“GOD’S DIVINE BLUEPRINT”

Text: Ephesians 4:7-16

Subject: God’s Way To Grow Healthy People And A Healthy Church

Introduction

Fact: God’s ultimate will for you and His church is one agenda, “make disciples”.
“Therefore go and make disciples.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

Fact: A disciple is clearly described in Scripture
1. A disciple is a believer. (Acts 16:30-20)
2. A disciple is a learner. (II Timothy 2:15)
3. A disciple is a follower. (Matthew 16:24)
4. A disciple is a witness. (I Peter 3:15)
5. A disciple is a reproducer. (Matthew 28:19)

Fact: The purpose of growing healthy disciples is...
- To enable people to reproduce after Christ’s kind.
- To see people go from consumers to producers.
- To watch people’s mindset grow from “What’s in it for me?” to “What’s in it for God?”

Fact: The biblical (acts 2) way to make disciples is...
- Reach people through our existing web of relationships.
- Teach people the Word to grow and mature.
- Train leaders to minister in small groups.
- Build community through establishing small groups (to connect people with people).

Question: Why do spiritually healthy people love to give and serve and disciple others?
Answer: Because healthy Christians look beyond “events” that bring crowds (to the “process” that builds disciples).
- Healthy saints want spiritual substance – not vanity fair!
- Healthy saints want internal change – not just good feelings!
- Healthy saints want lasting fruit – not just busy activity!
- Healthy saints want God’s glory – not ego gratification!
- Healthy saints want Christ like character – not performance!

Fact: Ephesians 4:7-16 is God’s blueprint to grow a healthy person (and a healthy church).
Fact: Ephesians chapters 1-3 deal with doctrine (chapters 4-6 deal with duty).
Fact: Chapters 1-3 reveal our wealth as believers (chapters 4-6 reveal our walk as believers).

♦ In 4:1-16, How to walk in unity.
♦ In 4:17- 5:17, How to walk in purity.
♦ In 5:18 – 6:9, How to walk in harmony.
♦ In 6:10 – 24, How to walk in victory.

Question: What has God given us to be healthy believers? Answer: Two things:
1. (V. 7) God has given us His “grace”.
2. (V. 11) God has given us His “gifts”.

1. We’ve been given “grace”:
“But unto every one of us is given grace.” (v. 7, which means):
God has distributed (to every believer) His grace to function somewhere.
God has given you a gift to minister (and the enablement to use that gift),
God has willed it that every believer have a contribution to invest in his Kingdom.

**Question**: “But pastor, I don’t deserve this.”

**Answer**: (v. 7) “According to the measure of the gift of Christ” means:
- It is a gift (or, Jesus purchased your gift by his merits at Calvary (not yours)

(We’ve All Been Given “Grace”)

2. **We’ve been given “gifts”**:  
“And he (Jesus) gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.” (v. 11)

**Fact**: God reveals five gifts He has given to His church (for an intentional purpose).
- **Apostles** – those who go into virgin territory to plant a new body of believers.
- **Prophets** – those who proclaim God’s Word to warn and awaken the body of Christ.
- **Evangelists** – those called specifically to bring unbelievers to decisions.
- **Pastors** – those called to assume long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a local body of believers.
- **Teachers** – those gifted by God to clarify and communicate the truth so that others can learn it, apply it and grow.

The question is:
- Why has God given us **grace** (undeserved favor to grow us and be fruitful)?
- Why has God given us **gifts** (spiritual leaders to lead, feed and protect the flock of God)?

(In other words)

**Question**: What is to be the end result of **gifts** and **grace**?

**Answer**: The end result is something that leaves us healthy and fruitful.

1. **You Are “Prepared”** (V. 12)
   “To prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.”

**Question**: Why has God given us **grace** and **gifts**?

**Answer**: To **perfect** (prepare) God’s people for **service**.

**Fact**: The Greek word for perfect (KATARTISMOΣ) means:
- To equip and prepare
- To make whole and complete
- To restore to its original condition.

**Question**: Why has God given us his **grace** (v. 7) and spiritual leaders (v. 11)?

**Answer**: “To prepare us for the **work of the ministry**”.

(In other words)
- Healthy sheep want to be taught and trained to minster to people and,
Healthy shepherds (who are secure in God) don’t want to do it all, but want to equip a great team to minister to people.

(In other words)

Spiritual leaders have **two choices:**
1. Try to do it all by themselves, thus failing to equip others and burning themselves out. (**Restricting** people) or,
2. Pray, study and equip the saints to serve. (**Releasing** people.)

**Question:** What happens if the leader prepares the people to serve and minister?  
**Answer:** (V. 12c) “...So that the body of Christ may be built up.”

**Which means:**
- The body will be built up and edified!
- The body will grow healthy and strong!
- The body will see the reward of needs being met!

II. You Are “Perfected” (V. 13)

“Until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a **perfect** (mature) man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

**Question:** Why has God given us grace and gifts (spiritual favor and spiritual leaders)?  
**Answer:** Three reasons in verse 13:
1. “**To be unified in the faith**” (which means to come into agreement with the Word).
2. “**To know Jesus better**” (which means to grow and grow and grow into a deeper relationship with Jesus).
3. “**To be perfected**” “Attaining the full measure of perfection.” V. 13)

**Question:** What is “perfection” in verse 13?  
**Answer:** The word “perfection” means: “mature and whole”.  
- It isn’t a sinless perfection, but a state of spiritual adulthood in comparison to childhood in Christian living.

**Question:** Why desire to become perfected?  
**Answer:** (V. 13) “…unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

(Which means)
- To advance in godliness to **become wholly like Jesus.** (Repeat)

(In other words)
- God pours out grace and puts spiritual leaders in our lives – **to help us become more like Jesus!**

**What a revelation of truth here**  
(That kingdom minded growing disciples never pray)  
✧ “Entertain me today.”  
✧ “Pamper me today.”  
✧ “Tell me stories today.”

**Instead** (Kingdom minded healthy disciples say):
1. “Holy Spirit, talk to me about anything in my life that is not like Jesus.” (and)
2. “Pastor, teach me the pure Word of God so that I can advance in godliness of life.”

**Why pray this?**

1. So that we can be *prepared* for service.
2. So that we can be *perfected* into the image of Jesus.

**III. You Are “Protected:” (V. 14)**

“Then we will *no longer be children* tossed back and forth by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.”

**Question:** Why has God given us his grace (v. 7) and His gifts of spiritual leadership (v. 11)?

**Answer:** 1. To prepare us for service.
2. To perfect us into the likeness of Jesus.
3. To *protect* us from being led astray.

**Question:** What is it that God wants to protect us from?

**Four dangers in verse 14:**

1. **“Winds of doctrine”** (which is)
   - Some religious fashion (teaching) that appeals to the flesh and seems to be blowing most strongly at the time.
2. **“The sleight of men”** (which is)
   - Trickery and fraud to take advantage of another.
3. **“Cunning craftiness”** (which is)
   - To be manipulated by error that looks like truth.
4. **“Deception”** (which means)
   - To use pretense to lead someone astray.

**What a revelation here:**

That God has given us spiritual leaders to protect us (with the truth).

- From religious hucksters who prey on people
- From charlatans, merchandisers and false prophets.
- From religious fads that come and go.
- From chasing after novelty and the sensational.
- From anything that doesn’t promote godliness of life.

**Remember:** To the extent that man is seen – God isn’t!!!

**IV. You Are Progressive” (V. 15)**

“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things *grow up into Him* who is the Head, that is Christ.”

**Question:** What does it mean to “speak the truth in love”?

**Answer:** The Greek word for speak is (ALETHEUO) which means:

- ♦ To speak and act truthfully (and) ♦ To be truthful at all times

**Question:** How are we to speak (and live) the truth?
Question: What causes someone to be harsh and abrasive?

Answer: Unresolved injury and issues internally. (James 4:1-3)

Question: How can you be healed?

Answer: Only by accepting full responsibility for what's inside of you!

Remember:
- To the degree I blame someone else for what’s inside of me, to that same degree I will not be changed and cannot be healed. (Repeat)
- It is pride that justifies holding onto past offences (pride blames its condition on what someone else has done). (Repeat)

Question: Why is this “truth and love” issue so important?

Answer: The rest of verse 15:
"..May grow up into Him.” (Which means)
“To advance in godliness of character that resembles Jesus.”

Fact: The words “into Christ” here mean:
- “Keep your eyes on Christ (your perfect example) and off of other people”!

(In other words from verse 15)
- To the degree I am truthful, to that same degree I will grow in Christ.
- To the degree I walk in love (and forgive every offender) to that same degree I will grow in Christ.
- To the degree I concentrate (keep my eyes) on Jesus, to that same degree I will grow in Christ.

V. You Are “Productive” (V. 16)

"From whom the whole body fifty joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

Question: What is the result of following the divine blueprint from God?

It is clear and plain
1. Each individual will become mature, stable, obedient and fruitful. (then)
2. The local church body will become a coordinated team with every member contributing to the whole. (Then)
3. The Lord will see to it that the church “maketh increase of the body” (or)
   - The church will grow God’s way (through nutrition) not by attrition (which is called “the rotation of the saints” from church to church).

Oh beloved...
“According to the effectual working of every part” includes you!
- You are invited to participate with God!
- You are included in God’s plan!
- You have been gifted to add something to eternity!
- You have potential and a purpose for being here!

Amen, Bill Kirk