



BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



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In the days when the Soviet Union was a world power, an American minister spent some years visiting and preaching among congregations behind the Iron Curtain. During his visit, he expected to find the churches united. After all, they were facing the common enemies of Communism and militant atheism. He pictured them like the pioneers of the American West, drawing their wagons into a circle to support each other in the face of danger. Instead, he was shocked to find the same kinds of distracting disagreements, divisions, power struggles, and personality conflicts common to churches of the free world.

At first, the minister was quite depressed by his discovery. Later he came to realize the devil cannot create new things; only God can do that. As a result, he has had to use the same tactics all over the world throughout generations.

Should it be surprising then that in America, one of the greatest countries in the world, our churches still have division culturally, socially, racially, and politically?

Paul said to the church at Corinth, "For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you." (1 Corinthians 1:11) The contentions were connected to personal preferences about certain leaders, and even extended to which spiritual gifts were better than others!

When division creeps into the Body of Christ, it sometimes causes us to forget who we are in Christ. Paul said this:

Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third

*teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? **1 Corinthians 12:27-30***

This series of rhetorical questions has the obvious answer of NO! But Paul asks in a way that reminds us even though these gifts were important in the Early Church, there were even greater gifts. He urges believers to "earnestly desire the greater gifts. (1 Corinthians 12:31)

Paul didn't stop here, for just like every great building must have a great foundation, he uses "a more excellent way" as the cornerstone of his case for the benefit of our differences in the Body of Christ. This more excellent way is the way of love, which makes the employment of our unique spiritual gifts constructive.

It is important to apply love in our relationships, even amidst our differences. In fact, the love Paul described is needed because of our differences. It is *agape love* or unconditional love that enables us to love the unlovable. It even enables us to give others permission to disagree with us, while still remaining unified in Christ.

Without agape love, our divisions have become distractions in cities throughout America, causing us to become insensitive to each other. As we look to our political structures, corporate America, and our own ways for satisfaction, we are still miserable with the outcome.

The distractions of disunity can distress and dismay even the most mature ... [Full Article](#)

Can You See the Big Picture?

It's not uncommon for two people to see the same set of events differently. These differences can sometimes cause us to lose sight of the big picture. Here's a case in point:

One Saturday, a blind beggar in Jerusalem had a life-changing encounter with Jesus. Jesus made mud with His saliva, spread it over the man's eyes, and told him to wash in the Pool of Siloam. The sightless man obeyed, and returned with 20/20 vision. With a new life ahead of him, he saw Jesus as a Healer and Life-Changer, and worshipped Him as his Savior.

When the Pharisees – the religious elites of that day – heard this news, their news reporters swarmed him like hornets to get the inside scoop on who Jesus really was. As the man recounted his story, they had an opportunity to connect the dots and follow the evidence to its conclusion that Jesus was the Son of God. . . .

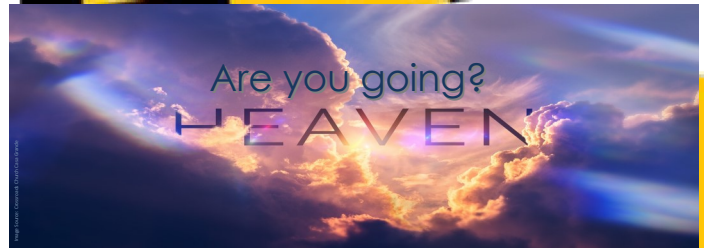
But instead of allowing the truth to inform their perspective, the Pharisees did the opposite. They viewed the situation through the filter of their priorities and prejudices. Consequently, the truth of who Jesus was and the life-changing significance of His miracle was lost in meaningless debate.

There is nothing wrong with having different perspectives on a subject. Differences of opinion are healthy and often add depth and color to a discussion. The problem comes when one side denies the facts or reinterprets them in light of its own priorities and prejudices. This shuts down dialogue and creates animosity, which sows discord and division. Before long, people take sides, a verbal (or physical) assault begins, and the main issue is killed in the cross-fire.

The Pharisees' cancel culture is playing out in our world today. Whether the issue is race relations, the defunding of police, COVID-19, abortion, climate change, or political alignment, little dialogue is occurring. We so identify with our positions on these issues that we have forgotten those who disagree with us are real people, with real feelings, and real stories which have influenced their perspectives.

We've missed the point. But there is hope in the same One who healed the blind beggar on that Saturday in Jerusalem. The Healer died so we could become whole. Through His death and resurrection, He offers eternal life and forgiveness of sins to all who trust in Him. Those who do are given new eyes through which to see their world — eyes which see people and pain behind differing positions, eyes which understand rather than condemn — in light of the big picture. - *Article by Cameron Edwards*

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