

Seven Foundations by Durk Meijer, August 4, 2016

First: God was and is complete in Himself. He created everything that exists and He gave life. Everything He created was good. He initiated and still continues to communicate His love to His creation. God created us for His pleasure and He deserves praise and honor and glory from all creation. This must start with us, as God works in us and through us. Since God is the giver of our life, we as individuals can't even add a single breath to our life. Our working for God will only show our best effort, but God working in us and through us will show His effort as an almighty Creator. Ultimately, we don't own anything. Rather, we are only stewards of what God has entrusted to us. If our love for God is genuine, then His working in us and through us will be natural and it will show itself through every aspect of our life. In this way, the leading of God's Spirit will be a foundation in everything we do.

Second: The gospel is often presented as us sinning, Jesus dying for our sin and us needing to believe and accept His offering of shed blood. But what would the gospel story really look like, if we step back from it? It seems that the story is more God centered. Since God created us in His image and for His pleasure, He deserves praise and honor and glory from all people. He created us to have a close relationship with Him. God gave the first humans what was good, but they chose to also know evil. He created humans not to know evil and they could not properly judge between good and evil. He gave them life, but their choice caused separation from God and death. Since we today also know evil and we judge, it still keeps each of us separated from God. We are naturally still making the same choice as our ancestors. God, in His love for us, has offered to restore our relationship with Him through a second birth that makes us a new creation. In essence we recognize and embrace that God is the only one who can deal with good and evil and that only He can be a righteous judge. God offers complete restoration to life with Him, but it is necessary to accept it from Him as a gift. That is what God offers to everybody in this world. It is completely His work and our response in faith allows us to inherit and begin this new life.

Third: God manifests Himself in various ways through which we can know about Him:

- Through our being in His likeness, which includes our innate desire to live and love
- Through all He has created
- Through His Spirit directly through dreams and visions
- Through His special messengers to us – which might be angels or other humans
- Through the message of the Bible, which includes how God also has revealed Himself through the life of his Son, Jesus Christ

Fourth: As we accept God's offer of new life, we become part of a living organism. We become all equally functioning members of God's family, also called the body of Christ. Each of us individually receives nourishment through the ways mentioned above, and in a very concrete way through the Bible, God's universal message to all people. Even though there is great virtue in learning from what others have learned, we should not substitute such learning for the Biblical message to each us. God intended for us to internalize His special message and as we abide in him, to live out the principles we discover from his teaching. Everyone should engage personally with God's message. If we don't, we are simply puppets on a string directed by someone else's teaching. If we stop drawing nourishment regularly from God's message and are not abiding in him, as well as living according to our human desires, we are in danger of designing our own idol, reshaping the God of creation to our own liking.

Fifth: As God works through us, we represent God to the world. As we come alongside people, we also offer them His message. In these ways we help them to discover who God is and how they can have a growing relationship with him. As we represent God, it is essential to build relationships with people, so that through those relationships we might help those people embrace God.

Sixth: In that context we are serving as facilitators, catalysts, mentors, and disciplers. It is very important that we allow people to personally recognize the truth of God and consider it as valuable. Consequently, they can start embracing it within the context of their own worldview. In that way, God can lead them in life changes, giving them joy, hope, peace, and purpose. In our serving people, we must allow God to simply connect with them where they are. In this way they can grow to be like God. They in turn also will become His representatives. We should recognize that their most important engagement is with the Creator and that our relationship with them is only part of the whole picture. As members of the body of Christ, each of us is unique and different, yet none more important than any other. We must recognize that all of us grow together and that we are accountable to each other. No one should suppose that such a relationship implies that no one leads, teaches or trains. Yet, even leaders and trainers are still principally servants who equally need to be held accountable.

Seventh: We should recognize that God can and will lead each of us. We also should recognize that since God wants to restore our relationship with Him, that He is actively pursuing this aim. Consequently, He makes it easy for us to engage with Him. In that context His message contains stories, so He can relate to every human being in the world in a simple and relevant way. Therefore, we should not force on people the customs or doctrine of any specific denomination, nor even a specific program or

method. We need to come alongside as helpers and learn from those we serve. We should help the people to interact with God and the Bible in small increments starting with good foundations that are relevant to the perspective of their worldview. We also can help them initially avoid those elements that might otherwise stunt their development. If we focus on assisting them, they will have the freedom to facilitate their progress at a rate they can manage. As they personally discover Scriptural truths, they will learn how to reject wrong doctrine, syncretism and dualism. In this way God can build his fellowship among them.