

God Causes The Growth

Both numerical and spiritual growth occur because of God's Word not the personality and wisdom of men

Introduction

- What can we do to help the church grow numerically?
- Is there something wrong when the church is not growing numerically?
- Some seek for the most "effective" way of teaching the lost
- Some look for the most "dynamic" evangelist who can effectively persuade many to be baptized

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Introduction

- How is the church to grow spiritually?
- Often, we seek for the most "dynamic" teachers to get members interested in studying the Word
- We seek for the most "dynamic" speakers to give "interesting" sermons that will excite the members to attend more
- We make judgments based on our idea of the "best" results of growth as we view them

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Introduction

- If we are not careful, we can place the wrong emphasis on men instead of the Word of God when it comes to the numeric and spiritual growth of a local church
- Human personality and wisdom overshadows what is written in Scriptures
- We idolize results above the Word of God
- Seeking to openly study the Word is hindered by allegiance to certain men

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Introduction

- Corinth was such a church where envy, strife and exalting of personality was preventing the saints from progressing in the faith as they should
- Paul reminds them that no matter who had taught them the truth, God is responsible for growth, both numerically and spiritually

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God Causes The Growth

1Co 3:4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not *mere* men?

1Co 3:5 What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave *opportunity* to each one.

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God Causes The Growth

1Co 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.

1Co 3:7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.

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Divine Truth Originates From God Not Man

- Source of Divine Truth is God not man
- Truth directly communicated by the Holy Spirit
- Written for us today in New Testament
- Therefore, we dare not boast as if we have invented Truth

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Divine Truth Originates From God Not Man

1Co 2:10 For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

1Co 2:11 For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

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Divine Truth Originates From God Not Man

1Co 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,

1Co 2:13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*.

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Divine Truth Originates From God Not Man

1Co 14:36 Was it from you that the word of God *first* went forth? Or has it come to you only?

1Co 14:37 If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment.

1Co 14:38 But if anyone does not recognize *this*, he is not recognized.

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Preaching Truth Not Dependent On Preacher's Personality

- God used and still uses all different types of men to communicate His Word
- Whether the eloquent Apollos or the not so eloquent Paul, they were used as the Lord's instruments to faithfully proclaim His Word
- Primary obligation of preacher – be faithful to the Word

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Preaching Truth Not Dependent On Preacher's Personality

Act 18:24 Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures.

2Co 10:10 For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible."

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Preaching Truth Not Dependent On Preacher's Personality

1Co 2:1 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.

1Co 2:2 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

1Co 2:3 I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling,

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Preaching Truth Not Dependent On Preacher's Personality

1Co 4:1 Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

1Co 4:2 In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

1Co 4:3 But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by *any* human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself.

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Preaching Truth Not Dependent On Preacher's Personality

1Co 4:4 For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.

1Co 4:5 Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, *but wait* until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of *men's* hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

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Preaching Truth Not Dependent On Preacher's Personality

1Co 4:6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.

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Obedying Truth Not Dependent On Human Loyalty

- Basis for becoming a Christian and growing as a Christian must be faith in the Word of God not on human loyalty
- The church in Corinth was plagued by partyism – Christians being concerned more with who they agreed with instead of whether it was based on the Word of God

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Obeying Truth Not Dependent On Human Loyalty

1Co 1:10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

1Co 1:11 For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's *people*, that there are quarrels among you.

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Obeying Truth Not Dependent On Human Loyalty

1Co 1:12 Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ."

1Co 1:13 Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

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Obeying Truth Not Dependent On Human Loyalty

Rom 10:17 So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

Eph 4:15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,

Eph 4:16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.²¹

Defending Truth Not About Personal Destruction

- Christians must openly discuss and debate what is taught that we all might seek to follow only Truth
- No room for personal destruction that often is used for a smokescreen to conceal unscriptural arguments or teachings

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Defending Truth Not About Personal Destruction

2Co 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh,

2Co 10:4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

2Co 10:5 *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

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Defending Truth Not About Personal Destruction

Gal 2:11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

Gal 2:12 For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he *began* to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.

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Defending Truth Not About Personal Destruction

Gal 2:13 The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

Gal 2:14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how *is it that* you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?

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Beware Of Exalting Results Above The Word Of God

- Desire to control and take credit for what we believe are acceptable results has led to preachers, elders and churches filled with carnality, being of the world
- How many are baptized and attend assemblies are never the true measure of the Lord's results, faithfulness to His Word
- By earthly measure, Jesus was the greatest failure as a preacher – no loyal followers at His death

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Beware Of Exalting Results Above The Word Of God

1Co 1:14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,

1Co 1:15 so that no one would say you were baptized in my name.

1Co 1:16 Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other.

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Beware Of Exalting Results Above The Word Of God

1Co 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void.

Act 14:27 When they had arrived and gathered the church together, they *began* to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.

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God Causes The Growth

Divine truth originates from God not man
Preaching truth not dependent on preacher's personality

Obedying truth not dependent on human loyalty

Defending truth not about personal destruction

Beware of exalting results above the Word of God

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