

## **Introduction: Can you imagine . . .**

- . . . coming home after an exhausting and stressful day only to get an “S.O.S.” message on your answering machine from a not-so-close friend . . . and immediately experiencing a shift of focus off yourself and your day and being filled with compassion and energy to help this one in need?
  
- . . . hearing of a promotion or a financial windfall in the life of your ex-husband/wife . . . and having the first thoughts that come to your mind be joy and gratitude to God for His blessing on their life?
  
- . . . being able to hear the honest conversations of your children and your closest friends as they've gathered at your home after your funeral . . . describing you as the most patient, loyal, and Christ-like person they had ever known?

## How God Brings Out the Best in His Children:

Ephesians 4:11-16 (NASB)

<sup>11</sup>And He gave . . .

. . . some as apostles,  
. . . and some as prophets,  
. . . and some as evangelists,  
. . . and some as pastors and teachers,

<sup>12</sup>for the equipping of the saints . . .

. . . for the work of service,  
. . . to the building up of the body of Christ;

<sup>13</sup>until we all attain . . .

. . . to the unity of the faith,  
and of the knowledge of the Son of God,  
. . . to a mature man,  
. . . to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

<sup>14</sup>As a result, . . .

. . . we are no longer to be children,  
. . . tossed here and there by waves,  
. . . and carried about by every wind of doctrine,  
. . . by the trickery of men,  
. . . by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

<sup>15</sup>. . . but speaking the truth in love, . . .

. . . we are to grow up in all aspects into Him,  
. . . who is the head, even Christ,

<sup>16</sup>from whom the whole body . . .

. . . being fitted and held together by that which  
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.

1. **Leaders** are gifted to equip God's people for service. Ephesians 4:11-12a
  
2. **Every member** is a minister. Ephesians 4:12b
  
3. **Ministries are developed** to help **every believer** to live **everyday** in **every** way just as Jesus would live if He were living out His life in their body. Ephesians 4:13
  
4. God **measures spiritual maturity** by a specific, four-fold criteria: Ephesians 4:14-16
  - Doctrinal Stability
  - Authentic Relationships
  - Full Participation
  - Growing Love

## **Are You Positioning Yourself for God to Bring Out the Best in You?**

A Diagnostic Evaluation:

### **1. I am currently being equipped for ministry by:**

- Worshipping regularly
- Listening to teaching tapes
- Being involved in an apprenticeship and/or mentoring relationship

### **2. I am currently ministering and building into the lives of others . . .**

- Rarely or sporadically
- Functioning in my gifts with joy and fruitfulness
- Involved in ministry, but don't feel deeply useful
- Regularly seeing other's lives changed through me and my gifts

### **3. I am becoming more like Christ in my everyday life as evidenced by:**

- A desire to read God's Word
- A disciplined study and understanding of God's Word
- An ability to "see through" false teaching

### **4. I am becoming more like Christ in my everyday life as evidenced by:**

- Enjoying one or more deep, authentic relationships in Christ
- My regular attendance in a small group where "speaking the truth in love" is common
- Having three or four gut-level accountability relationships that are helping me through the most sensitive areas of my life

### **5. I am *becoming more like Christ* in my everyday life as evidenced by:**

- A desire to become more deeply involved with God's people (worship, classes, friendships)
- A sense of belonging and acceptance at my church
- A clear sense that I "fit" in my church body (I am loved by others and find myself caring and helping them in increasing measure)