



APEST – Why Self-Awareness is Vitally Important

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I hope you've appreciated the monthly guest blog on APEST by Brandon Kelly. I'm grateful for how Brandon is helping us think differently and live differently because of the reality of God's different gifts to the Church. It's important that we begin to both think differently and live differently.

Author

The weekly eNews is provided by CGGC Executive Director Lance Finley.



I'm currently at one of our camps for a couple of days and I remember being asked to teach on Ephesians 4:11-13 at this same camp several years ago. It was an eye opening experience for me as I learned that the group of high school students I was working with had little to no understanding of the role of apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds or teachers in the life and ministry of the church. Most of them had been raised in the church and after 14-18 years of Sunday school, worship services and youth group meetings they were unable to articulate much about the different gifts that help the church do all that the Church is supposed to be doing. Since that time, I've had the opportunity to have similar experiences with other gatherings of adults and found that, although older and more experienced in life, our adult friends aren't much farther ahead in their understanding of APEST.

It's hard to live out something that you don't understand. If we don't understand the role of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd or teacher; then it's hard to expect that we'd have much success in seeing all five gifts functioning well in our local body. If we don't understand APEST, then it's hard to have an appreciation for what each role brings to the life of the church and why it's so vitally important to have all five gifts functioning and working together.

One of the best experiences I've had in ministry took place a couple of years ago at another camp where the leaders took young people in their last couple years of high school and attempted to help them gain a greater understanding of how God had "wired" them for service in His kingdom. The retreat helped them explore their talents and abilities, their spiritual gifts and even included some teaching around the idea of APEST. It brought a mix of emotions for me: there was a lot of joy seeing young lives discover more of an understanding of how God had designed them and how that might impact their future lives. There was also a deep sense of sadness realizing that this was the first time many of these young folks had ever been exposed to any of these ideas or concepts: our discipleship is missing the mark. We shouldn't be raising up kids that have no sense of God's shaping of their lives, no sense of their gifting or calling to serve God and His kingdom. We've got to do better in the years to come.

What about you, faithful *E-News* reader? How self-aware are you when it comes to APEST? How has God wired and gifted you? Are you more of an apostle who's always starting new things and taking new ground? Are you a prophet who keeps calling us back to God and asking us to see justice roll down like an ever flowing stream? Are you an evangelist who can't keep good news to yourself but always looking for opportunities to share what you've received? Are you a shepherd who cares for and protects the flock? Are you a teacher who's passionate about God's truth and helping others to embrace that truth as well? Do you know enough about how God's designed you to recognize your own gifting and live into that calling?

In the years to come, we need thousands of spiritually charged leaders to give themselves to God's mission and be willing to fully live into their spiritual calling and gifting. We need all the apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers working together to accomplish the great work that God has for us. Do you know and understand your role? What role has God designed you to play in this epic drama that He's directing?

When we know our roles, it helps us to live into the roles as well as appreciate all the other roles that God has designed to be a part of the work He's accomplishing in our world. The prophets need the shepherds, the apostles need the teachers and we all need the evangelists in order to do the work that God is calling us to do.

What role is God calling you to play?

Christ's Peace,

Lance