

Signs of Maturity

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I. Greatest problem in churches today is a lack of leadership.

A. The two greatest causative factors in the employment problem.

1. The average leader is neither trained nor equipped to fulfill Ephesians 4.

2. Lack of insightful and mature leadership.

a. Men who have heavy responsibility are small men.

b. Leaders produce after their own kind.

II. Background facts.

A. Distinguishing between spirituality and maturity.

1. Spirituality is the control of the believer by the Spirit - a new born believer can experience this.

2. Maturity has to do with the cultivation of the Spirit - this demands time.

a. Hebrews 5: when by virtue of the passing of time some should be communicators, they need to be communicated to.

b. When the Scripture calls someone a babe, it is referring to his lack of receptivity to the Word, which requires time.

c. Time is of the essence to develop mature believers.

B. Salvation affects the whole of a man. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

1. When Christ is in you, you become a new Christian in every area of life.

2. The great tragedy of life is that the conversion of the life is only partial.

a. Spirituality becomes compartmentalized.

b. Religious activity is engaged by the man, but large areas of his life are never affected.

3. Christianity is dynamic - it needs to move into every area of your life.

4. Christianity is a process - it needs to invade every area of life.

III. Marks of maturity.

A. Discernment. (1 Corinthians 2:15)

1. The spiritual man judges all things.

a. This does not mean that he is a know-it-all.

b. He discerns things if he is under the spirit of God.

c. The nonbeliever cannot discern.

2. The spiritual man is discerned.

3. The spiritual man has the mind of Christ.

a. This man has discernment concerning himself.

1) Personal example: missionary interviewees fail to produce their greatest assets and their greatest weaknesses.

2) The highest mark of maturity comes from the man who knows his greatest strengths and greatest weaknesses.

3) Humility does not deny this - there are two sides to pride: thinking too much or too little of oneself.

4) Think soberly of oneself.

b. The man has discernment concerning others.

1) Barnabus's search for Saul discerning his giftedness.

2) Example of seeking others to do the appropriate job even at one's own cost positionally.

3) Everyone has been given gifts and those men have been given to the church.

B. Your reaction to criticism. (Isaiah 54:17)

1. Personal example of a student's wife who couldn't take criticism.

2. Some of the greatest growth has come through constructive criticism.

3. The ministry will be filled with it.

C. Adjustment. (Philippians 4:11)

1. The average person is masterful at adjusting the circumstances rather than adjusting to them.

2. Changing your location does not change your problem.

3. Only when you adjust to your problem do you really solve your problem. Ask yourself, what problem are you solving this week?

D.. Balance.

1. You do not need to do anything to become an extremist. Just keep going the way you are and you will become one.

2. Balance is always produced by the Spirit of God.

3. Personal example of woman in a mental institution who had no balance in Bible reading - she was pushed to the extreme.

4. It is not better to burn out than rust out - we are called to "live out."

IV. Question and Answers.

A. Greatest need in Christian Education.

1. Leadership problems. The average church is run by 15% of its leadership.

2. 100% of God's people have a gift.

3. Every church has two groups: pillars who support it and caterpillars who fill it up.

B. Greatest need in the Sunday morning worship service.

1. To worship - worship is a personal response to a divine revelation. You have not worshipped until you have responded.

C. Is it okay for the preacher to estimate a congregation bigger than it is?

1. This undermines your testimony. If you cannot trust a pastor when telling the numbers truthfully, how can you trust him for anything else? A subtle form of lying that is bred from insecurity.

2. The church is chock full of self-appointed fruit inspectors.

3. There are too many people that are too sensitive to the things of people.

4. Ephesians 6:1: pride is the great danger here.

D. God's standard on dating and what is permissible before marriage.

1. Every Christian principle that is standard to Christian living is the standard that should be pursued during dating.

2. The engagement period is a period of transition.

3. When you are ready to get married, there should be a natural, logical transition that occurs.
4. If there is anything that you cannot discuss before marriage, then you are not ready for marriage.
5. The great demands of communication in marriage demands that some preparation would take place prior to marriage.

E. [missing question concerning bringing offense to others].

1. If you are going to work with people you are going to have problems.
2. Try to maintain a positive attitude.

F. Is it proper as a Christian to use a friend's discount?

1. It is not proper to bootleg off of other's privileges.

G. What is a Christian's obligation in giving to the community.

1. We are obligated to give when we can so as not to bring offense to the gospel, but we first have a responsibility to the family of the faith.

G. A Christian's responsibility in voting.

1. In part, no one can be an authority in all of the bills put out.
2. It is also a shoddy testimony to nonbelievers when believers do not show up at the poles.

Application Questions:

1. What is the difference between spirituality and maturity? According to the speaker, how do they relate? What are the implications of this separation?

2. The speaker asked the audience what question they were solving this week. Is there any issue that you are trying to resolve? What issue can you set yourself to addressing in your own spiritual walk this week?

3. Which mark of maturity stood out to you the most? How can you begin pursuing or continue to pursue this characteristic? Be specific.
