

Differences among Christians should be dealt with in a way that glorifies God

One of the marvels of God's creation is the variety that exists among human beings. We're all equally created by God in His image, and yet no two individuals are exactly alike. Each of us is a unique package of strengths, abilities, personalities, etc. — and each of us deals with life in a somewhat different way.

Whenever two or more people have the opportunity to work together, it is possible to view their differences as a part of their strength. Each person in a group brings something to the work that would be missing if that person were absent. A group can have more wisdom and power than an individual could ever have. Any yet, the challenge is for the members of the group to truly work together, making sure that their differences help the work rather than hinder it.

The strongest groups are those powered by a common goal or shared vision that is so important to the group that they subordinate their differences to the pursuit of the collective mission. It is unavoidable that people will encounter differences as they work together, but if people care enough about what they are doing together, they'll not be hindered by their differences. They'll make their different perspectives a part of their strength, rather than their weakness.

When the work happens to be the Lord's work, of course, the goal being pursued is nothing less than the glorification of God. Everything that happens must be viewed within the context of this mission, which is the most important mission anyone ever had. Whatever difficulties and differences may threaten to disrupt the work are to be subordinated to the more important goal of bringing glory to God. Paul wrote, "To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling . . . so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 **Thess. 1:11,12**). Throughout the coming week, let's meditate on this great thought: *differences among Christians should be dealt with in a way that glorifies God*. As the Lord's people, we have a goal that is greater than our differences. What we are doing is too important to let anything separate us, and that means that we will deal with differences in a better way than if we were worldly people.

Monday: Deuteronomy 4:5-8

Key Idea: The highest privilege of God's people is to bring glory to Him by their obedience.

Questions for Family Growth: In this passage, what would be the result if the people of Israel were faithful in obeying God? In **1 Cor. 6:20**, what are we commanded to do as individuals? How important should God's glory be to us in our decision-making?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 21:31**.

Tuesday: 1 Peter 4:10,11

Key Idea: Christians should do whatever they do in a manner that glorifies God.

Questions for Family Growth: What does it mean that we are “stewards of the manifold grace of God” (NKJV)? In **v.11**, to what end or purpose should our individual abilities be used? In the latter part of **v.11**, what do we owe to God as our Creator?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 22:1.**

Wednesday: John 15:1-8

Key Idea: We are not the disciples of Jesus Christ if we do not bear fruit that glorifies God.

Questions for Family Growth: What are some different meanings of the word “disciple”? Is everyone who claims to be a disciple really a follower of Jesus Christ? In **v.8**, what shows that we are true disciples? What is it that glorifies God?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 22:2.**

Thursday: Philippians 1:27

Key Idea: Glorifying God should be more important than any differences within a congregation.

Questions for Family Growth: How can our conduct be “worthy of the gospel of Christ”? What are some suggestions that would help us do a better job of “striving side by side for the faith of the gospel”? How can we “stand firm in one spirit, with one mind”?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 22:3.**

Friday: Romans 15:5-7

Key Idea: Christians should handle their differences so as not to hinder their glorification of God.

Questions for Family Growth: In practical terms, how can a congregation glorify God “together” and “with one voice”? What does it mean to “receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God” (NKJV)?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 22:4.**

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