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Foundations Reflection Guide

Part 4: The Body

This reflection guide is designed for uses for those who have listened or watched **Part 4: The Body**

It provides space to process the scriptures and apply the "Foundations" teaching.

The big idea is that, although our differences can sometimes be challenging or cause conflict, we are meant to live together in community. Each person brings their own gifts, talents, and passions to the church for everyone's benefit and to honour God. The purpose is for God's glory to be shown to the world through a diverse church, where every unique gift, empowered by the Spirit, comes together in unity to honour Jesus Christ as Lord.

1. The Identity and Purpose of the Church

- **Read These Scriptures**

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

Ephesians 3:10-12

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.

Matthew 5:14

- **Not a Building:** The church is the primary vehicle God uses to reveal Himself to the world, not just a physical structure.

- **God's "Plan A":** It is specifically through the church that God's "manifold wisdom" is made known to the heavenly realms.

- **The World's Hope:** As "the light," the church is meant to be visible and distinct.

- **A Shared Calling:** Glorifying Jesus is not the job of a few "super saints"; we are all called to display Him to the world.

- **Reflection:** How does it change your view of Sunday mornings knowing that the "heavenly realms" are watching the church to see God's wisdom?

2. Unity in Diversity

- **Read 1 Corinthians 12:14–27**

Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact, God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.
If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

1 Corinthians 12:14–27

- **Interdependence:** Like organs in a body, we only function fully when joined together; we cannot say to another part, "I don’t need you".
- **God’s Arrangement:** God has placed every member exactly where He wanted them to be—no one is an "accident".
- **Indispensable Parts:** Those who seem "weaker" are actually vital to the health of the body.
- **The "Limp":** When we refuse to serve or use our gifts, the church functions like a body with a limp rather than a high-performance athlete.
- **Reflection:** Have you ever felt like you "don't belong" because you aren't like another part of the body? How does this scripture correct that thought?

3. The Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

- **Read Ephesians 4:10-12**

He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe. So, Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

Ephesians 4:10-12

- **Gifts are for Service:** Unlike the world, which uses talent for status or wealth, Christians are to use gifts to build others up.

- **Equipping:** Leaders are given to the church specifically to equip everyone else for "works of service".

- **Maturity:** Using our gifts helps the church reach unity and prevents us from being "tossed back and forth" by false teachings.

- **Reflection:** What natural talents or spiritual gifts has Christ given you to serve His "Body"?

4. Tongues and Prophecy

- **Read 1 Corinthians 14:1-6**

> Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified. Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction?
>
> 1 Corinthians 14:1-6

Tongues (Godward): This gift is for speaking to God and edifying our individual souls. When interpreted in worship however, "unlocks" words of knowledge, prophecy and other revelations for the body.

Prophecy (Manward): Prophecy is for strengthening, encouraging, and comforting of the church; it will never contradict scripture and speaks truth in the moment, to lift our eyes to who God is and what he is doing.

Order in Worship: Worship should be orderly, ensuring everything is done to strengthen the church.

Reflection: The Scriptures indicate that prophecy ought to be weighed; what is the significance of this, and how can we effectively weigh a prophetic word?

Questions

1. **The Active Member:** Would you describe yourself as an active, functioning part of God's body right now?

2. **Identifying Gifts:** What specific gifts, talents, or passions has God given you to serve His church?

3. **The Practical Challenge:** How can you practically serve and build up someone else in the body of Christ this week?

4. **The Earnest Desire:** Are you following the scriptural command to eagerly seek spiritual gifts for the benefit of the whole body?