

November 22/23, 2014

God's Strategy for Presenting Every Person Complete in Christ

The Truth about our Life in Christ

Ephesians 4:7-16

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Opening Discussion

1. Talk about the various ministries where you have served in the local church. How did your service affect your own personal growth? How did you contribute to the growth of others?
2. Do you think “playing your instrument” in God’s orchestra is limited to what happens on the church campus or does it include everything you do? Explain your answer.
3. Do you think it is possible to mature in your walk with Christ without being involved in service? Why or why not?
4. What are some ways you’re currently serving others that isn’t related to your job or your family?

Bible Study

1. Read Ephesians 4:1-6 to pick up the flow of thought in the chapter. Paul implores us to preserve on earth the unity that is true of us in the heavenlies. How would you define unity? What is the difference between unity and uniformity?
2. Verses 8-10 are loosely taken from Psalm 68. Christ as the triumphant King gives gifts to His people as a celebration of his great victory. Read John 3:13 and notice similar language referring to Jesus having descended from Heaven in His incarnation. There is no biblical support for interpreting these verses as Jesus descending into Hell. There was no need for Jesus to enter Hell. The redemption was completed on the cross with the words “it is finished.” The focus of these verses relates to the victorious King giving gifts to celebrate His great victory.

According to verse 11 what are these gifts from Christ?

3. According to verses 12, 13 what is the purpose of these gifts?

4. According to verses 11-12 what is the role of the pastor and who are the ministers in the church? How does this affect your understanding of your calling in the church? Are you really a volunteer just because you aren't getting paid for your service? When you stand before God and give an account, do you think He will consider your calling a "volunteer" position? Paul referred to his calling as a "stewardship" in 3:2. What is required of a steward (1 Cor. 4:1, 2)?
5. Verse 13 alludes to the fact that we need each other to become complete or "mature" in Christ. The truth is that we are filled with the fullness of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23). However, to walk worthy of that truth we must serve and be served in the body of Christ. Then we will attain ... to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. Why do you think we can only really grow to completeness in community with one another?

If this is true, what is our responsibility to others who attend but aren't plugged into service in order to see them presented complete in Christ? How can we help move people from attenders to ministers in the body of Christ?

6. According to verses 14 and 15, what is the difference between a mature (complete) person and an immature person? Can a Christian reach maturity in Christ detached from the body of Christ? Why or why not?
7. How does verse 16 tie into verses 4-6? Summarize what you've learned in 4:1-16.

Application

1. If there are any in the group who are not involved in service, have the group suggest what they've observed as far as giftedness, and where this person might use this giftedness in the church. Remember service takes place on and off the campus of LBC.
2. If everyone in your group is involved in service, discuss three practical things your group could do to get others involved in service in the body.
3. To fulfill the calling of this text one must reflect the heart of a servant rather than the heart of a consumer. Discuss the difference and assess how you are doing in this area.