

Becky Combee Ministries, Inc.

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DIFFERENT IS SPECIAL

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Several years ago in almost every lesson I taught I made the same statement. It was not anything I had thought of before, but it came from my spirit by divine unction. Over and over again, I said, "It is okay to be different. If it isn't illegal or immoral, it's okay." This simple statement has rescued me many times.

Today, there are two major forces that contradict this statement. The world around us always promotes conformity. "Everybody is doing it" is more than archaic verbiage with no impact on our lives. From fashion to fixtures, we are set on compliance with trends and promotional gimmickry that orchestrate our footprints. For instance, there is no longer a place in our homes for brass fixtures, harvest gold appliances, or pink and blue lavatories. We cannot wear bellbottom jeans, poodle skirts, or saddle oxfords. We have moved on and it seems we must all move on together.

The church is also the paragon of conformity. Every generation has been governed by a list of regulations that were considered critical to holiness. In times past, cosmetics were taboo; ear "bobs" were forbidden; and pearls were unholy. Today, the hymnal is old fashioned and multiple weekly services are not necessary. "Everybody is doing it." But sometimes, "everybody" is wrong.

Every point of conformity must be judged by the

Word of God. In 1 Timothy 2:9, the apostle Paul writes that women should wear modest apparel. When I stand in front of the mirror, I must judge myself. I cannot judge anyone else or select my clothes by the world's standards. I must please my heavenly Father.

The book of Hebrews records, "Let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do."¹ This verse of Scripture is the guideline for those in authority. It is the foundation of their decisions and contradicts the modern trend to do "less and less." I cannot forget the testimony of one young man from the drug culture. He cherished the mid-week service of his church. He said, "I just can't make it from Sunday to Sunday without my church family." Oh, how important it is to follow our heart and to honor the leadership of God's Word.

I never refuse other responsibilities if I sense the Lord will use me, even temporarily.

In the church, the Word of God dictates our similarities, but it also recognizes our differences. I am so glad! In Ephesians 4: 16, the apostle Paul writes that the body of Christ is united by "that which every joint supplies." Further, he declares that "each part does its own work to make the whole body grow."² The New Living Translation says, "Each part does its own special work." What a wonderful word – SPECIAL!

I am awestruck by the various gifts in the body of Christ, and I am also relieved because there are so

many things I can't do well. For several years I substituted for teachers in the children's department. Am I good at children's work? Not really! In the past, I sang in the choir. Am I a talented vocalist? No! Yet, I can teach children and I can sing. However, my gift is teaching foundational principles to adults. The call of God on my life is "Go ye therefore, and TEACH."³

Jesus instructed the disciples to "occupy until I come."⁴ The Greek word "occupy" means "to busy oneself, to trade."⁵ I believe in these instructions from heaven. I believe we must be faithful to the church Jesus established with His own blood. We must be diligent in the work of the Lord.

This is the reason that I have served the Lord in many different ways. Yes, I give priority to teaching the beginning principles of God's Word. But I never refuse other responsibilities if I sense the Lord will use me, even temporarily.

In the natural, I can't bake the best cake or wrap a perfect present. This does not stop me from baking a cake – even a very good one. It does not prevent me from wrapping a beautiful package. Yet I am not intimidated by talented people who do a better job. If the cake must be exceptional, I know who will help me. I am not jealous of their ability. Instead, I cherish the gifts of others.

It's "okay to be different." Oh, how important it is to understand this word from the Spirit. Through our diversity we excel. We are perfected by combining our talents and gifts. The body of Christ grows "by the proper working of each individual part."⁶ Together we win! We are a team – a God-ordained team – and together we win!

¹Heb 10:25 NLT ²Eph 4:16 NCV ³Mt 28:19 ⁴Lk 19:13
⁵G4231, Strong's Hebrew & Greek Dictionary ⁶Eph 4:16 NAS



STIR IT UP!

SUZANNE D. WILLIAMS

*Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou **stir up** the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind (2Ti 1:6-7).*

You let your gift grow idle. You assumed it would keep working even if you took a break, put up your feet, lay down for a while. A siesta. A respite. A nap.

But while you were catchin' z's time moved by and other stuff crept in until the very thought of using your gift became a curiosity.

"Yeah, I used to do that ages ago."

It happened to Timothy, and Paul gave him the solution. "Stir it up," he said. "**Stir up this thing God gave you.** The thing I laid my hands on you for. The thing power flowed from God through me into you with the ability, the strength, and the fearlessness to do."

"God called you. God set you apart. God. The Almighty. The All-Sufficient one. The best backup there is. So what are you waiting for, what are you afraid of? What, son in the faith?"

Stir it up!

The phrase in the Greek is an interesting one. It

means to rekindle a fire. To fan the flames. Add fresh fuel. (Clarke, e-sword) But do it knowing God's behind you. These verses go together.

Stir it up! And then you won't be afraid. Stir it up! And then you'll see God's power in your thoughts. Stir it up! And then you'll feel the true majesty of the love of God.

Don't just sit there, my friend. **STIR IT UP!**

What is it God has for you to do? What instruction did He whisper in your ear early one morning that you forgot about? Stir that up!

YOU do it. Because until you get up and push yourself towards it. **Until you actually RUN the race, you'll still be sitting in the same spot tying your shoes.** And the goal will be just as far off as it ever was.

Stir it up! And then you won't need to be revived. The very thought of revival implies something died, something that shouldn't have, something that should be as alive today as it was when you first received it, as alive as that moment when God came down and you took that initial step of faith.

God didn't give you a gift to keep it wrapped in a pretty package with a nice bow.

He said, "Unwrap it and use it. I'm right here behind you with everything you'll ever need to complete the task." So do it. Stir up that gift and see where it takes you.