

EPHESIANS 4:13-16

GROW UP!

Spirit-born children show a gift-based self-control that makes Christ our Head the center of praise.

Cov-Pres

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11 And He gave some...12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

ONE: Grow Up! 4:13-14a

All are *born again* as children, no matter our *first-creation* credentials, stature or skills...

1 Peter 2:2 (NASB95)² like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

Re: overseers/elders: 1 Timothy 3:6 (NASB95)⁶ and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.

Natural abilities, personality and skills to gather a following do not equal spiritual maturity

Christ leads through all the members of his body: learn from those you tend to think lowliest!

Because of what Christ has done and is now doing—*gifting*—we need to grow up into, to attain to...

***the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God* (4:13)**

***the faith* often refers to the revealed faith—the apostolic teaching (1 Cor 15:3**

God's wisdom (grace-gifted salvation) made known through the church that knows the Son (3:10; 4:13)

This Christ and his will/teaching must be the source of unity not a “gospel” of grace with no Head!

the mature man (to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ) (4.13)

Our maturity is manifest as we know and act out both grace and truth as found only in Jesus!

Who do you want to follow? Look at the kind of followers they produce and whose good they serve.

If we're going to grow up we've got to stop being tossed about by random waves and new winds of teaching...

Children are **unstable** (restless, attracted to every new current)...

Children are **fickle** (easily led along, by passions drawn to new ideas/influences/experiences)...

(Brain to hand/brother to friend: *Don't! Protect your stomach, your sleep, your marriage, your GPA...*)

Filter out the SPAM!

Learn your particular temptations—that which tends to lead you off-the-center: Christ.

Cov. Leadership Retreat: Prof. Phil Douglas: What is YOUR CHURCH's PERSONALITY?

Another application: **THREE Tendencies/Proclivities/Preferences:**

The Doctrinalist
mercy & justice

The Pietist/Heart Religionist

The Cultural Engager: relational evangelism,

1/ We who have **Doctrinalist** proclivities love to learn, study, digest and apply biblical doctrine.

Reformation Theology. Ordo Salutis. Five Points of Calvinism. Justification & Sanctification! We want more Adult Classes on Doctrine. We are committed to the theological purity of the church and willing quickly to attack, uh—approach, others we think are in error. **Thinking right** about God will solve most all of our problems. Every thought captive to Christ!

2/ We who have **Pietistic/Heart** proclivities most love to worship, to pray, to stir our love for Christ. We want to stir others too. We desire classes that lead us to worship, to have quiet times alone with God. We long for calls for us and others to surrender to Christ. The affections of the heart are the rudder of the soul! No matter how much we know, the will is steered by our affections and passions.

3/ We who tend to center on **Cultural Engagement** are those who long for more relationships, more opportunities to interact in ways that would expose Gospel and Gospel-based community to others, to build welcoming church ministries, to plant contextualized churches, to have more ministries-of-

deeds showing Christ's mercy, or to work to bring justice to those with less privilege, opportunity and resources.

Back to the central point: we need to be neither unstable nor easily-carried-away from what's most important...

Speaking the truth in love OR *proving the truth true in love* grow up in all aspects into Him...

Hearts, words & actions need to line up together: **Romans 12:9** *Let love be genuine.*^{ESV} (without hypocrisy)

Christ, our Head, is to be most prominent—pre-eminent!

The most gifted are never as important as some think: *For if we grew in such a way that the shoulders rose half a foot above the head, what sort of growing would that be?* [John Calvin, on Eph 4:14-16]

CONCLUSION: Don't hold back from Christ or his Covenant Body of which you are a working member!

Communion: We desire many meals & menus; Jesus gave this meal, himself, as food to be praised above all other.