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HEALTHY BELIEVERS

Therefore by their fruits you will know them. Matt 7:20 NKJV

To examine someone else is not necessarily judgmental. When you go to the doctor's office or the hospital, the physicians immediately run basic tests on you, to determine how healthy you are. They test your blood pressure, weight, pulse rate, and perhaps take blood and urine samples for testing. They will interview you, examine your skin and outward appearance, and listen to your heart through the stethoscope, looking for outward signs of inward trouble.

Unfortunately, most pastors are not very good spiritual physicians. Surveys have shown that most pastors see their people as happy and healthy Christians if they show up for church regularly and tithe, while their people see themselves as discouraged, bound up, enslaved to things they would never mention in church, and basically unhappy.

How can we correct this blindness, and really begin to help God's people? What does a healthy Christian look like?

A physician knows to look for certain clues that indicate health or disease in a physical body. We can deduce from our survey that church attendance alone does not indicate spiritual health, and tithing can be done out of spiritual bondage, and not grace and love. What indicates real spiritual health?

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. Gal 5:22-23 KJV

Here are the nine criteria for spiritual health. To really see these (or the lack thereof) in the hearts of their people, the good spiritual physician needs the 'tool' of discerning of spirits, because the outward appearance may be far different than the inward reality.

Let's briefly examine the first three of these fruit, to help us see with our spiritual eyes what is really going on in others, and how to help them.

Love is simply an unselfish concern for another. Do you, or the people you serve, have a deep, abiding concern for others, or do you, or they, worship at the altar of the unholy trinity of 'me, myself and I'? You can't judge by the outward appearance. My dear friend owns a construction company, and is by any measure a 'tough customer.' But I have seen this guy pour out love on the weak and helpless, time and again, like you would not believe (if you want to see the real heart of someone, observe how they act toward people who cannot benefit them). The old saying goes, you can't judge a book by its cover. Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord (and His spiritual physician) looks on the heart...

Love is the first gift listed, indicating unity and commencement. Real love is where spiritual health starts! Love is also the great unifying factor in all relationships...

Joy is an inside job. Joy bubbles from the fountain of living waters in the spirit of a born again one. Happiness is external, and is ruled by pleasant circumstances. Joy is internal, and is not enslaved to circumstances. Happiness is soulish...joy is spiritual. Now, there is nothing wrong with happiness. It is nice when things are actually working out easily! But whether circumstances are good or not, the healthy Christian has joy bubbling from within his heart.

And these things we write to you that your joy may be full. 1 John 1:4 NKJV

Sin stifles joy. When there is little or no joy, the good spiritual physician looks for the root cause. Sin, and its attendant condemnation, hinders the flow of the river of life. Sin must be confronted, exposed and destroyed. How come we hear so few sermons about sin, righteousness and the fear of God? A famous American president once observed that when pulpits quit preaching righteousness, the prisons filled up. An anointed sermon can change the hearts of many. As Kenneth Copeland has said, one (RHEMA) word from God can change your life forever...

Peace is the absolute end of all strife and trouble in your heart, not merely that 'numb period' in between conflicts. So few Christians have real peace. The reason for this is that God's physicians have hid behind the foolish notion that real Christians can't have demons. Demons damage your 'internal communications,' your thought life, among other things. Real Christians CAN have demons. It does not mean they are bad people...no more so than a wounded soldier is a bad soldier. They just need healing and deliverance ministry, which includes repentance and especially forgiveness. Do you have peace?

Recently, I did deliverance ministry for about fifty pastors. The peace in the room when we were done was palpable. I usually ask each one if they have peace when we are done with corporate deliverance. Most times, maybe one in fifteen will need extra ministry. But this time, the Holy Spirit's work was so thorough that each one felt burdens lifted and peace in their hearts. I didn't even have to ask...I could see the joy, the relief, the peace on each face. I asked anyway, just to be sure...

Jesus said that by their fruits, you shall know them. Ask the Lord to fill you with the gift of discerning of spirits, so that you can see the nine criteria (or lack thereof) for spiritual health in God's people. Then, by the word of wisdom and gift of faith, you can know how to truly help them. Nothing brings more joy to a parent than the health of their children. The Father God has no greater joy than when His children walk in spiritual health. God wants healthy believers!

Remember dear ones, we must be about our Father's business...

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