. The BronX draws from Scripture again or illumination on this concept:

~ John 15:13

*Greater love has no one that this, that he lay down his life for his friends.*

~ Colossians 3:12-13, 15

*Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you...Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.*

~ Galatians 6:2-5

*Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else...*

~ 1 Samuel 18:1-4

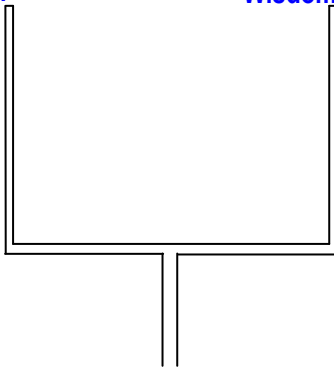
*...Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself...And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.*

# The Field-Goalpost Paradoxes

Much of the Xtian life as lived and preached by Jesus is paradoxical. Scripture teaches radical balance – delicately achieved between extreme poles. The imagery selected by *BronX* is that of a field goal post as used in Football—a fork between which you must aim between in order to actually score. To hit or go past either pole means failure. Discussion, strategies and action plans of *BronX* will strive to identify what the “poles” are and aim for the Biblical and Spirit-led “goal” is. From Scripture a number of general paradoxes are highlighted below...

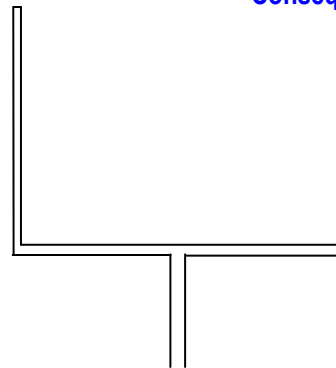
**Living by the Spirit**

**Responsible Wisdom Living**



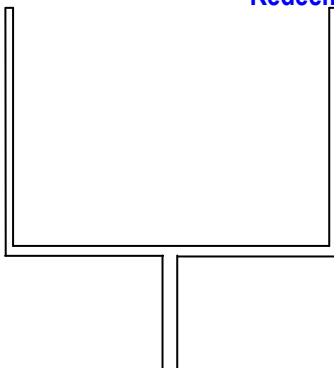
**Forgiveness of Sins**

**Accountability, Consequences**



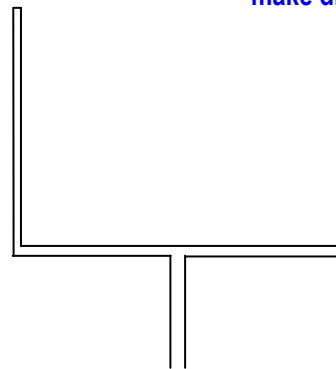
**Hate All Evil and Sin**

**Love Sinners— Redeem them**



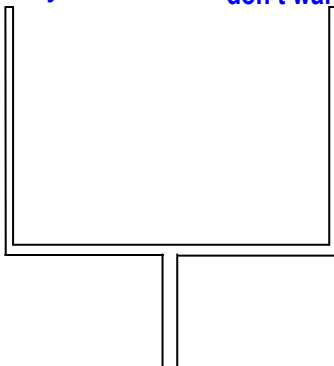
**Be still, and know that He is God**

**Go, therefore, make disciples**



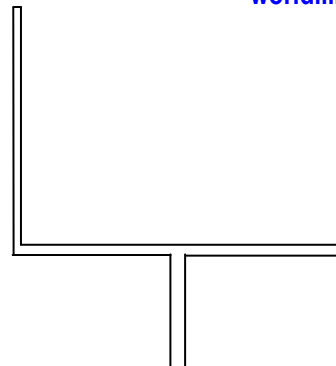
**Be ye holy, as I am holy**

**That which I do, I don't want to do...**



**Be in the world— engage the world**

**Don't be OF the world...be aliens**



# The Individual Membership Creed

Jesus said in the course of dialogue with a mixed crowd that, “A house divided will ultimately fall.” There are numerous statements, narratives and maxims of Scripture from which we could draw support for the value of unity and accord of purpose. To be unequally yoked with unbelievers in marriage is imprudent, sharing counsel with fools brings destruction and attempting brotherhood with guys of different agendas leads to potential unrealized. The BronX requires declared “membership” not for purpose of collecting dues or projecting an exclusive façade—but to protect the integrity of the group. The purpose of the membership creed is to clarify individual expectation and preserve the sanctity of the group dynamics established. A guys “accountability group” can look like many things in American church society, ranging from Bible studies, fellowship groups, discipleship groups, evangelism studies, sport nights at local gyms and the like. The spectrum of manifestations are all good and with Godly merit—but the intent should be defined and agreed upon by all participants.



## Declaration of Allegiance, Brotherhood & Fidelity To the BronX

*I, \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby attest that I have read in full the Charter of Brotherhood set forth by the BronX and resonate with the objectives set forth. As a brother in the BronX, I commit to engaging all forums with transparency, consideration, humility and love as I join with my brothers in Christ in endeavoring to follow our Savior wherever He leads. Through prayer, fellowship and relationships I commit to lifting my brothers up while I myself am humbled to be carried as well. In good faith I here sign declaring my allegiance, my brotherhood and my faithful love (1 Corinthians 13) to my fellow brothers in the BronX.*

*Signed: \_\_\_\_\_*

*On this \_\_\_\_\_ day, in the year of our Lord 200\_\_*

*Witnesses: \_\_\_\_\_*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_