

# Pictures of the People of God

## *Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, May 1st*

**Reflection:** Pictures & parables have many points of focus. Even words can have multiple definitions and/or applications, many of which are affected by our own experiences. Most define “church” as either a building or a loosely associated group of people. God sees his church much differently! The English word church comes from the Greek kuriaskos’, meaning “*belonging to the Lord.*” The most common word in the New Testament for church is ekklesia, from ek: out & Kaleo (a calling). Taken together these two words mean the church is: “*a called out assembly of people that belong to the Lord!*” The Bible is filled with different “word pictures” that God uses to describe us. These help us better understand what He’s looking at (and for) when he sees us. For instance the Scriptures describe us as:  
*Hidden Treasure* (Mt. 13:44); *Costly Pearls* (Mt 13:45,46); *Clay in a master potter’s hands* (Is. 64:8);  
*A Bride engaged to Jesus* (Eph. 5:22-33; Rev. 19:7); *a Flock of Sheep* (Ps. 23; 100; Jn 10)

**Direction:** Last time we began to examine the fact that God describes us as members of His family. God’s word reveals that our introduction into His Family occurs spiritually through both “Birth” (spiritual conception See Jn 3:3; 1 Peter 1:23) as well as “Adoption” (Spiritual Selection, See Ro. 8:15, 8:23; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5 “*predestined us unto the adoption of Children by Jesus Christ...*”)  
Eph 2:18,19 “*For through him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God!*”

The Privileges of being part of God’s family include Sharing God’s Nature (2 Peter 1:3,4);  
His Resources (Ro 8:16-18) and His Name! (Mt. 5:16; Ro. 2:24; Acts 11:26)

With Great Privilege comes Great **Responsibilities!** These can produce great pressures!

## **The Pressures and Problems of being part of God’s Family**

The family is the laboratory of life! What we learn (or don’t learn) about relationships in our families,  
Follow us throughout our lives!

If the Church is a family, Then we’ll face many of the same challenges as a large (diverse) family.

For instance, like regular families:

### **1. We’re at Different levels of Spiritual Maturity**

**A. Some are “natural”** 1 Cor 2:14 “*the natural man* (psychikos: Soul based sensitivity) *receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him:* (mori’a: absurd) *neither can he know them,* (ginosko: understand) *because they are spiritually discerned.*” (Pneumatikōs: Spirit based sensitivity)

- 1) They’re not actually part of God’s family. They Profess but don’t Possess genuine faith. Mt 7:21-23
- 2) These are the “tares” in Mt.13:24-30
- 3) These are the “hard soil” of Mt. 13:19
- 4) Symbolized by the “Mixed Multitude” (Ex. 12:38 and Neh. 13:3) who came “along for the ride”
- 5) These often affect the actual “believers”. Nu 11:4; Heb. 3:15-17; Ezra 9 and Nehemiah 13

**B. Some are “Spiritual”** 1 Cor 2:15,16 “*But he that is spiritual* (pneumatikos: spiritually sensitive) *judgeth all things,* (mem {truly} anakrino {examines}) *For who hath known the mind of the Lord...?* *But we have the mind of Christ.*” (nous: understanding {of the Spirit})

- 1) These are the “good ground” of Mt. 13:23
- 2) These are the mature (of full age) in Heb. 5:14
- 3) These are the “Perfect” (telios) in Phil. 3:15

C. Some (most) are “Carnal” 1 Cor 3:1-3 *“I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it... For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, (sarkikos’: temporal, fleshly focus) and walk as (unregenerated) men?”*

- 1) These are the babes in Heb. 5:11-13
- 2) They’re the “rocky, shallow, weedy” of Mt. 13:20-22
- 3) These are easily influenced by the natural “tares”.
- 4) These are *“enemies of the cross”* in Phil. 3:18,19 *19 “Whose end is destruction, (apolia: waste Mt. 5:13) whose God is their belly, (carnal appetites) and whose glory is in their shame, who mind (phroneo: regard, value) earthly things.” (1Jn 2:15-17)*

## 2. We’re at different Emotional/Relational maturity levels.

A. Jesus demonstrated this priority. Lk 2:40-52

- 1) He’s our example! Ro 8:28,29; Phil 3:10

B. A sure sign of immaturity is self absorption. Ro 15:1-3 (See also Phil. 2:1-5)

C. Maturity can be measured by an attitude of “self denial!” Mt 16:24 *“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”* (also Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23)

- 1) Such Maturity develops under pressures. 1 Peter 2:21 *“hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:”* Heb. 5:8,9

## 3. Diversity Were just different! 1 Cor 4:7 *“For who maketh thee to differ from another?”*

A. We tend to migrate/appreciate those with whom we agree or share common interests/experiences.

- 1) These relationships are most comfortable because they require the least “adjustments”. 1Cor 2:4,22 *“I am of Paul... Apollos... Cephas”*

B. The more diversity, the more FRICTION!

- 1) Friction is inevitable when people and things aren’t moving in the same direction & speed!
- 2) Friction produces heat.
- 3) Heat / Pride causes things to expand. Pro 13:10 *“Only by pride cometh contention:”*
- 4) That’s why God’s Spirit is symbolized by Oil! (Zech. 4:1-6)

C. The more Grace/Godliness (maturity), the more

- 1) Cooperation! Eph. 4:14-16
- 2) Compassion! 1 Cor 13:4-6; 1 Pt 4:8 *“Charity shall cover a multitude of sins”*
- 3) Completion (accomplishment) 1 Cor 4:1-2 *“...so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, (Hypēretēs: literally under oarermen)”*

**Conclusion:** The Privileges & Problems of families include being involved in committed relationships with people of differing maturity levels. God designed the Family to help us grow in spiritual & relational maturity. Others benefit (or suffer) based on how effectively this is accomplished.

We have both Privileges and Problems.

Thankfully God uses these as part of His process to Perfect (Mature) us! (Ro. 8:28,29; 1 Thes. 5:23)  
God begins this process through our Human Families; and Continues it through the Church Family!  
God expects His church family to be at least as committed as our human families! (Heb. 10:22-25)  
1 Tim. 4; 2 Tim. 3 & 4 all describe these last days! I believe they are upon us!

**Application:**

- What is your current level of Spiritual and Relational Maturity?
- Are you committed to Partnering with God (and His people) as He seeks to Grow us into a functioning family of faith?