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Review - We see 7 essential characteristics in scripture that provide a dashboard for telling us how we are doing as Jesus' church.

Review: Abiding - Reaching—Connecting—Chasing the strays—Shepherding towards spiritual maturity

## Essential 6 & 7 - Identify, Equip & Release Leaders/Function As A Team

Ephesians 4:1-13 (NIV) <sup>1</sup> As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. <sup>2</sup> Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. <sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. <sup>7</sup> But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. <sup>8</sup> This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people." <sup>9</sup> (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? <sup>10</sup> He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) <sup>11</sup> So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

### 1. A call for unity in the church - relationally and corporately

- When the Lord invites us into relationship with Him, we are joined to the body of Christ.
- As we walk in relationship with other Christians, our growth process is to become more and more balanced between what we believe and what we actually live out relationally. Vs. 1-2
- Our maturity is demonstrated by our unity and love for others. Vs. 3
- We have unity because of what we share in common. Vs. 4-6

John 17:20-21 (NIV) <sup>20</sup> "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, <sup>21</sup> that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

- Unity in the church is essential for people to see who Jesus truly is.

### 2. How God brings unity into the church

- Through spiritual gifts

Ephesians 4:7 (NIV) But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

- Grace is the basis for God giving spiritual gifts, not earned but given freely by God for His purposes.
- Vs. 11 says some are called and gifted to be leaders/equippers.

1 Timothy 4:15-16 (NIV) <sup>15</sup> Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. <sup>16</sup> Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

- Paul instructs Timothy to be devoted to the ministry he was given and equipped to carry out.

2 Timothy 2:2 (NIV) And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

- Timothy's role in leadership is to equip people for ministry who can equip others.
- As a church our essential #6 is to identify, equip and release leaders for the purpose of preparing the body for works of service.

- The result is the whole body of Christ reaches unity in faith, maturing to be like Christ in every way.

1 Corinthians 1:10-13 (NIV) <sup>10</sup> I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. <sup>11</sup> My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. <sup>12</sup> What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ." <sup>13</sup> Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?

- Leaders are equippers who understand their role is to equip the body of Christ so that the world sees Jesus as He really is.
- Becoming mature in Christ enables you to be a team player, as a leader and a follower.
- While not all of us are gifted as church leaders, all are gifted and called to contribute with our gifts/talents within the church body.

### 3. In every case with every gift - Jesus is the one we glorify

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 (ESV) <sup>4</sup> Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup> and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup> and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. <sup>7</sup> To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

- God gives different gifts for the common good of the church body. We are to grow and mature spiritually, using these gifts to serve, minister and build others up in Christ Jesus. Acts 6

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 (NIV) <sup>12</sup> For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. <sup>14</sup> Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

- The church is a community that is developing people who follow Jesus, are being changed by Jesus, and then join Him on His mission.

Ephesians 4:13 (NIV) until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

- We all need to value each other and respect our various roles. Staying unified, we are called to collaborate with one another. Our collective goal is to bring Jesus glory.

### For Small Group Discussion

#### Questions:

1. Do you actively seek unity with other Christians? How?
2. Do you need to, so far as it depends on you, make effort to be at peace with all men? If so, what do you think Christ would have you do? Romans 12:18
3. Do you appreciate the different giftings within different people; or are you jealous of others? What would God have you do in response?
4. What are you doing to help equip others and are you being equipped yourself?

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