



Show Thyself A Man

By Andrew Snoke

“Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, **and shew thyself a man**” (1 Kings 2:1-2).

One of the greatest blessings in my life, has come from being a father, a grandfather, and a husband. Fatherhood blesses a man with a brief season of time to be a hero to some little son or daughter. During those formative years, young fathers have the privilege of having little ones look up to them, believing that their earthly fathers can fix anything broken in the world. To be a man, to be a father, to be a husband, is a calling highly respected by God. God loves men to be men, and He loves women to be women. He has gifted masculinity in men, and femininity in women. I have to think that when a society begins to blur the lines of masculinity and femininity, it must be an offense to our Creator.

David, in his last days on earth, desired to pass onto his son Solomon what it meant to be a true man. Men would do well to understand what it means to be a “man.”

Manhood - true manhood - princely manhood, like that of David, is one of the grandest things in the world. This spiritual “manhood” that I speak of does not depend upon the size and strength of one’s physical body. There are men of small stature, like the apostle Paul, King David or Napoleon Bonaparte, who tower above other men as the mountains tower above the plains.

The great evangelist of old, Billy Sunday said something similar to this:

There are physical giants who are light-weights when it comes to true manhood. Samson was a giant

in stature but a baby in self-control. It was not the Philistines who destroyed Samson. It was Samson himself. A true man will be led by his principles and not by his impulses. No one can read the Bible thoughtfully without being impressed with the fact that it speaks much of manhood and holds manhood up as something that should be sought after with diligence.

The Bible emphasizes manhood in an unusual way. The book of Genesis contains sixty chapters and covers 2,300 years of human history, and yet one half of it is devoted to telling us about the colossal manhood of Abraham, and a third to that of the exemplary life of the man, Joseph. The story of creation is told in 800 words, but much more is given to the story of Caleb’s rugged manhood.

An entire book is occupied with the story of Job, and another with the uncompromising life of the man named Daniel. Abraham towers like a mountain when he pushes aside the spoils of the unrighteous king of Sodom, unless he should say that Abraham was depending on him.

The Lord is not a respecter of persons, but He is a respecter of character.

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Hear God's admiration of the character of Job, in the strongest language that even God could use, in declaring, "He is perfect!" "And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil" (Job 1:8)?

David, a man after God's own heart, was never known for being the best father during his life. Yet at the **very end of his life**, King David desired to leave some form of fatherly advice that would establish Solomon with the *character of kings*. David said:

"Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying,

I go the way of all the earth: **be thou strong** therefore, and **shew thyself a man**; And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, **to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies**, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: That the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel" (1 Kings 2:1-4).

Godly attributes are a hallmark of true manhood.

God has called man to be a "head" in his home.

"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3). "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man" (1 Corinthians 11:7-9).

This may place some in an uncomfortable position, but "man" was placed in a marriage, in a home, to "lead." God is looking for diligent, strong, manly leaders in homes. God IS NOT looking for domineering, condescending, slave masters to rule over their homes. He is looking for shepherds of the home, gentle warriors. They are to be men that love their families with a sacrificial love and who are willing, if necessary, to work long hours, to be cold, and hungry if it means that their families are warm, and have the provisions they need.

Real men, find time to sip tea with their tiny princesses and help with their homework. Real men help their little boys slay pretend dragons. They are active, present, and very involved in the lives of

their children. They always find ways to hold, honor, love and cherish the gift of the wives with which God has blessed them. Real manhood finds reasons to be home with their families, instead of excuses for being away. Godly manhood, princely manhood, the **character of kings** comes only from a humble obedience to our Lord and Master. I recently came across a compiled list of statistics that paint a very sad picture of the homes in North America when the Father is missing.

1. 85% of youths in prison are from fatherless homes.
2. 63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes.
3. 71% of high school dropouts are from fatherless homes.
4. Children are 15 times more likely to have behavioral problems, when fathers are missing.
5. Children are 24% more likely to run away, when fathers are missing.
6. Children are 33 times more likely to be seriously abused requiring medical attention when fathers are absent from the home.
7. Teenage girls are 7 times more likely to become teenage mothers when fathers are missing.

As King David said in his final words to his son Solomon, true manhood comes from obeying God's commands diligently, consistently, and humbly.

The Bible is not silent on God's requirements for manhood. In Ephesians 5: 23-33, the Lord gives the following (8) commands to the husband regarding his wife:

1. Be head of the wife (not a boss, or tyrant, but a loving head).
2. Love his wife as Christ loved the church. (This is a sacrificial love displaying a willingness to give one's own life for his wife).
3. Love his wife as his own body.
4. Nourish his wife (bring up, care for, protect).
5. Cherish his wife (literally to foster, to warm in one's bosom).
6. Be joined as one flesh (not depriving one another sexually).
7. Leave his parents for a wife.
8. Cleave to his wife (to hold tightly, closely).

By reading the qualifications of elders in 1 Tim 3:2 we can learn other requirements for men, for truly all men are elders of their homes.

These qualifications include:

1. Blameless in conduct.
2. Husband of one wife. No polygamist.
3. Vigilant (in this instance the Greek means, to

drink no wine).

4. Sober (meaning: sound mind, discreet, prudent, moderate, self-controlled).

5. Of good behavior.

6. Given to hospitality.

7. Apt to teach (including teaching his family the ways of the Lord).

8. Not given to wine (not given to any alcohol).

9. No striker (not quarrelsome; not quick tempered).

10. Not greedy of filthy lucre (not desirous of dishonest gain).

11. Patient (meek and gentle).

12. Not a brawler (not a trouble maker).

13. Not covetous.

14. Ruler of his own household.

15. Not a novice.

16. Of good report from outsiders.

These qualities, these godly attributes of manhood, do not come easily. They come only when a man has learned to submit his will over to the will of God. By the power of the Holy Spirit, and with obedience to the Scriptures, a man can learn to display the godly character of kings.

I encourage all of the male readers of this article, to ask God for His help in being what God has created men to be.

The Good Shepherd

By Albert Hannigan

“He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young” (Isaiah 40:11). “And they brought young children to Him, that He should touch them: and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them” (Mark 10:13 to 16).

These passages point out the importance of the children in God’s program. Children may not realize all that is going on, but God’s love for them, and their importance in God’s kingdom is shown here. Though they might not understand much about His plan and His kingdom, yet they are very important in the eyes of the Lord. To have Jesus pick them up and lay His hands on them must have been a wonderful experience. Jesus knew the importance of imparting of the anointing of the Holy Spirit to them, even as little children. And how important it is that we, of all ages, have that impartation of the Holy Spirit unto us also. Zechariah 4: 6 says that it is not by might nor by power, but by His Holy Spirit that we can function in our ministries and be of value upon this earth.

In the Gospel of John, chapter 10, Jesus explains quite a lot regarding His shepherd’s ministry. Jesus is the door through whom we enter into God’s fold and are in His care. There is no other way. It is not by our good works nor our striving to become good enough to merit God’s favor. *“All we like sheep have gone astray;... [but] the Lord hath laid on Him [Jesus] the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53: 6).* It is only by accepting the death and resurrection of Jesus, and repenting of our sins, that we can be forgiven. He is of sin the double cure. He not only removes our sins but also removes the desire to sin. Praise His wonderful Name!

He came that we might have life and that we might have it more abundantly (John 10: 10). He said, *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand” (John 10: 27- 29).* And God is also concerned about other sheep who are not of this fold. Them also He must bring, and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd (John 10: 16). We praise God that Jesus is concerned about other sheep that are not yet in His fold. He died for them all.

When we think of shepherding God’s sheep, our thoughts turn to the wonderful 23rd Psalm. The psalmist personalizes our association with

the Lord as being our own faithful Leader. He leads us in green pastures, beside still waters, and restores our souls. Green pastures speak of an abundance of all we need, where our hunger is satisfied and everything we need is supplied. The still waters speak of peace and rest and joy. This is so opposite to the trouble and confusion that is in the world without the Lord. He restores our soul, taking us from worldly paths to his warm embrace and comfort, and to paths of righteousness where we are blessed and our

lives can bless others. Even when we face perilous circumstances, He says “*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you*” (John 14: 27). We rest in the knowledge of being in the presence of the Lord and with that great company of those who have gone before. With our hand in the hand of our Good Shepherd, surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives, and we will dwell in the presence of the Lord forever (Psalm 23: 6). Amen.

Seeking God

By Nat Swaan

God works in our lives toward our benefit. **Romans 4: 17**, explains to us: “(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and **calleth those things which be not as though they were.**” God sees us as a completed creation. We are God’s sons and daughters, not what we see ourselves to be. He wants us to see that we are in a process, which He has promised to complete. God encourages us, by the continuing work of change in our lives, as we commune with Him.

In the book of Job, we read how Job went through very hard trials. He came to the point of stating he should never have been born. God answered him in **Job 38: 4-7**: “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” That statement by God, tells us how highly he values us. Earth is only one planet of our solar system in the Milky Way that contains tens of billions of solar systems like ours. The Universe contains 100 to 200 billion galaxies like the Milky Way, according to scientists. When the foundations of this earth were laid, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. Earth is a special place to God.

God loves us so much that as it says in **Psalms 113: 5-8**: “Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high, Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth! He raiseth

up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.” Through Jesus Christ, God has humbled Himself and His Son. He took us in our rebellion and sin, and made us His children, kings and priests unto Him. You cannot imagine what your future holds. We can only see where we are now, not where and what we shall be. Job could only see what had happened to him. God enlightened Job as He spoke to him. Job replied to God in **Job 42: 5-6**: “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

Psalms 139: 16 (NIV), speaks of God creating each of us: “Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.” God has ordained a path for us. He wants us to commit to Him and submit to Him. Then He pours out His love to us, and blesses us.

God created this world and us for His purposes. **Genesis 1:27** tells us: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.” God is a spirit, not a man or a woman. He displays in both man and woman, attributes of his nature. A woman looks for love. She wants someone to nurture and cherish her. A man looks for respect. A woman desires wooing, whether courting or married for 50 years; she desires her love to woo her.

God loves us with an unending love. Many scriptures speak of his love for us. **Zephaniah 3: 17** states: “The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in

his love, he will joy over thee with singing.” **Romans 5: 8** says: “But God commendeth(exhibits, approves) his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” **1John 4: 7-8**: “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”

God speaks of his jealousy(the passion of his love) for us. **Exodus 34: 14**: “For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.” Man and woman are both in the image of God, and God desires us to woo Him, to communion with Him. He wants love to flow both ways. **Jeremiah 29: 13**: “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” One of the most passionate verses is in the **Song of Solomon 2: 10-13** “My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love,

my fair one, and come away.” These verses speak of Christ and the Church.

God gives us a beginning in our salvation, and the gift of His Holy Spirit. **Ephesians 1: 13-14** “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.” God has freely given us the promise, our betrothal, through Jesus Christ, and desires us to seek Him, to desire Him, to woo Him. How God loves us! He wants us to commune with Him. He desires our fellowship. **John 14: 23**: “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” **Revelation 3:20**: “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” Take time to fellowship with God. He desires intimacy with you. God will bless you and draw you to Himself, as you release yourself in praise and worship in the Spirit, to Him.

God Needs You

By Bro. Markus Hansen

“*Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular*” (1 Corinthians 12:27, KJV). Likely you are familiar with this scripture. It conveys a truth that was made real in the beginning of this present move of the Holy Spirit. It is a truth, and God has been revealing more of its secrets and showing us more and more how to live in it.

When the body of Christ comes into its fullness and is functioning as intended, it will be the key to ushering in the kingdom of God here on earth. In The Revelation, God’s church is described as the “Bride of Christ.” At a wedding our focus is always drawn to the bride. Dressed in pure white, hair beautifully done and her face beaming, the bride, in all her beauty, walks toward her groom who waits in anxious anticipation. So it is today. God is waiting for His bride, the Church, to come forth in all her beauty. “*Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready*” (Revelation 19:7, NIV).

Our language is so limited in its ability to describe

the truths of God for they all have deep spiritual meaning. It is with language that God’s messengers convey God’s truths to our ears, but it is only by the Holy Spirit that they are received. “*But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*” (1 Corinthians 2:14, NKJV). In order to comprehend God’s message to the church, we must be filled with the Spirit of God. We are required to be “*in the Spirit*” as Apostle Paul admonished us to do many, many times in his writings. We need to be alive in our spirit. We need to have our minds renewed by the Spirit of God so that we can hear, understand, see and believe what God is saying to the Church.

As we seek God with an open heart for a deeper understanding of the coming of His kingdom, He will reveal it. “*For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear. Then He said to them, ‘Take heed*

what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given” (Mark 4:22-24, NKJV). Let us seek God and obey the leading of the Holy Spirit so that God will continue to reveal more of His truths, more about His kingdom. It is not enough to just hear the word of God, we are required to put into practice what God is revealing to us. *“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only”* (James 1:22, NKJV). God expects us to LIVE in what He is showing us.

“Now you are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” This is an astonishing statement. Yes, we recognize the amazing work accomplished on the cross of Calvary where Christ gave His life for all mankind. Yes, we gladly accept the grace of God offered for the remission of our sins by the shed blood of Christ. We rejoice after coming up out of the waters of baptism as a new creation in Christ Jesus. As we grew in our Christian walk, the time came when the Holy Spirit descended and filled us to overflowing with His presence. These experiences are building blocks in our spiritual journey. *“Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God’”* (John 3:5, NKJV).

To think that we are a particular part of the body of our beloved Jesus is difficult for us to comprehend.

How is it possible that we can be part of the body of Christ for He was sinless? *“For He made Him who **knew no sin** to be sin for us . . .”* (2 Corinthians 5:21, NKJV). *“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet **without sin**”* (Hebrews 4:15, NKJV). We can only qualify to be members of His glorious body through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. *“Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins”* (Hebrews 9:22, ESV).

When we confess our sins and ask Jesus to abide in our heart, we become a new being, a new person, a new creation. God no longer looks at our sinful past; He sees us in a totally different light with great potential for growth in the Spirit. When Christ bore our sins on the Cross of Calvary, He became sin for us so: *“. . . that we might become **the righteousness of God in Him**”* (2 Corinthians 5:21, NKJV). Fathom that! Jesus gave His life so that we can be moral, virtuous, ethical, irreproachable, pure and perfect in Christ Jesus. In other words, **Christ-like!** Does that sound unfathomable? To one’s reason it may, but when we abide *“in Christ”* it becomes a distinct possibility.

Question: How will this be achieved? The only way

that we will be able to become a perfected son of God is by becoming a fully functioning, yielded member of His body, His church. There is no other way! We must become interdependent with every member of the body of Christ.

My wife and I drive a car that is sixteen years old. It has over 245,000 kms. Other than routine maintenance, this car has never needed a major repair. When we insert the key into the ignition, the engine starts. When we turn on the lights they come on. When we engage the transmission and step on the gas pedal the car moves. Pressing the brake pedal stops the car. Our car is reliable and appreciated because every part of the car functions like it is intended to.

Recently we added bird feeders outside our kitchen window. It is a blessing to watch the birds fly to and from the bird feeders. Hummingbirds, chickadees, flickers, downy woodpeckers, Steller’s jay and spotted towhees are regular visitors. Though the aeroplane is a marvellous invention, nothing compares to the aerobatic ability of birds. We never cease to marvel how they turn, twist, change direction, fly up, swoop down and then land on the smallest object, no runway needed. These antics are performed with seemingly little effort. The flying performances of the hummingbirds are even more astonishing. They are able to stop in midair, hover to survey their surroundings, then fly straight ahead, backwards, and even upside down. Then there are the ones with brilliant colours. The male hummingbird is able to reverse the direction of its crown feathers showing iridescent reds and pinks while hovering to attract a mate. Consider the insulating qualities of bird’s feathers allowing them to survive in below-freezing climates and the staggering distances migrating birds fly. These beautiful birds do not have to walk to reach their destination. With the beat of their wings, they propel themselves into the air and fly away.

Now consider our human body. From a young age we are able to walk, run, jump, climb, sit, stand, sleep, converse, hear, read, see in three dimensional colours as well as experience the marvels of falling in love. When every individual member of our body is functioning according to the job assigned to it, nothing seems impossible; every cell, muscle, tendon, sinew, joint, and organ doing what it is designed to do. Nothing less, nothing more. Every individual part is **harmoniously working together for the benefit of the whole body.**

This is the message that the Apostle Paul brings in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. He refers to the human body to describe the body of Christ. In brief, Paul writes that

the body of Christ has many members, each individual member is set in the body of Christ as God pleases, each member should consider and have care of every other member and all members are to work together for the good of the whole body.

Before delving further into this subject let it be established with all certainty that Christ is the head of His body *“and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all”* (Ephesians 1:19-23, NKJV).

In order for Christ to exercise His headship, we have to surrender our will to His. We have to assign our headship to Christ. If we do not, we cannot be an effectively-functioning part of the body of Christ. There is no room for bargaining. We cannot say, ‘OK Lord, You can be my head over these areas of my life but not this part.’ This may seem rather harsh especially when you consider that the world is heading down a pathway of self gratification. Paul warned Timothy to be on guard as perilous times were expected where: *“People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power”* (2 Timothy 3:2-5, NIV).

Jesus said: *“I am the vine (or trunk), you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; **for without Me you can do nothing.** If anyone does not abide in Me he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned”* (John 15:5-6, NKJV). A branch receives all its sustenance from its trunk. If severed from the trunk it dies. So it is with us. Everything we need, to be a living, vibrant part of the body of Christ, flows from Christ, as long as we remain in Him. The way we remain in Him is to surrender our will and accept Christ’s headship over every aspect of our lives!

The notion of being a *“member in particular”* carries with it a deep sense of responsibility. The Amplified version reads: *“Now you [collectively] are Christ’s body and [individually] you are members of it, each*

part severally and distinct [each with his own place and function]” (1 Corinthians 12:27, AMP). Other translations of the New Testament use different words for particular such as “individual” and “unique.” You are unique. You are different from every member of the body of Christ. Your uniqueness, your individuality is God’s design. Within the body of Christ you have a particular ministry, a vocation, a job to do, and God has equipped you with special abilities so that you can carry out your responsibility. Therefore, you are very important to God and the church. *“For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them”* (Romans 12: 4-6, NKJV).

In 1 Corinthians 12 Apostle Paul provides a description of the nine spiritual gifts that are provided for the benefit of the church. In verse 7 Paul writes: *“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all”* (NKJV). The word manifestation in this context means that the evidence of spiritual gifts bestowed upon an individual is to be seen, but not necessarily the person. Spiritual gifts are not given to be hidden under a bushel. After spiritual gifts are imparted by prophecy and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery; God expects us to utilize them, and it should be evident that they are in use.

*“From whom the whole body fitly 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”* (Ephesians 4:16, KJV). The Living Translation: *“Under His direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly, and **each part in its own special way helps the other parts**, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.”*

When the humming bird wakes up after a night of a hibernation-like state called torpor, it flaps its wings and is off to find nectar. For it to fly from its nest, every single individual, unique part of the tiny hummingbird’s body has to function harmoniously and perfectly together. When we see these amazing creatures we marvel at their beauty. So it is with the body of Christ, His church. Nothing is more beautiful to God than when every member of the church is functioning according to the gifts and abilities given to each individual. That is why you are very important to the church and why you should make every effort to attend your local church every Sunday. You are an essential part of the whole. Your contribution is

needed and vital to the church. No member is more or less important to the whole body of Christ. It is the contribution of every member that enables the church to function as it should, a beautiful, vibrant reflection of Jesus Christ in all His beauty.

In 1 Corinthians 11 we read about the Lord's Supper which we partake of during our weekly Sunday service. Paul warns us that we are not to eat of the bread or drink of the cup in an unworthy manner. Then he makes this statement: *"For if he eats the bread and drinks from the cup unworthily, **not thinking about the body of Christ and what it means**, he is eating and drinking God's judgment upon himself; for he is trifling with the death of Christ. That is why many of you are weak and sick, and some have even died"* (verses 29,30, NLT). This means that God demands that we have the highest regard for the ministry and gifts of each and every other individual in the body of Christ, as well as our own. We must respect, honour and employ the gifts that God has given us.

When we come to the point where every member of the church is functioning harmoniously, the day will arrive when there will be no more disease, no sickness attacking God's elect. The lame will walk, eyes will see, ears will hear and we will be liberated from the constraints of this present world and be ushered into God's glorious kingdom. That is our hope and our vision.

"In my opinion whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has planned for us. The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own. The world of creation cannot as yet see reality, not because it chooses to be blind, but because in God's purpose it has been so limited—yet it has been given hope. And the hope is that in the end the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay, and have its share in

that magnificent liberty which can only belong to the children of God! It is plain to anyone with eyes to see that at the present time all created life groans in a sort of universal travail. And it is plain, too, that we who have a foretaste of the Spirit are in a state of painful tension, while we wait for that redemption of our bodies which will mean that at last we have realized our full sonship in Him. We were saved by this hope, but in our moments of impatience let us remember that hope always means waiting for something that we haven't yet got. But if we hope for something we cannot see, then we must settle down to wait for it in patience" (Romans 8:19-25, J.P. Phillips).

Let's resolve to seek God with all our hearts and ask Him to help us to fulfill our ministry in the church. Jesus told His disciples: *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples"* (John 15:7-8, NKJV).

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