

PURSUING OUR CAPACITY

A person with a backpack stands on a rocky mountain peak, looking out over a vast, hazy landscape of rolling hills and valleys. The scene is captured in a soft, late-afternoon light.

Embracing Our Differences

“I’ve travelled around the world, and what’s so revealing is that, despite the differences in culture, politics, language, how people dress, there is a universal feeling that we all want the same thing. **We deeply want to be respected and appreciated for our differences.**”

Howard Schultz, *Starbucks*

God's Kingdom Plan – Parable of the 'Great Feast'

Matthew 22:2-6 NLT

² “The Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a king who prepared a great wedding feast for his son. ³ When the banquet was ready, he sent his servants to notify those who were invited. But they **all refused to come!**

⁴ “So he sent other servants to tell them, ‘The feast has been prepared. The bulls and fattened cattle have been killed, and everything is ready. Come to the banquet!’ ⁵ But **the guests he had invited ignored them and went their own way**, one to his farm, another to his business.

⁶ Others seized his messengers and **insulted them and killed them.**

God's Kingdom Plan – Many Different Guests!

Matthew 22:7-13 NLT

⁷ “The king was furious,... ⁸ And he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, and the guests I invited aren’t worthy of the honour.

⁹ Now go out to the street corners and **invite everyone you see.** ¹⁰ So the servants brought in **everyone they could find, good and bad alike,** and the banquet hall was filled with guests.

¹¹ “But when the king came in to meet the guests, he noticed **a man who wasn’t wearing the proper clothes for a wedding.** ¹² ‘Friend,’ he asked, ‘how is it that you are here without wedding clothes?’ But the man had no reply. ¹³ Then the king said to his aides, ‘Bind his hands and feet and throw him into the outer darkness,...”

One Human Race – A World of Differences!

1. **Life Experience** – childhood, family, work, travel, loss, success, failure...
2. **Health / body** – mentally, physically, illness, recovery, gender/sex, age...
3. **Biometrics** – fingerprints, eyes, DNA, physiology...
4. **Mental abilities** – intellect, reasoning, wisdom, lateral thinking, exams...
5. **Sporting ability** – minor, elite (tennis, football, others...)
6. **Communication skill** – voice, articulation, gesticulation, listening, empathy
7. **Personality / strength** – *Myers Briggs, DISC, Enneagram, Strength Finder*
8. **Creative** – music, art, literature, dance, light / sound, skills & talents...
9. **Relational** – attraction, love languages, personal nature
10. **Ethnic origin** – cultures, languages, customs, food, outward appearance
11. **Beliefs** – religion, philosophy, science, value systems, ethics

“Strength lies in differences,
not in similarities.”

Stephen R Covey

Embraced Differences... Powerful Unity In Christ!

Galatians 3:26-29 NLT

²⁶ For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

²⁷ And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, **like putting on new clothes.** ²⁸ There is **no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female.** For you are **all one in Christ Jesus.** ²⁹ And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and **God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.**

How to Increase Kingdom Connectedness?

- 1. Overcome my uncertainty**
- 2. Develop my willingness**
- 3. Break default human nature**
- 4. Increase understanding**
- 5. Reject prejudice**

God's Inclusive Plan...

Revelation 7:9-10 NLT

⁹ ...I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from **every nation and tribe and people and language**, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb (*Christ*)... ¹⁰ And they were shouting with a great roar, "Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!"

Revelation 19:6-7 NLT

⁶ ...I heard again what sounded like the shout of a vast crowd or the roar of mighty ocean waves or the crash of loud thunder: "Praise the Lord! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns... ⁷ ...For **the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb**, and his bride has prepared herself.

How Is God Challenging Me Today?

John 13:34-35 NIV

³⁴ *Jesus...* “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Q. What are my barriers to ‘*Embracing Our Differences?*’

Q. Who can I embrace (appropriately) in my world?

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A person with a backpack stands on a rocky mountain peak, looking out over a vast, hazy mountain range under a clear sky.

Embracing Our Differences