



**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**THE LOCAL CHURCH**  
**Finding Where We Fit**  
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**I. GOD'S PLAN FOR THE CHURCH: Diversity not Division**

**A. The Early Church: DIVISION IN THE CHURCH AT CORINTH**

“Tiny fault lines began to grow in the early church as believers pursued their own agendas.”

1. Discontent with their roles
2. Proud of their giftings
3. Believing their roles were the key to success of the church
4. Devalue the gift of others
5. Following different leaders
6. Looking outside the congregation for affirmation
7. Allowed themselves to be influenced by the pagan world
8. Sinful behavior is tolerated.

**B. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT CORINTH**

“To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours.” 1 Corinthians 1:2

1. All part of the Church of God
2. The church is God's, their community belongs to Him.
3. Sanctified together in Christ Jesus
4. “Their position before God is solely determined by the work of Jesus on the cross of their behalf.”
5. Living transformed lives together
6. “Paul leaves no room for PRIDE or INDIVIDUALISM.”

**DISCUSSION:** Does the church body today have similar issues as the church at Corinth? Do these issues cause division or growth? Which of the eight areas listed above might be a struggle in your own life? In what ways might your personal struggle create overall division in the church body as a whole? What common ground do we stand on as a body of believers?

## II. SPIRITUAL GIFTS

“The point is clear individual gifts are given for the COMMON good and to be used for building up the local church.”

- A. 1 Corinthians 12:7 “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”
- B. 1 Corinthians 14:26b “Let all things be done for building up.”
- C. 1 Corinthians 12:14-20 “But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.”
- D. Some women will be teachers, evangelist, administrators of ministries, agents of mercy, generosity, servants to those in need. Romans 12:3-8
- E. We are tempted to misuse our gifts: set them aside, neglect, overestimate, use them elsewhere, or exhaust.
- F. Gifts are given for one purpose to “strengthen His church for which he will make Himself known.” Gifts are not to glorify ourselves.
- G. Charles Hodge “When God’s gifts, natural or supernatural, are perverted as a means of self-exaltation or aggrandizement, it is sin against their giver as well as against those for whose benefit they were intended.”
- H. When the church is healthy, Christ is reflected to the world.

**DISCUSSION:** Do you firmly trust and believe that the Holy Spirit has gifted you to serve the body of Christ? In what ways are using or misusing those gifts? Are we celebrating the diverse gifts of others or focusing on insecurities and jealousy? How is the church affected when we choose not to use the gifts God has given each of us? Are we asking ourselves the questions at the bottom of page 98? What is the one purpose of our spiritual gift?

## III. ENGAGING IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

“When our most important communities become something other than the church body in which the Lord has placed us, we miss out on the joy that comes from actually living in fellowship with the very people whom the Lord has gifted us to serve.”

- A. Personally engaging in the local church presents more joy and more challenges.
- B. John Stott quote on page 97 - Being a part of a church community is challenging because we are all sinners.
- C. Personal engagement leaves no room for building up barriers and safeguards, for distancing, “unfriending,” “unfollowing,” or choosing our own timing for response.
- D. Growing trends of online church removes us from the sanctification that occurs as we grow in building relationships with one another (with the exception of our current circumstances).

**DISCUSSION:** Why is it important for the local church to be more than just an online community? Before the pandemic, why have online churches become a growing trend? Do you think this change in our culture is beneficial to the church? How could this trend harm the church? Does removing ourselves from church community bring glory to God?

#### **IV. SHARED COMMITMENT TO GOD'S WORD ENCOURAGES ACCOUNTABILITY**

Galatians 1:9 taught truth "As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed."

#### **V. SHARED COMMITMENT TO GOD'S WORD ENCOURAGES ONGOING BIBLICAL GROWTH**

Titus 2:3-5

#### **VI. SHARED COMMITMENT TO ONE ANOTHER ENCOURAGES AUTHENTIC MINISTRY**

- A. Acts 2:44-47 "Believers having all things in common" "Worshiping and growing together with glad and generous hearts."
- B. 1Corinthians 12:26 "one part suffers, every part suffers. One part is honored, every part rejoices with it."

#### **VIII. SHARED COMMITMENT TO ONE ANOTHER ENCOURAGES EVANGELISM**

Acts 2:47b "As they poured into each other's lives ... the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved."

#### **IX. SHARED COMMITMENT TO ONE ANOTHER ENCOURAGES HELPFUL AFFIRMATION**

- a. 1Peter 5:1-3 "doesn't domineer but sets an example"
- b. Hebrews 13:17 "obey your leaders and submit to them."
- c. Let us bring our staff "joy and not groaning."
- d. "Humility" and "respect" towards our leadership in authority over us.
- e. We must have flexibility and patience in our planning as we bring it under the authority of church leadership.

#### **X. A WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT**

- f. "Actively loving the bride of Christ" is always worth it!

**DISCUSSION:** What are the benefits of having an authentic ministry? How can Women's Ministry at Hebron Church grow in the areas above? Are you fully committed to loving the bride of Christ? How can you grow in your commitment to serve?

#### **X. PERSONAL REFLECTION:**

- i. Pray
- ii. Read 1Corinthians 1, 12, and 14
- iii. Read Romans 12
- iv. Read Acts 2
- v. Reflect, Journal
- vi. Pray