

T.E.A.M. WORKS IN THE CHURCH

Identity vs. WEidentity

Ephesians 4:1-16

Together

Everyone

Accomplishes

More

5. Delight in the truth that God has Gifted you.

An Old Testament verse that shows Jesus' plan to give spiritual gifts to the church.

A reference to Jesus' superiority to the Ephesian goddess Diana – who was said to have descended from heaven at the very spot of the temple. Jesus not only descended... He ascended!

One of the few references in the Bible to Jesus descending into hell. (lower, earthly regions)

Remember: the point of these verses is not to emphasize Diana and the lower regions. The point is: Jesus has used an awesome display of His mighty power to give each one of us His gifts!

6. Depend on God Given Leaders who can help you to develop your God given gifts.

“to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” Eph. 4:12 (NIV)

“Each of you has received a gift to use to serve others. Be good servants of God's various gifts of grace.” 1 Pet. 4:10 (NCV)

“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.” Eph. 4:13 (NIV)

“And I am sure that God who began the good work within you will keep right on helping you grow in His grace until His task within you is finally finished on that day when Jesus Christ returns.”

Phil. 1:6 (TLB)

“And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.” Eph. 1:22-23 (NIV)

7. Decide to use your gifts to Serve others.

“Nothing is more foreign to the New Testament than the idea that spiritual gifts are to be exercised privately, or that the individual receives them for personal enrichment.” Ralph Neighor

“Spiritual Gifts are not toys to play with. They are not weapons to fight with. They are tools to build with.” Warren Wiersby

“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.” Eph. 4:14 (NIV)

“Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly – mere infants in Christ.” 1 Cor. 3:1

“Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.” Heb. 5:12-14 (NIV)

Christian Growth is the process of moving from Spiritual Infancy to Spiritual Maturity.

INFANCY

MATURITY

GROWTH STEPS

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| I am Consumed by Possessions | I am Content with Possessions |
| I am Selfish in Relationships | I am Sacrificing in Relationships |
| My Body is MY Business | My Body is HIS Temple |
| Prayer is an infrequent cry for help | Prayer is a constant act of trust |
| Work expresses my Worth | Work expresses my Worship |
| Problems are destroying me | Problems are developing me |
| I seldom handle the Bible | I accurately handle the Bible |
| Time is spent wastefully | Time is spent wisely |

Immature churches and immature people are controlled by three things:

1. Circumstances “tossed back and forth by the waves”
2. New Ideas “Every wind of teaching”

Jesus described His teaching as a rock...
Paul describes false teaching as a “wind.”

3. Selfish People “The cunning and craftiness of men.”

“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ.” Eph. 4:15 (NIV)

“From Him the whole body joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” Eph. 4:16 (NIV)

“Then... you will know how to live in the family of God. That family is the church of the living God, the support and foundation of the truth.” 1 Tim. 3:15 (NCV)

The picture of a mature Christian/church
Mature Churches and people give control to Christ in three areas.

Notice: are controlled by or give control to. We don't control our own destiny. We DO get to choose who or what will control our destiny!

Our Communication

How we talk

False teachers don't do that... they tell you what you want to hear, not what you need to hear. That's why they can be so attractive.

Our Direction

How we decide

Our Service

How we work

“It's one thing to bring an individual to maturity...but an entirely different thing to bring a team to maturity.”

If our world is to see a real picture of what God is doing it needs to see considerably more than individual people finding a panacea for their individual ills. It deserves to be shown a unique society of totally diverse people so united in Christ, that they are working in many ways through their God-given gifts to build up individuals and produce an alternative society that is becoming increasingly mature and more attractive. This is the totally different thing that our society needs to see and which our God is committed to show them.

Stuart Briscoe