

Summary and Application



Seven Pictures of God's People (Part 10)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you as we draw near to the close of another week. Today I'm going to continue and complete my series on "Seven Pictures of God's People." I do trust that these talks have been helping you. In this series we've been looking together into the mirror of God's Word to find out what kind of people we really are as God's redeemed people. The particular section of the mirror that we've been looking into has been Paul's epistle to the Ephesians.

We've been discovering an amazing variety in what we've seen there. God's people have many different functions here on earth, and each different function presents us under a different aspect. Today I'm going to sum up these seven pictures and draw out the main practical lessons we can learn from them.

First of all, I'll list the seven pictures once more in their correct order.

(1) The assembly.

(2) The body.

(3) The workmanship.

(4) The family.

(5) The temple.

(6) The bride.

(7) The army.

Now, I'll go through each picture in turn and underline the two main lessons that we learned from each. In each case, you'll remember we looked for two practical applications from each picture. The first was the essential nature of the picture, the particular distinguishing features that singled it out most clearly from all the rest. The second was what was required of us in the context of the picture? What particular responsibility did it place upon us as God's people if we're to fulfill our destiny as representatives of that particular picture? So we'll go through the seven pictures very quickly and

briefly and pick out in each case the essential feature and what is required of us.

The first picture: the assembly, God's governmental body. The essential feature, I pointed out, was governmental authority. The church is God's representative body on earth through which, by spiritual power and authority, He rules the nations and brings His purposes to pass.

What is required of us? I think, if we think in terms of a political governing body, the thing that comes to me is "respect for order." I don't believe we're fit to govern if we don't have respect for due order. We can't govern the universe until we've learnt to govern ourselves. That means order in our conduct and, in particular, I think in our relationships one to another. And here's an area where we've got a lot of work to put in.

The second picture: the body. The essential feature: the agent of Christ's will. We looked at that scripture in Hebrews 10 where Jesus speaks prophetically through the Psalms. It says, "Lo, I come to do thy will. A body hast thou prepared for me." So we see that the function of the body was to do the will of the one for whom the body was prepared. And as the Body of Christ, our function is to do the will of Christ in the earth. We're His agents to carry out His redemptive purposes. He's the head and we're the other members of the body. You remember, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 12, "The head cannot say to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'" Jesus depends on us as the members of His Body to carry out His redemptive purposes in the earth. He is not going to preach the gospel any more, we're going to preach the gospel. He's not going to heal the sick, we're going to heal the sick. We are His hands, His feet, and so on.

What's required of us? I think we have to recognize that as members of the one body, we're all different. We've got different functions, different characteristics—but we're interdependent. I think that's the main emphasis in the New Testament teaching on us as members of the body, that we cannot say to one another, "I don't need you." We're interdependent—different, diverse, but interdependent. And the unit, the body, only becomes effective when we recognize that.

The third picture: the workmanship. I called it "God's creative masterpiece." I pointed out that the essential feature was that it was the revelation to the universe of God's creative genius. To the principalities and powers in the heavenlies, now by the church, is being made known the manifest, the many-sided, wisdom of God. It represents God's creative genius at its highest point.

What's required of us to be part of this masterpiece? Well, the word I picked on was "yieldedness." If we're a word in a poem, we've got to be the right word in the right place, rightly related to all the other words. If we're a note in the music, we've got to be in the right place. If we're an instrument in the orchestra, we've got to play according to the score. We've got to respect God's design, fit it with God's design, let Him make us what He wants to make us and place us where He wants to place us—"yieldedness."

The fourth picture: the family. We are God's family because we all have one father. Jesus is our elder brother and we're all members of the same family. Let me relate a little incident that comes to my mind. It happened in the days when some of the Scottish Christians up in the Highlands were being severely persecuted by the English Army. As a Scottish lassie was on her way to a secret meeting of believers, she was arrested by an English policeman who asked her where she was going. She didn't want to lie but she didn't want to betray her fellow believers, so she lifted her heart to the Lord in prayer and asked Him for an answer. And this is what she said, "My older brother died, and I'm on my way to my father's house to hear the will read." That's a good answer. You see, Jesus is the elder brother, God is our Father; it's our Father's house.

Well, what's the essential feature of that picture, the family? I believe it is this, a shared life-source. God the Father is the life-source of all of us, and we are together in that family, not as an institution, not as an organization, but what we have in common is a shared life-source.

And what's required of us? I suggested mutual acceptance. Jesus calls us His brothers because God calls us His sons. And if God calls our fellow believers His sons, we have to call them our brothers. That's not always easy. I pointed out, you choose your friends, but you don't choose your family. But still, we have to accept one another.

The fifth picture is: the temple, God's dwelling place. Paul says "we are the temple of the living God." In previous dispensations God always asked His people to provide Him a dwelling place. First, it was the tabernacle of Moses, then the temple of Solomon, and then another temple in the return from the Babylonian exile. So God always requires a dwelling place. But all of these were purely temporary. They did not last. Ultimately they were all destroyed. And in the 7th chapter of Acts, Stephen reminded the Jewish Sanhedrin, "God the Most High does not dwell in temples made with human hands." God has an eternal temple. The material of God's temple is not stones or wood or mortar, it's the most valuable thing in the universe: people, human beings, God's redeemed people. That's what God is building His dwelling

place out of. And each one of us, Peter says, is a living stone.

So, what's required of us? To be shaped and fitted; to submit to the discipline of God, to submit to the ministries that God has placed in the church, to let them chisel us and hammer us and fit us into the shape that we want to be. To be willing to be placed where we belong, with two stones on either side, a stone beneath us; and listen, friend, in most cases, a stone above us too. That's what's required if we're going to be part of the temple.

The sixth picture: the bride. The bride of Christ, the one to whom He's going to be united eternally at the marriage supper of the Lamb. I pointed out the tremendous emphasis in Scripture on marriage. Human history begins and ends with a marriage. What is the essential feature of that relationship between bridegroom and bride? I suggested it's mutual commitment, total self-giving. Jesus gave Himself without reservation to the church, now He asks the Church to give herself without reservation to Him.

What's required of us? Careful preparation, to get our wedding garments in order. The righteous acts of the saints are the fine linen that we're going to appear in.

The seventh picture: the army, a demonstration of God's invincible power pitted in relentless warfare against the spiritual kingdom of Satan, equipped with spiritual weapons that enable us to cast down Satan's strongholds, liberate his captives and win this world for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In that army, what's required of us? I think the answer is clear, military discipline.

All right. May I ask, in closing, that you meditate on these pictures? Especially on what's required of us. And let the Holy Spirit transform you into what God wants to make you.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday. Next week I'll be sharing with you on another rich and exciting theme from the word of God.

This week I'm making a special offer of my book Discipleship, Shepherding, and Commitment. This book gives specific, practical instruction as to how we can become the kind of people God wants us to be. It points to a way in which the Body of Christ can become organically united without forming a new denomination.

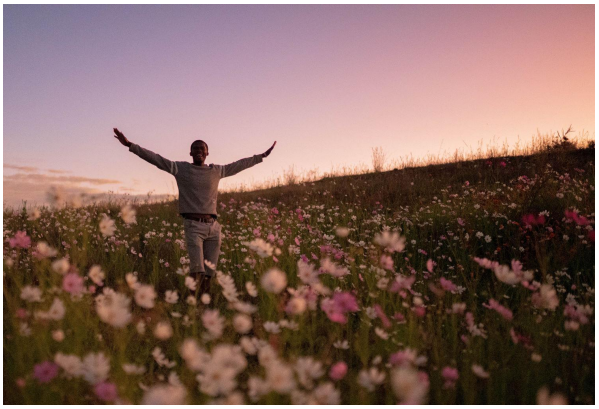
Also, my complete series of talks this week on "Seven Pictures of God's People" is available in a single, carefully-edited, 60-minute cassette. Stay tuned for details.

Bible Teaching Resources



Books

Illuminate and expand your understanding of the Bible with the Derek Prince collection of Christian books.



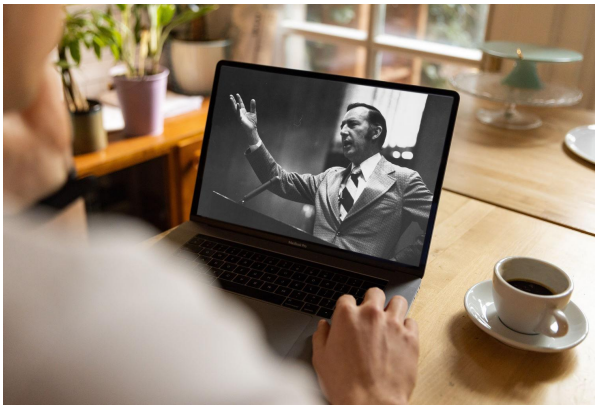
Daily Devotionals

Browse free biblically inspired daily devotionals by Derek Prince for practical teachings to uplift your Christian faith.



Legacy Radio

Listen to inspiring 10-minute messages and connect faith to life with the Derek Prince Legacy Radio podcast.



Sermons

Watch original and digitally remastered sermons by Derek Prince. Includes full message transcripts (free download).



Official App

Available free, download the official Derek Prince Ministries app and equip your faith, anywhere, anytime.



Proclamations

Declare life and experience the transformative power of God's Word with our bible-based Proclamations.

Copyright © Derek Prince Ministries