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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Bereans “received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so.”

1

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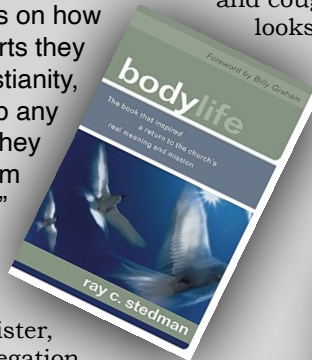
ACTS 17:11

***1 Corinthians 12:4-6
Lesson #7
Unity within Diversity
07/13/2025***

2

“Many churches (and some individual Christians) keep careful records on how many converts they make to Christianity, but never keep any of how many they drive away from Christ.”

- to show up, shut up, and cough up, as it looks busy, acts holy, and stays happy.



In too many churches, the ministers minister, and the congregation congregates -

Ray Stedman

3

Many Evangelical churches see the N.T. church as a model that we should follow, until we find out that it was confused, conflicted, and divided.

The N.T. letters were written to troubled churches that were diverse and divided



Didn't Jesus' pray that his people should be united?

4

The 21st century “church”

Catholicism - 1.2 billion

- Roman Catholic Church (Latin Rite) - 1,129.9 million
- Eastern Catholic Churches (Eastern Rite) - 17.1 million
 - Alexandrian
 - Ethiopian Catholic Church - 0.21 million
 - Coptic Catholic Church - 0.17 million
 - Antiochian (Antiochene or West Syrian)
 - Maronite Catholic Church - 3.1 million
 - Syro-Malankara Catholic Church - 0.5 million
 - Syrian Catholic Church - 0.17 million
 - Armenian
 - Armenian Catholic Church - 0.54 million
 - Chaldean (Eastern Syrian)
 - Syro-Malabar Catholic Church - 4.0 million
 - Chaldean Catholic Church - 0.65 million
- Byzantine (Constantinopolitan)
 - Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church - 4.3 million
 - Melkite Greek Catholic Church - 1.6 million
 - Romanian Church United with Rome, Greek-Catholic - 0.8 million
 - Ruthenian Catholic Church - 0.65 million
 - Slovak Greek Catholic Church - 0.37 million
 - Hungarian Greek Catholic Church - 0.29 million
 - Italo-Greek Catholic Church - 0.07 million
 - Croatian Greek Catholic Church - 0.06 million
 - Belarusian Greek Catholic Church - 0.01 million
- Bulgarian Greek Catholic Church - 0.01 million
- Georgian Byzantine Catholic Church - 0.01 million
- Macedonian Greek Catholic Church - 0.01 million
- Albanian Greek-Catholic Church - 0.01 million
- Greek Byzantine Catholic Church - 0.01 million
- Russian Catholic Church - 0.01 million
- Breakaway Catholic Churches - 28 million
 - Apostolic Catholic Church - 5 million
 - Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association - 4 million
 - Philippine Independent Church - 3 million
 - Brazilian Catholic Apostolic Church - 1 million
 - Old Catholic Church - 0.6 million
 - Mariavite Church - 0.03 million
 - Liberal Catholic Church - NA

5

Protestantism - 670 million

- Baptist churches - 105 million
 - Southern Baptist Convention - 16.3 million
 - National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. - 7.5 million
 - National Baptist Convention of America, Inc. - 5 million
 - Nigerian Baptist Convention - 5 million
 - Progressive National Baptist Convention - 2.5 million
 - American Baptist Churches USA - 1.4 million
 - Brazilian Baptist Convention - 1.4 million
 - Baptist Bible Fellowship International - 1.2 million
 - Myanmar Baptist Convention - 1.1 million
 - Baptist Community of the Congo River - 1 million
 - National Baptist Convention, Brazil - 1 million
 - National Primitive Baptist Convention of the U.S.A. - 1 million
 - National Missionary Baptist Convention of America - 1 million
 - Samavesam of Telugu Baptist Churches - 0.8 million
 - Baptist Convention of Kenya - 0.7 million
 - Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Russia - 0.6 million
- Anabaptism and Free churches - 5 million
 - Schwarzenau Brethren/German Baptist groups - 1.5 million
 - Mennonites - 1.5 million
 - Plymouth Brethren - 1 million
 - Moravians - 0.7 million
 - Amish - 0.2 million
 - Hutterites - 0.2 million
- Quakers - 0.4 million
- Waldensians - 0.05 million
- Methodism - 75 million
 - United Methodist Church - 12 million
 - African Methodist Episcopal Church - 3 million
 - Methodist Church of Great Britain - NA
 - Methodist Church Nigeria - 2 million
 - African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church - 1.5 million
 - Church of the Nazarenes - 1.9 million
 - Methodist Church of Southern Africa - 1.7 million
 - Korean Methodist Church - 1.5 million
 - United Methodist Church of Ivory Coast
 - Christian Methodist Episcopal Church - 0.9 million
 - Methodist Church Ghana - 0.8 million
 - Free Methodist Church - 0.7 million
 - Primitive Methodist Church - NA
 - Chinese Methodist Church in Australia - NA
 - Free Wesleyan Church - NA
 - Free Methodist Church in Canada - NA
 - Methodist Church in India - 0.6 million
 - Evangelical Methodist Church - NA
 - Wesleyan Church - NA
 - Wesleyan Methodist Church-Allegheny Conference - NA
 - Christ's Sanctified Holy Church - NA
- Congregationalism - 5 million
 - United Church of Christ - 1.2 million
 - Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola - 0.9 million
 - United Congregational Church of Southern Africa - 0.5 million

6

- **Lutheranism** - 87 million
 - Evangelical Church in Germany - 26.9 million
 - Church of Sweden - 6.9 million
 - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America - 4.8 million
 - Christian Evangelical Church Mekong Jesus - 4.7 million
 - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania - 4.6 million
 - Danish National Church - 4.5 million
 - Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland - 4.3 million
 - Batak Christian Protestant Church - 4 million
 - Church of Norway - 3.9 million
 - Malawian Lutheran Church - 3 million
 - Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod - 2.4 million
 - The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria - 1.7 million
 - United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India - 1.5 million
 - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea - 0.9 million
 - Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church - 0.8 million
 - Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil - 0.7 million
 - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia - 0.6 million
 - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa - 0.6 million
- **Pentecostalism** - 130 million
 - Assemblies of God - 60 million
 - New Apostolic Church - 11 million
 - International Circle of Faith - 11 million
 - The Pentecostal Mission - 10 million
 - Church of God (Cleveland) - 9 million
 - International Church of the Foursquare Gospel - 8 million
 - Church of God in Christ - 6 million
 - Apostolic Church - 5.5 million
 - Christian Congregation of Brazil - 2.5 million
 - Universal Church of the Kingdom of God - 2 million
 - Church of God of Prophecy - 1.9 million
 - God is Love Pentecostal Church - 0.8 million
 - Indian Pentecostal Church of God - NA

- **Presbyterianism** - 40 million
 - Presbyterian Church of East Africa - 4 million
 - Presbyterian Church of Africa - 3.4 million
 - Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) - 3.0 million
 - United Church of Canada - 2.5 million
 - United Church in Australia - NA
 - Presbyterian Community of Congo - 2.5 million
 - Presbyterian Church of Korea - 2.4 million
 - Presbyterian Church of Cameroon - 1.8 million
 - Church of Scotland - 1.1 million
 - Presbyterian Church of the Sudan - 1 million
 - Presbyterian Church in Cameroon - 0.7 million
 - Presbyterian Church of Brazil - 0.7 million
 - Presbyterian Church of Ghana - 0.6 million
 - Presbyterian Church of Nigeria - 0.5 million
 - United Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa - 0.5 million
 - Presbyterian Church in America - 0.3 million
- **Continental Reformed churches** - 30 million
 - Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar - 3.5 million
 - United Church of Zambia - 3.0 million
 - Protestant Church in the Netherlands - 2.5 million
 - Swiss Reformed Church - 2.4 million
 - Evangelical Church of Cameroon - 2 million
 - Protestant Evangelical Church in Timor - 2 million
 - Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa - 0.7 million
 - United Church in Papua New Guinea - 0.6 million
 - United Church of Christ in the Philippines - 0.6 million
 - Protestant Church in Western Indonesia - 0.6 million
 - Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua - 0.6 million
 - Protestant Church in the Moluccas - 0.6 million
 - Reformed Church in Hungary - 0.6 million
 - Reformed Church in Romania - 0.6 million
 - United Reformed Church in Southern Africa - 0.5 million

7

- **Non-denominational evangelicalism** - 80 million
 - Calvary Chapel - 25 million
 - Born Again Movement - 20 million
 - Association of Vineyard Churches - 15 million
 - New Life Fellowship - 10 million
 - True Jesus Church - 2.5 million
 - Charismatic Episcopal Church - NA
- **African initiated churches** - 40 million
 - Zion Christian Church - 15 million
 - Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim - 10 million
 - Kimbanguist Church - 5.5 million
 - Church of the Lord (Aladura) - 3.6 million
 - Council of African Initiated Churches - 3 million
 - Church of Christ Light of the Holy Spirit - 1.4 million
 - African Church of the Holy Spirit - 0.7 million
 - African Israel Ninivah Church
- **Seventh-day Adventist Church** - 17 million

- **Restoration Movement** - 7 million
 - Churches of Christ - 5 million
 - Christian Churches and Churches of Christ - 1.1 million
 - Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) - 0.7 million
- **Nontrinitarianism** - 27.5 million
 - Latter Day Saint movement (Mormonism) - 14.1 million
 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints - 13.8 million
 - Community of Christ - 0.25 million
 - Jehovah's Witnesses - 7.3 million
 - Iglesia ni Cristo - 6 million
 - Oneness Pentecostalism - 6 million
 - United Pentecostal Church International - 4 million
 - Pentecostal Assemblies of the World - 1.5 million
 - Church of Christ, Scientist - 0.4 million
 - Friends of Man - 0.07 million
 - Christadelphians - 0.05 million

- **Anglicanism** - 82 million
 - Anglican Communion - 80 million
 - Church of Nigeria - 18 million
 - Church of England - 13.4 million
 - Church of Uganda - 8.8 million
 - Church of South India - 3.8 million
 - Anglican Church of Australia - 3.7 million
 - Episcopal Church in the Philippines - 3.0 million
 - Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia - 2.5 million
 - Anglican Church of Tanzania - 2.5 million
 - Episcopal Church of the United States - 2.2 million
 - Anglican Church of Canada - 2.0 million
 - Anglican Church of Kenya - 1.5 million
 - Church of North India - 1.3 million
 - Church of the Province of Rwanda - 1 million
 - Church of Pakistan - 0.8 million
 - Anglican Church of Burundi - 0.8 million
 - Church of the Province of Central Africa - 0.6 million
 - Church of Christ in Congo-Anglican Community of Congo - 0.5 million
 - Scottish Episcopal Church - 0.4 million
 - Church of Ireland - 0.4 million
 - Continuing Anglican movement - 1.5 million
 - Traditional Anglican Communion - 0.5 million
 - Anglican Church in North America - 0.1 million
 - African Orthodox Church - NA
- **Nestorianism** - 1 million
 - Assyrian Church of the East - 0.5 million
 - Ancient Church of the East - 0.3 million

8

Eastern Orthodoxy - 210 million

- **Autocephalous churches**
 - Russian Orthodox Church - 125 million
 - Romanian Orthodox Church - 18 million
 - Serbian Orthodox Church - 15 million
 - Church of Greece - 11 million
 - Bulgarian Orthodox Church - 10 million
 - Georgian Orthodox Church - 5 million
 - Greek Orthodox Church of Constantinople - 3.5 million
 - Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch - 2.5 million
 - Greek Orthodox Church of Alexandria - 1.5 million
 - Orthodox Church in America - 1.2 million
 - Polish Orthodox Church - 1 million
 - Albanian Orthodox Church - 0.8 million
 - Cypriot Orthodox Church - 0.7 million
 - Greek Orthodox Church of Jerusalem - 0.14 million
 - Czech and Slovak Orthodox Church - 0.07 million
- **Autonomous churches**
 - Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) - 7.2 million
 - Maldivian Orthodox Church - 3.2 million
 - Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia - 1.25 million
 - Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia - 0.82 million
 - Orthodox Church of Antioch - 0.34 million
 - Estonian Orthodox Church - 0.3 million
 - Patriarchal Exarchate in Western Europe - 0.15 million
 - Finnish Orthodox Church - 0.08 million
 - Chinese Orthodox Church - 0.03 million
 - Japanese Orthodox Church - 0.02 million
 - Latvian Orthodox Church - 0.02 million
- **Non-universally recognized churches**
 - Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kyiv Patriarchate) - 5.5 million
 - Belarusian Autocephalous Orthodox Church - 2.4 million
 - Macedonian Orthodox Church - 2 million
 - Orthodox Church of Greece (Holy Synod in Resistance) - 0.75 million
 - Old Calendar Romanian Orthodox Church - 0.50 million
 - Old Calendar Bulgarian Orthodox Church - 0.45 million
 - Croatian Orthodox Church - 0.36 million
 - Montenegrin Orthodox Church - 0.05 million
 - Orthodox Church in Italy - 0.12 million
- **Other separated Orthodox groups**
 - Old Believers - 1.8 million
 - Greek Old Calendarists - 0.86 million
 - Russian True Orthodox Church - 0.85 million
- **Oriental Orthodoxy** - 75 million
 - **Autocephalous churches in communion**
 - Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church - 45 million
 - Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria - 15.5 million
 - Syriac Orthodox Church - 10 million
 - Armenian Orthodox Church - 8 million
 - Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church - 2.5 million
 - Indian (Malankara) Orthodox Church - 2 million
 - Armenian Orthodox Church of Cilicia - 1.5 million
 - **Autonomous churches in communion**
 - Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church - 1.2 million
 - Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople - 0.42 million
 - Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem - 0.34 million
 - French Coptic Orthodox Church - 0.01 million
 - British Orthodox Church - 0.01 million
 - **Churches not in communion**
 - Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church - 1.1 million
 - Malabar Independent Syrian Church - 0.06 million

9

Issues that have divided local churches:

- Politics
- Holy Spirit filling
- Race and Social Justice
- Sexuality and Gender
- Traditions in worship etc.
- Personality
- Cultural tastes



These can be damaging if not managed well
or they can be edifying if responded to wisely.

10

The 12 disciples were remarkably diverse

Some (Peter, Andrew, James, John) were **working class fisherman**.
Matthew was a tax collector or **Roman collaborator**.
Simon the Zealot was a part of the **Roman resistance**.
Paul was a **Pharisee**.

Peter was **bold & impulsive**, John was **warm & relational**,
Thomas was **cautious & skeptical**, Philip was **analytical & practical**,
Judas was **selfish & unfaithful**

John 13

“34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 **By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**”

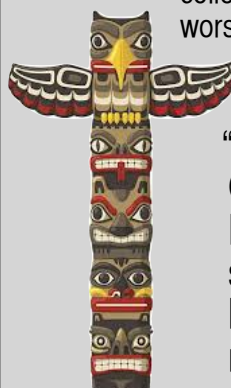
1 Corinthians 1:26-31

“not many wise according to the flesh”

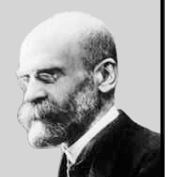
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“The idea of god was nothing more than a symbolic representation of the collective values of the society that worships itself through him, she, or it.”

Emile Durkheim
1858-1917



“Genesis tells us that God created man in His image. History suggests that man has been trying to return the favor.”



12

One of God's principle tools in bringing people closer to Christ **is in how His people respond to those who bear God's image in ways that differ from them.**

Luke 6:32

"And if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For **even sinners love those who love them.**"

Matthew 25:40

"Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, **even the least of them, you did it to Me.**"

13

Another of God's principle tools in bringing people closer to Christ **is in how His people respond to life's (thorns in the flesh) circumstances.**

Matthew 5:16

"**Let your light shine before men** in such a way that they may **see your good works**, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

Philippians 4:11

"Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to **be content in whatever circumstances** I am."

14

A third tool that God uses in bringing people closer to Christ **is the bold, sensitive, and respectful way His people share the Gospel story.**

1 Peter 3:15

"but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being **ready to make a defense** to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence"

Romans 12:18

"If possible, so far as it depends on you, **be at peace with all men.**"

15

Bereans "fact check" traditions to see if they are the emphasis of Scriptural teaching.

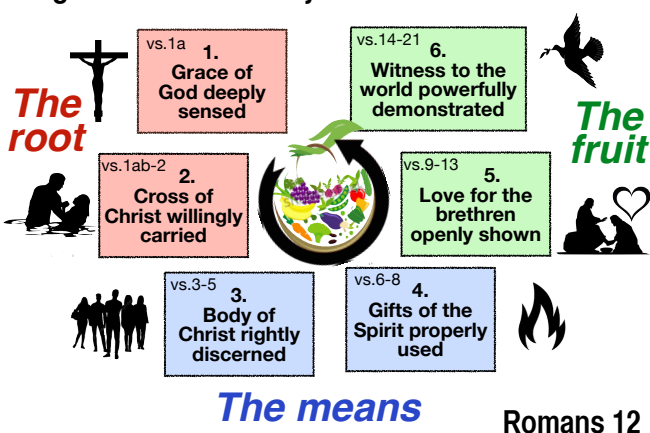
There are three passages of Apostolic teaching that should get our attention with respect to the nature & calling of the church in this world.



Romans 12
Ephesians 4
1 Corinthians 12-15:11

16

A guide to "Community" formation & function.



17

Romans 12

"1 I urge you therefore, brethren, **by the mercies of God**, to present your bodies a **living and holy sacrifice**, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do **not be conformed to this world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

1. Take our baptism seriously

Dying to our old self & worldly values and living for and in Christ.

The church must resist the temptation to be a business - competitive, numbers oriented, and afraid of conflict that comes with diversity.

18

Baptism is the ticket to Body Life.

If we don't take it seriously we will not
and cannot live out the Body of Christ.

Know yourself
Accept yourself
Get over yourself
Give yourself

Wisdom - Listen, learn, and love

How a church manages diversity will
tell you a lot about its authenticity
and spiritual health.

19

Romans 12

"3 For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you **not to think more highly of himself than he ought** to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. 4 For just as we have many members in **one body and all the members do not have the same function**, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another."

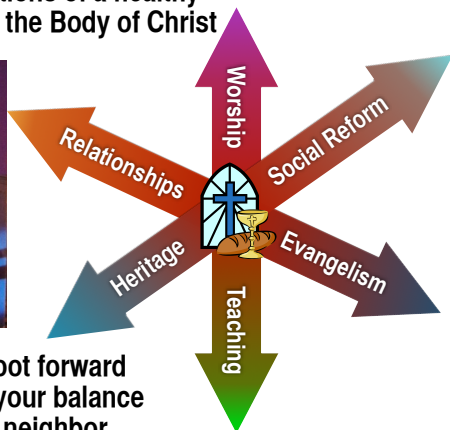
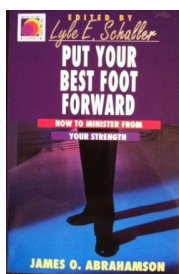
2. Grow antenna, not horns as we face diversity.

We are each both NEEDED & NEEDY.

We are stressed & stretched by our differences.

20

Six basic functions of a healthy community as the Body of Christ



Put your best foot forward
without losing your balance
or kicking your neighbor

21

"4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function,"

A living sacrifice means respect for Diversity.

- We share a common Spirit but not a common perspective, function, or role in ministry.
- Don't kick your neighbor because he or she plays a different instrument in God's orchestra or a different function in Christ's body.
- Don't lose your balance and reduce the whole Christian life to your particular ministry preferences.

22

1 Corinthians 12

"4 Now there are varieties of **gifts**, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are varieties of **ministries**, and the same Lord. 6 And there are varieties of **effects**, but the same God who works all things in all persons."

Rom. 12:6-8

- Prophecy
- Serving
- Teaching
- Exhortation
- Giving
- Leadership
- Mercy

1 Cor. 12:8-10

- Word of wisdom
- Word of knowledge
- Faith
- Gifts of healings
- Miracles
- Prophecy
- Distinguishing spirits
- Tongues
- Interpreting tongues

1 Cor. 12:28

- Apostle
- Prophet
- Teacher
- Miracles
- Kinds of healings
- Helps
- Administration
- Tongues

Eph. 4:11

- Apostle
- Prophet
- Evangelist
- Pastor
- Teacher

The point is **DIVERSITY**
in ability, opportunity, and experience.

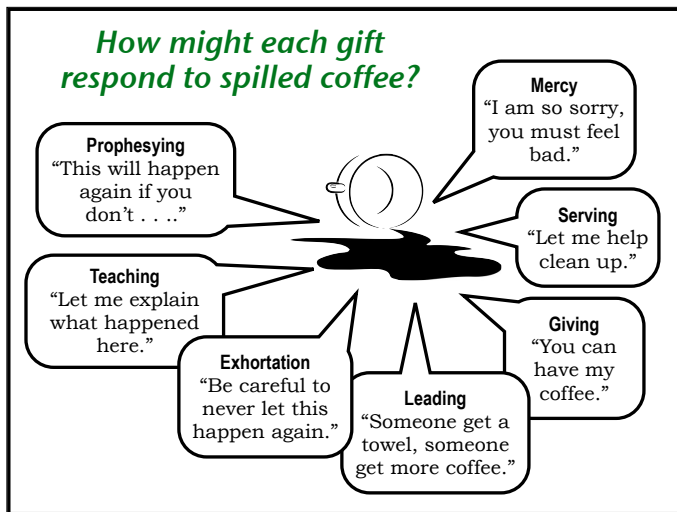
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Romans 12

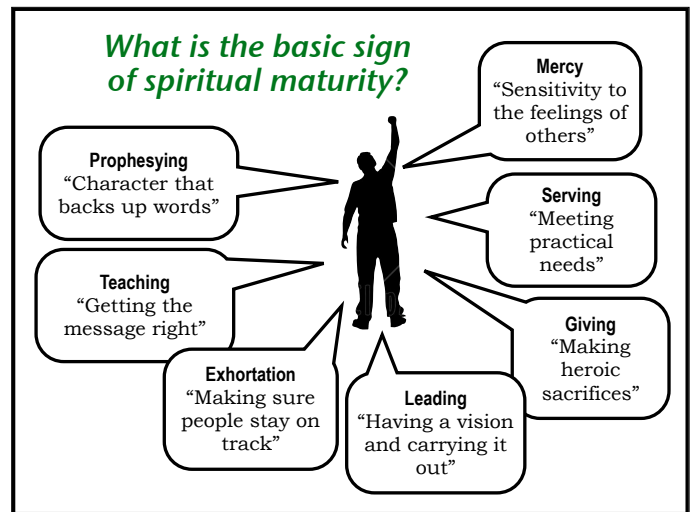
"6 And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if **prophecy**, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if **service**, in his serving; or he who **teaches**, in his teaching; 8 or he who **exhorts**, in his exhortation; he who **gives**, with liberality; he who **leads**, with diligence; he who **shows mercy**, with cheerfulness."



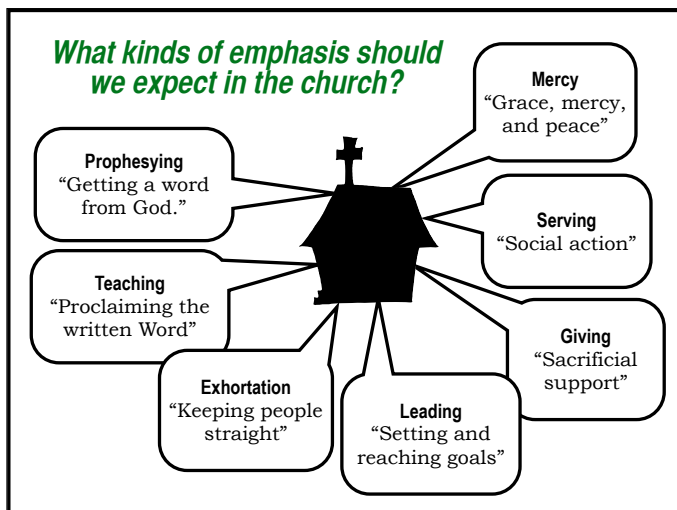
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25



26



27

3. Keep the main thing, the main thing.

(!) (.) (,) (?)

1 Corinthians 13:12

"For now we see in a **mirror** dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but **then I shall know fully** just as I also have been fully known."

Convictions can bring conflict that should lead to comprehension, cooperation, & community, but not combat.

28

Closing thoughts

- Take your baptism seriously.** Don't confuse a necessary culture war with the world and an unnecessary civil war within the church.
- View differences as opportunities** to grow in wisdom and witness to the world.
- Grow antenna not horns.** Listen, question, seek trusted leader's advice, work for consensus, and act in good faith.
- Remember that we are **both "needed" & "needy"**.
- Major on majors, minor on minors.** Lighten up.

When we keep the main thing the main thing, the rest works out well.

29

Hard Questions

The illustration shows a man and a woman standing in front of a large, open book. The man is holding a sign that says "Next week 2 Tim.2:15" and the woman is holding a sign that says "Rightly dividing the word of truth".

30