

KIRBSTONES

ALONG THE NARROW WAY

curb-stone (kürb'stön') - *noun* - one of the stones or a range of stones forming a curb, as along a sidewalk or roadway. Historically, the curbstones were placed vertically along the edges of the roadbed and the paving material was backfilled against the row of curbstones. The curbstones served ⁽¹⁾to hold the material in the roadbed, ⁽²⁾to prevent the scattering of the material along the edges, and ⁽³⁾to define the road itself from all the adjoining areas.

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT.

¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT." - MATTHEW 7:13-14 - NIV

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Often, churches are tempted to invite a high-profile, celebrated teacher, or a well-known consultant with the idea that they will bring the magic formula for numerical growth.

Slick marketing, impressive production, and increasingly large crowds can create a sense of momentum. Yet, relying on celebrity servants of God can shift our focus from the One who builds his church. Instead of depending on outside personalities, we must yield to the Spirit, equip our people with the Word, and be faithfully obedient to God's leading.

When a church repeatedly brings in famous speakers, the congregation can become conditioned to expect outside superstar saints each Sunday, rather than seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 3:6 teaches that *I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth*. Our watering comes from someone else's ministry, yet God intends to give increase in our local context through the Holy Spirit's work. When we lean on another's blessing poured out in sermons, we risk neglecting the work of the Holy Spirit in and among us.

Paul warns against building faith on human wisdom, rather than on God's power. He writes in 1 Corinthians 2:4-5, *My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power*. When a church depends on the reputation of a celebrity, the people's faith tends to rest on that individual's eloquence or charisma. But when we yield to the Holy Spirit and preach the Word of God, our churches are built on something more solid than personality: *they are founded on God's power, which transforms hearts and endures forever*.

The NT teaches us the importance of equipping every believer for ministry, rather than outsourcing discipleship. *So Christ gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up* (Ephesians 4:11-12).

Notice that these roles exist within the church body: they equip his people so that all can serve. When we constantly bring in outside consultants or celebrity teachers, we undermine the calling of our local pastors, elders, and teachers. We need to ensure that our leaders and every member are equipped to minister in our specific context. The goal is not a full sanctuary, but a NT community, where each believer is called, trained, and sent.

Over emphasis on guest events puts a strain on church resources financially and spiritually. Promotional expenses and speaker fees divert funds from our ministries. People become accustomed to blockbuster events. They grow restless during times of ordinary teaching and fellowship. They judge a week's worship experience according to the speaker's fame, rather than whether the Spirit moved through the Word.

Instead of looking outward for marquee names, let us commit to going deeper inward, into our Scripture and prayer, allowing the Spirit to guide our steps. Let us train folks to serve sacrificially, let teachers diligently study and rightly divide the Word, and encourage pastors to shepherd with prayer and obedience. This will lead to *sustainable growth*.

Let us pray that our leaders will exercise faith, patience, and humility. Jesus prayed for unity. *I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one, I in them and you in me, so that they may be brought to complete unity* (John 17:22-23). True unity and growth come from a shared reliance on Christ and the Spirit, not from the spotlight of a guest speaker. Churches that (1) yield themselves to the Spirit, (2) arm their people with the Word, and (3) obey God's leading will experience a vitality and unity that no celebrity talks can replicate. Trust in Christ to be our Chief Shepherd.

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***“I planted the seed,
Apollos watered it, but
God made it grow.”***

1 Corinthians 3:6—NIV