



Your NAWE Companion

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God's Equal Expectation

Lauren Helveston, Tallapoosa, GA

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Our human tendency, even as believers, is to judge, compare, and evaluate others and ourselves based on external factors. Even a great prophet of God had this tendency. Saul, the first king of Israel, had been rejected by God. The Lord then sent His prophet Samuel to Bethlehem to choose a new king from the sons of Jesse. Seven of his sons were present when Samuel arrived. Immediately Samuel took one look at one of Jesse's sons and made a judgment call based on outward appearance:



Praise & Prayer

Praise the Lord for the recent birth of a grandson to Howard & Sherri Ledford (Winterville, GA).

Pray for Dr. Walter Moody (Liberty, SC) who has begun treatment for cancer.

Keep praying for those who are working their way through the Course of Study.

Be praying for preparations for our Ministers' & Wives' Retreat coming up in April.

"When they arrived Samuel took one look at Eliab and thought, 'Surely this is the Lord's anointed!' But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Don't judge by his appearance or height for I have rejected him. The Lord does not make decisions the way you do! People judge by outward appearance but the Lord looks at a person's thoughts and intentions (heart).'" 1 Samuel 16:6-7 (NLT)

The new king to be anointed by Samuel was not even present at the time. David, the youngest son, was sent for and anointed as the new king.

Paul, the Lord's great servant, who lived more than a thousand years after Samuel, did not make the same mistake as Samuel. In Galatians 2:6 Paul states, "as for those who seemed to be important - whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance." (NLT) Paul further explains in 2 Corinthians 10:12 that comparing and measuring ourselves with one another is foolish. Yet we still tend to do so.

Don't misunderstand what I am saying. I understand the variegated composition of the body of Christ. We are all part of the Lord's one body, and each of us has different work to do. We readily understand that the Lord has given each of us the ability to do certain things well (see Romans 12:5-6).

I also understand that tasks, jobs, and ministries require different skill sets, gifts, capacities, and education. When I coached high school football I certainly would not be looking for a quarterback that tended to have two left feet and was cross-eyed to run our triple-option offense.

Therefore, if God does not look on outward appearance and judge by external circumstances, then is there something He is looking for and equally expecting from all of us? And if so, is there a "level-playing field" for all of us? Or to restate, is there something we all have equal access to and that our Lord expects equally from each of us?

Does it have to do with education, personality, giftedness, intelligence, life experiences, being a pastor, teacher, or missionary, having possessions, good looks, physique, position, world traveler, etc.? No, it is the character of Christ! Romans 8:29 "For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to be conformed to the likeness of his son." And one of the most thorough expressions of that is in Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

This is the equal expectation for all of us! We all are unique. We are different in so many, many ways. But the same ultimate calling and equal expectation from our Father is for each of us to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, Jesus.

So the compelling questions for all of us are these: Am I being conformed more to the image of Jesus? Is the character of Christ being manifested in my life and ministry? My response would be: I am moving in that direction, but I am still a major work in progress and in process!!!

Church News & Updates

A Major Change

Tony Elder, Conyers, GA

On the second Sunday of January, Wesley Community Fellowship in Conyers, GA began combining our Sunday morning worship service with another congregation which had been meeting in our building for the past several years. Our two congregations which have some racial and cultural differences believe God has led us to take this significant step at this time. We remain two separate churches organizationally, but we come together as one body in worship.

It is hoped that this endeavor will be a testimony to the community that our unity as believers is greater than those things which tend to divide people. In light of the times in which we live, we believe such a witness is needed and could have a significant impact. There is also hope that this closer connection will result in some effective joint efforts in outreach and other ministry.

We are glad to report that after the first few weeks, it is going well. We are enjoying a wonderful spirit of Christian brotherhood. We have also chosen to adopt much of the worship style of the other congregation which has infused our services with a fresh and more lively spirit. We are still making adjustments—change is always challenging. However to this point we can raise our Ebenezer and testify, "Thus far the Lord has helped us." Please continue to keep us in your prayers.

We are also pleased to announce that Wesley Community Fellowship will be hosting the **2017 NAWE Annual Meeting**. Several of you had commented on the fact that you have never been to our church. So this is your opportunity to come. We are honored to have our facilities used for this special event and are looking forward to the good fellowship and services.

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Calendar

April 18-20: Ministers' & Wives' Retreat at Montgomery Bell State Park near Dickson, TN

July 11-13: Annual Meeting at Wesley Community Fellowship in Conyers, GA