

# According To Their Kind

Inside your bulletin is a flow chart. I'm going to use this with my message this morning. Hopefully, this chart can be used as a tool to help you track your progress and avoid some pitfalls in your spiritual growth process.

Reading through Genesis, chapter one, you will find several phrases repeated. For example, in the NIV: **And God said, "Let...; and it was good; according to their kind or kinds.**

God exercises His creative power by merely speaking, and brought the universe into being. He focused His attention on Planet Earth, carefully shaped it to support life, and populated it with living creatures. And it was good.

Finally, God created humankind in His own image, and set man to rule over His Creation. And <sup>31</sup>**God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day. (Genesis 1:31)**

The chapter emphasizes the awesome power of our Creator, and yet reminds us that human beings are the clear focus of God's loving concern.

The phrase "according to its kind" (or its equivalent), refers to vegetation and all living creatures. Creation is orderly and perpetuates itself within God's established laws. But, in chapter two, we run across a snag. There is a problem. There was something "not good."

## What could possibly be "not good" about the Garden of Eden?

After all, Adam lived in a perfect world. There was no death, no disease, no poverty, no pain, no conflict, no crime, no crying, no hunger, no hatred, no pollution, no traffic jams, no exams . . . . It was paradise!

He had everything he could need or want. He was in a perfect world and owned it all. Most importantly, even above all the physical, material blessings and benefits he enjoyed, Adam enjoyed an intimate relationship with God. They walked and talked in unbroken fellowship. They communed together face-to-face. You and I might talk about having a "quiet time" with God; Adam could boast of literally being with God, living, talking, and walking with Him.

Yet, in such an ideal setting, something was still "not good."

In the midst of God's "good" creation (1:31), man was "alone," and **God declared that his aloneness was "not good."**

So, God provided Adam one "comparable to him"; one corresponding to him in kind.

All is very good until the serpent tricked them. Now, when the Lord walked in the

garden, they hid from Him. **He called to man, "Where are you?" (Genes 3:9)**

God has not stopped calling. Just as God found Adam and Eve, and provided everything they needed, even though fellowship had been broken, God called and found us. And just as God provided Adam with one corresponding to him in kind, just what he needed, then provided a covering after the fall, just what he needed, God provided us with just what we needed. We were spiritually dead, and God provided the Holy Spirit to make us spiritually alive again.

Ken Howell, a brother, mentor, and good friend, developed this flow chart that I believe is a great tool to help us put together God's calling for all mankind **to become like His Son, one corresponding to him in kind.**

In the box at the top of the chart, it says

**We Don't Find God, He Finds Us**

A common mistake that people make is that they think that they have to look for God. You don't have to travel around the world or climb a mountain to find him. Some find him in their back yard. Some find him on their knees. Some find him on their face. It's not where you look, it's how you look. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. The proud says, "I'm

going to find God on my terms. The humble says, “I come to you, God, on your terms.” Those who have ears to hear let them hear God calling.

From making clothes for Adam and Eve to the return of His Son for the Church, God has not stopped, nor will He stop calling to man by His Spirit.

The next set of text boxes on the flow chart make a pyramid. Six boxes connected to the one at the top:

Holy Spirit

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

The message that the Holy Spirit delivers through God’s calling began with Genesis, where we read, “God said, “Let there be...”“ we can look around us in every direction and know that God is.

God is

We live an ordered existence, created and sustained by a loving God. His providential government proclaims His wisdom, power, glory and goodness. He makes it rain on the just and the unjust.

Providence of God

The message of his written Word has been mocked, criticized, scrutinized,

trashed, neglected, ignored, and misused in about any way you can think of, and has survived: even thrived. The Son, the Word, was treated the same way.

“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!”” (Isa 52:7)

Messenger

So the message comes to you and me by a messenger, delivering the living word, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the providence and design of God, bringing conviction. All have sinned, but not all accept.

“He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—<sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.” (John 1:10-13) born of the spirit, not of the flesh.

Acceptance of Gospel with Heart

Now comes the acceptance part. We move from conviction, from the white-knuckle grip on the back of the pew during invitation; from the excuse that I just can’t wrap my brain around this resurrection stuff, or the multitude of other excuses, to obedience.

Do you think Abraham had it all figured out when tied Isaac, laid him on makeshift alter and pulled the knife? Maybe he did, maybe he didn’t. Even Nicodemus, a teacher of Israel didn’t understand when Jesus told him that he must be born again.

But, by faith, we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

<sup>4</sup>By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.

<sup>5</sup>By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. <sup>6</sup>And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:3-6)

Read the rest of the faith chapter in Hebrews and see if you can find any mention of faith without action.

Obedience, My conversion

The next box after Acceptance of the gospel is obedience. There can be no conversion without obedience. This is not works. It is minding God. By faith with obedience you can be born again, and receive the indwelling Spirit through immersion.

You could say that through His obedience, our Lord's Cross is the gateway into His life. His resurrection means that He has the power to convey His life to me. When I was born again, by accepting his plan and putting that plan into action, by my obedience to his plan, I received the very life of the risen Lord from Jesus Himself. Holy Spirit power in me by his grace.

Spiritually Mature Scriptural Teaching and Personal Study of Word

This next box is where many get stuck in the mud. I will use myself as an example. I felt the tug on my heart as a teenager during a revival. I wasn't immersed until I was 20. But it was 7 years beyond that before church was more than just an occasional hour on Sunday.

Spiritually mature scriptural teaching and personal study of the word: it's a sad commentary on many churches that immerse believers and then do nothing with them. Now, it's not always the fault of the ministers in the church. In my case, I can't blame anyone but myself. There has to be willingness for the immersed to learn as well as willingness for the church to teach.

But wherever the breakdown, the enemy is thrilled. Here is my theory: if the enemy can't stop you from becoming a Christian, they are more than satisfied with you being an ineffective Christian. Let me illustrate: a father was counseling his son on marriage. The father had concerns that the young lady in question had too many unresolved issues.

His counsel to his son was this: do you think that she will be an asset or a liability?

The father was concerned that the young lady would become an MRG: **that's much required grace**; that she would require more from the relationship than she would contribute.

Ineffective Christians can become MRG's to the church.

Salvation Sanctification Process  
Daily maintenance (Prayer)

Look at the next box: Salvation and sanctification **process**. This is a progressive work that continues as long as you are on this earth. The Spirit and the Word never stops forming you into the likeness of Jesus. But you can stop the process at any time. This is where you can become an ineffective MRG Christian.

What would happen to you if you stopped growing and changing physically: if cells stopped dividing and making new ones? You would die, right? The same principle happens spiritually if you stop the process of growing and changing.

Improperly Applied Faith Stagnates  
Self-serving Babe in Christ  
Unfruitful Servant

Look at the box that says: Improperly Applied Faith Stagnates.

There was an illustration on the radio this week; a man had signs that hung on his front and back. The front said, "I am a fool for Jesus." When he turned around, the back sign asked, "Whose fool are you?"

Any time you choose to stop growing, you become self-serving and unfruitful. **"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."** (Galatians 5:22-23) You stop growing and you become unloving, depressed, impatience, inconsiderate, dishonest, self-willed, as rough as sandpaper, and self-indulged.

Not a pretty picture is it? Paul describes these people to Timothy: he says that in the last days, **"People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power."** (2 Timothy 3:2-5) Anyone watched the news lately?

A form of Godliness, a carnal or nominal Christian at best, denying the power that has been given to them, that Jesus died to give them.

Evidently, we have been in the last days for a long time. When John writes to the seven churches of Revelation, four of the seven are told to repent. From losing their first love, being married to the world, to

being dead to being lukewarm; they may have looked good on the outside, but you can't fool the one who sees the heart.

And this was only a generation or two from the real first church.

Properly Applied Power On  
Faith Increases: Spirit led Bond Servant

The Likeness of Christ: A Son of God  
Mature Spiritually: "Equipped to do good Works"

But, properly applied power on, faith increases. You become a Spirit led bond servant; one who chooses to serve others, making them top priority over self, longing, panting for the likeness of Christ; to be a son or daughter of God, equipped to do good works.

This brings us to the end of the flow chart. Obviously, much more could be said about each of these boxes. Keep this in your Bible or close by. Think of it as a checkpoint, or like a doctor giving you an exam to see if everything is as it should be.

Don't think of this flow chart like tab A connects to tab B to tab C. This is not a mechanical formula that earns you points with God or forces God's hand if you get everything right.

Use it as a tool, a checkup, an exam, to track progress in receiving everything that

God has in store for you. This is to help you be all that you can be in God's army. I don't want you to miss any of his wonderful blessings.

One more item and then we'll quit.

I have one principle that I want to touch on that I think is so important in our spiritual growth and practical application of our faith: **the principle of two by two.**

Study partners, team ministries, calling partners, loafing buddies, and the list goes on. Jesus sent out the Twelve and the Seventy in pairs. And it is just important in today's world as it was then. Temptation hasn't become less tempting; everyone is sue crazy, they will sue you if you look at them the wrong way, and the 'two heads are better than one' principle hasn't changed.

When you are alone, you are a much easier target for the enemy. When Judas was alone, he sold out Jesus, when Peter was alone, he denied Jesus. Yes, he was in a crowd, but he was alone. None of his team was there to hold him accountable. Peter became an easy target for the enemy.

In the beginning, God made plants and trees that would reproduce according to their various kinds. He made land and sea creatures, birds, wild and domestic animals to fill the land, sea, and air, after their own kind.

Then God said, **"Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...(Genesis 1:26)**

Adam and Eve lived in a perfect world with full access to and fellowship with God.

Even though it is not a perfect world today, far from it, our image and likeness of God can be restored. Just as God searched and called for Adam and Eve in the garden, God is still searching and calling for any who want to be like His Son. Even though the evil one and the powers of darkness seem to be everywhere, roaming the earth, seeking whom they may devour, one much more powerful, the Holy Spirit, is moving over the earth like the wind, searching for those willing to humble themselves and yield to the will of God, and become one corresponding to him in kind.

Is that your desire? Do you want to be like Jesus? Do you want Holy Spirit power in your daily routine? Do you want people to notice that you are not like everyone else; that you are somehow different than most people they meet? **Do you want to be one corresponding to Him in kind?**

We can take care of that right here, right now. If you haven't been born again, today is the day it can happen. If you have, and you just need that jump-start to get back on track, make today the day.