

Why We Have So Many Immature Christians

The Apostle Paul wrote that “we have the mind of Christ,” not “I,” singular (see 1 Cor. 2:16). It takes all of us coming together to fully manifest Christ. He was “the Apostle and High Priest of our profession” (see Heb. 3:1). He was “The Prophet” of whom Moses spoke. He was the Teacher, the Evangelist, or “bearer of good news,” and He is our Shepherd.

As it says in Ephesians 4, when He ascended, He gave gifts to men, and these gifts were aspects of Himself. Now we have people who manifest His apostolic nature, others His prophetic nature, and through others He manifests Himself as Shepherd, Teacher, or Evangelist, etc.

These ministries of the Lord are called the “equipping ministries,” but there are other aspects of Him that are manifested through His people as well, such as healing ministries, discernment, administrations, etc. No one has every aspect of Him, but to manifest Him, we must come together and be rightly fitted together in His body, the church.

For this reason, as we mature in Him, there will likely be a specific aspect of His nature we are particularly drawn to that is related to our own calling and ministry, and in this way, we are changed into it. As we are told in 2 Corinthians 3, we are changed by beholding the glory of the Lord.

If we are called as a pastor, for instance, we may start to see the glory of Jesus the Shepherd. If we are called as a teacher, we may see the glory of His teaching ministry. This is how we grow up into Him, by seeing that aspect of His nature we must be changed into, and begin to manifest Him in it.

Of course, that does not mean we do not see the other aspects of His nature and appreciate them, as well as adopt those characteristics that fit with our calling. Most pastors are also teachers, or evangelists, etc. Everyone can manifest any aspect of Him at any time, such as a pastor may get prophetic revelation, but these are exceptions rather than our main purpose.

In Luke 2:52 we are told, "Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature ... " We even see this in the stature of His miracles. The first person He raised from the dead had only been dead a short time. The next one had been dead for much longer, as they were about to be buried. The last one, Lazarus, had been buried for four days. So each of these miracles was more outstanding than the previous one. Those who are growing in miracle ministries also grow this way.

I often hear believers and unbelievers complain when only a small percentage of the sick are healed in a healing meeting, but I think we should be thankful for any. We must be patient to let that ministry grow in stature like Jesus did. If He had to grow in wisdom and stature, how much more do we? No one starts off mature in anything, but we start off immature.

One reason there are so few mature ministries is likely due to so much impatience in allowing others, or ourselves, to mature. I would love to have the gift of being able to lay hands on people and just say, "Be mature in Jesus' name!" but I've never seen that gift. Remember, it takes "faith and patience to inherit the promises" (see Heb. 6:12). Have you ever wondered why we've had this huge "faith movement," but where is the "patience movement"? It takes both to walk in our inheritance. Do not despise small beginnings.

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