

3 PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUAL HEALTH

6/15/24

- Today – Opportunity to give a Bible study
 - Comment – Today is the day just before the Day of Pentecost
 - Title – 3 Principles of Spiritual Health
 - Comment – I presented versions of this material on 3/26/05 and 6/12/16
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On Monday, March 21, 2005, I played for the local board a video clip from the “Heartland” program on Fox News (that aired on Saturday, March 19, 2005). Curtis Freeman (of the Duke Divinity School) was a guest commentator, who pointed out three characteristics that can contribute to an unhealthy church environment. His points can be paraphrased this way:

- Exclusivism and isolation
- Authoritarian church government that does not allow dissent
- Dogmatic interpretations about end-time prophecies

I believe that this congregation began creating a healthy environment in 1995 that does NOT include those three unhealthy characteristics. In fact, I believe that members of this congregation exhibit the opposite of those 3 characteristics – hence, healthy characteristics.

- Avoid dogmatic interpretations about end-time prophecies

Deut. 18:20	the prophet who presumes to speak a word in the Lord’s name (which He has not commanded to speak) or who speaks in the name of other gods – that prophet shall die
22	if that thing does not happen or come to pass, that prophet has spoken it presumptuously – you shall not be afraid of him
Deut. 13:1-3	comes to pass – but he also tells you to go after other gods – not listen

- Recognizing authoritarian church government that does not allow dissent

Matt. 20:25-28 the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them – those who are great exercise authority over them – yet it shall not be among you

Are you inclined to want leaders to exercise dominion and authority over you?

Are you inclined to exercise dominion and authority over other people?

How do you respond when someone in your congregation gives a different doctrinal view?

Are you mature enough to handle different views?

Are you loving enough to handle different views?

Rom. 14:1 receive those who are weak in the faith – not to doubtful disputations

American Standard – now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions

The Amplified NT – as for the man who is a weak believer, welcome him (into your fellowship), but not to criticize his opinions or pass judgment on his scruples or perplex him with discussions

· Avoiding exclusivism and isolation

Mark 9:38	“teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us”
39-40	“do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me – for he who is not against us is on our side”
2 Cor. 11:20	5 characteristics – do not allow people to..... to take you into bondage to exalt themselves over you to devour you to hit you to take (extort) from you
2 Tim. 2:19	the Lord knows those who are His – if you name the name of Christ, depart from iniquity

There Must Be Some Mistake

I was shocked, confused, bewildered – as I entered the Kingdom’s door.
Not by the beauty of it all – nor the lights or its decor.

But it was the folks in the Kingdom – who made me sputter and gasp –
the thieves, the liars, the sinners – the alcoholics, the trash.

There stood the kid from 7th grade – who swiped my lunch-money twice.
Next to him was my old neighbor – who never said anything nice.

Herb, who I always thought – was awaiting the fire of hell
Was sitting pretty on a throne – looking incredibly well.

I nudge Jesus, “What is the deal? – I would love to hear Your take.
How did all these sinners get here? – God must have made a mistake.

“And why is everyone so quiet? – Would you please give me a clue?”
Jesus replied: “They are all in shock” – “No one ever thought, they would see you.”