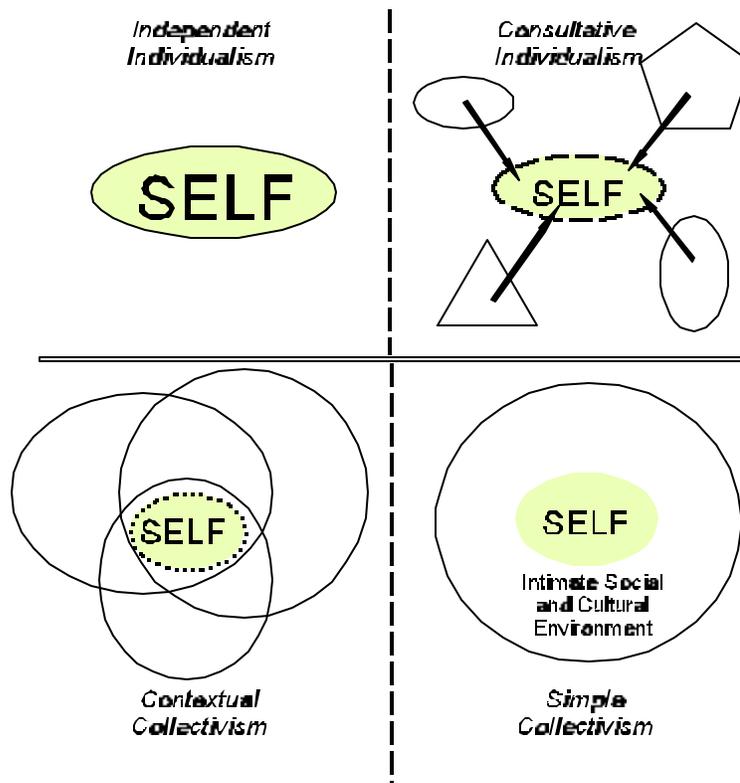


Defining the Self: Individualism and Collectivism

Perhaps the most important dimension of cultural difference in social behavior, across the diverse cultures of the world, is the relative emphasis on individualism v. collectivism. In individualist cultures, most people's social behavior is largely determined by personal goals, attitudes, and values of collectivities (families, co-workers, fellow countrymen). In collectivist cultures, most people's social behavior is largely determined by goals, attitudes, and values that are shared with some collectivity (group of persons) . . . (Triandis, "Collectivism v. Individualism", 71)

1. The definitions of self in individual and collective societies are illustrated in the following diagram:

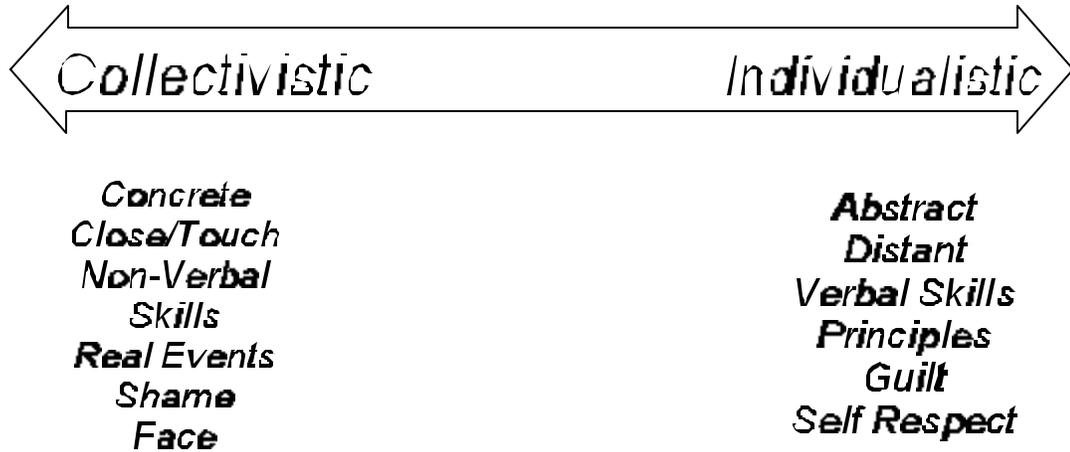


2. The spectrum of individualism and collectivism:

Simple Collectivism	Contextual Collectivism	Consultative Individualism	Independent Individualism
One ingroup totally determines many of the behaviors	A substantial influence by one or more ingroups on one or more behaviors	Two or more ingroups influence behaviors	No ingroup determines the behaviors

Note: An ingroup is a "Group of people about whose welfare one is concerned, with whom one is willing to cooperate without demanding equitable returns, and the separation from whom leads to discomfort or even pain." (Ibid., 72)

3. Major differences between individualism and collectivism (chart adapted from Triandis, "Multimethod Probes"):



Collectivism	Individualism
Antecedents	
Unit of survival is food ingroup Agriculture Large families Lower social class Non-migratory	Affluence Cultural complexity (indexed by, e.g., number of distinct occupations, levels of political organization, and population density) Hunting/food gathering Upper social class Migration Urbanism Exposure to mass media
Defining Attributes	
Pay much attention to a certain ingroup; ingroups defined according to tradition. See a sharp distinction between ingroup and outgroup members; ingroups are perceived to be more homogeneous than outgroups When there is conflict between individual and ingroup goals, ingroup goals tend to have primacy. When vertical relationships conflict (parent/child) with horizontal relationships (spouse/spouse), the former are more important.	Have ingroups and outgroups, but pay less attention to them. Ingroups formed by fluid definitions based on personal needs. Do not see as sharp a contrast between ingroup and outgroup members; ingroups are perceived to be more heterogeneous than outgroups because of the focus on individual differences When there is conflict between individual and ingroup goals, individual goals tend to have primacy. When vertical relationships (parent/child) conflict with horizontal relationships (spouse/spouse), the latter are more important.

<p>Behavior regulated largely by ingroup norms (though there may be freedom to think deviant thoughts, behavior is more important than thought life)</p> <p>Much emphasis on hierarchy, harmony, and saving face; typically males are at the top of the hierarchy</p> <p>Ingroup fate, ingroup achievement, and interdependence within the ingroup are emphasized</p> <p>Definition of self-reliance: "I am not a burden on the ingroup."</p> <p>Groups are the basic unit of analysis of a society</p> <p>Ingroups broad and stable</p> <p>Tendency to value family integrity, security, obedience, and conformity</p> <p>Spectrum of collectivism: from a narrow familism to a broad nationalism</p> <p>Self is defined socially, e.g., as an appendage of the ingroup: "We relate, therefore we are."</p>	<p>Behavior regulated largely by individual likes and dislikes and cost-benefit analysis ("Is the social benefit I will gain worth the social cost I might pay?"); greater hedonism</p> <p>Much less emphasis on hierarchy, harmony, and saving face</p> <p>Personal fate, achievement, and independence from the ingroup are emphasized</p> <p>Definition of self-reliance: "I can do my own thing"</p> <p>Individuals are the basic unit of analysis of society</p> <p>Ingroups are narrow and unstable</p> <p>Tendency to value achievement, pleasure, and competition</p> <p>Spectrum of individualism: from narcissism to extension of the self to be concerned with abstract entities (e.g., the "public good")</p> <p>Self is a separate and distinct entity: "I think, therefore I am"</p>
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Consequents

<p>Socialization for obedience and duty</p> <p>Sacrifice for ingroup</p> <p>Cognition: focus on common elements with ingroup members</p> <p>Behavior: Intimate, saving face, reflects hierarchy, social support, interdependence</p>	<p>Socialization for self-reliance and independence</p> <p>Good skills when entering new groups</p> <p>Loneliness</p>
<p>Better levels of crime, divorce, drug abuse, homicide, delinquency, teenage pregnancies, child abuse, and mental illness</p>	<p>Better economic development, satisfaction with level of family obligations, more affluence, invention, and achievement</p>

4. Markus and Kitayama also chart the differences ("Culture and the Self: Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation", p. 230)

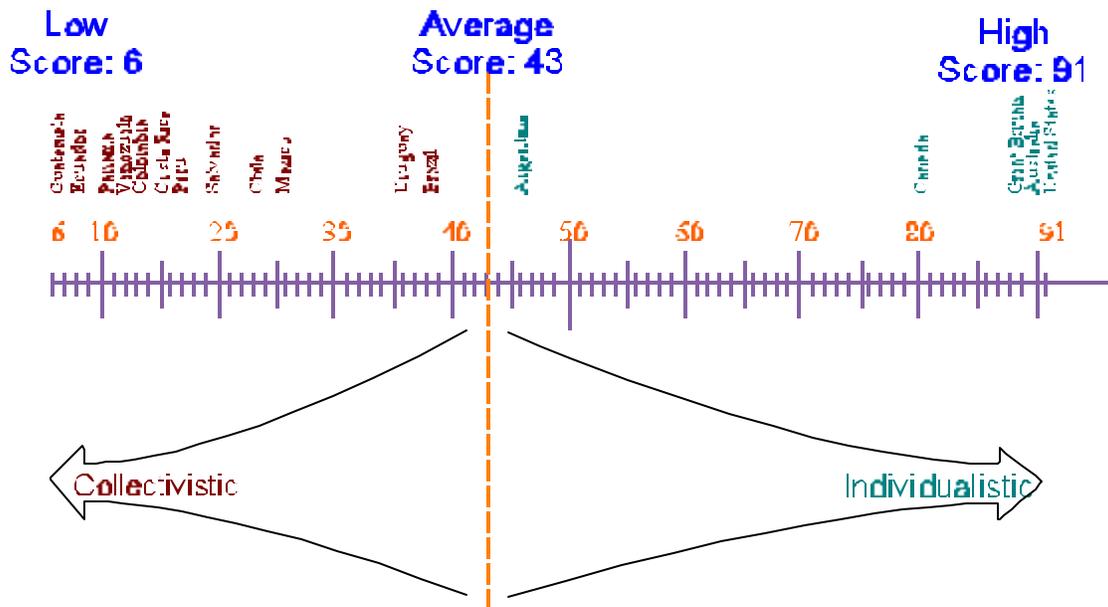
Feature	Collectivism	Individualism
Definition	Connected with social context	Separate from social context
Structure	Flexible, variable	Bounded, unitary, stable
Important Features	External, public (statuses, roles, relationships)	Internal, private (abilities, thoughts, feelings)
Tasks	<p>Belong, fit-in</p> <p>Occupy one's proper place</p> <p>Engage in appropriate action</p> <p>Promote others' goals</p> <p>Be indirect: "read other's mind"</p>	<p>Be unique</p> <p>Express self</p> <p>Realize internal attributes</p> <p>Promote own goals</p> <p>Be direct: "say what's on your mind"</p>

Role of Others	<i>Self-definition</i> : relationships with others in specific contexts define the self	<i>Self-evaluation</i> : others important for social comparison, reflected appraisal
Basis of self-esteem or self-satisfaction	Ability to adjust, restrain self, maintain harmony with social context	Ability to express self, validate internal attributes

5. Hofstede proposes the following consequences for the orientation of a culture (extracted from Culture's Consequences) and range of sample scores:

	Collective	Individual
Society at Large	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>Gemeinschaft</i> (traditional, community-based) social order * Unbalanced power political systems * Less occupational mobility * Income inequality between sectors of the economy * Less press freedom * Repression potential * Labor movement more united * Labor unions more interested in sharing management responsibility; appeal of worker self-management * More road accidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>Gesellschaft</i> (modern, society-based) social order * Balanced power political systems * Greater occupational mobility * Income equality between sectors of the economy * More press freedom * Protest potential * Labor movement more atomized * Labor unions less interested in sharing management responsibility * Safer driving
Religious Life, Philosophical and Ideological Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Collective conversions * <i>Jen</i> philosophy of man * Stress on identity and roots * Traditionalist ethic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Individual concerns * Personality philosophy of man * Worship of the independent sector * "Protestant" (modernist) ethic

	Collective	Individual
Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Involvement of individuals with organizations primarily moral * Employees expect organizations to look after them like a family--and can become very alienated if organization dissatisfies them * Organization has great influence on members' well-being * Employees expect organization to defend their interests * Policies and practices based on loyalty and sense of duty * Promotion from inside * Promotion on seniority * Policies and practices vary according to relations (particularism) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Involvement of individuals with organizations primarily calculative * Organizations are not expected to look after employees from the cradle to the grave * Organization has moderate influence on members' well-being * Employees are expected to defend their own interests * Policies and practices should allow for individual initiative * Promotion from inside and outside * Promotion on market value * Policies and practices apply to all (universalism)



6. Measuring individualism versus collectivism:

When <i>measuring within</i> a culture, self-reliance is the most significant factor.	When <i>comparing</i> cultures, family integrity is the most significant factor.
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7. Types of collective in-groups include:

- a. The patriot group (puts nation ahead of larger family; some US circles)
- b. The familialist group (puts family ahead of work-group or country; traditional China)
- c. The organization group (puts company or organization ahead of larger family; Japan)
- d. The political group (puts political organizations or party ahead of other groups; former USSR's official line)

8. Strategic aspects of in-groups to consider:

	Simple Collectivism <small>One in-group totally determines many behaviors</small>	Contextual Collectivism <small>A substantial influence by one or more in-groups on one or more behaviors</small>	Consultative Individualism <small>Two or more in-groups influence behaviors</small>	Independent Individualism <small>No in-group determines behaviors</small>
Why do in-groups form?				
How are in-groups regulated?				
How are in-group norms determined?				
How is membership determined?				
How are role and status determined and regulated?				
What types of things do in-group norms address?				
How much control can an in-group have over an individual member?				
How does change occur in in-groups?				
How are new in-groups formed?				

- a. Why do groups form?
 - i. The universality of small, primary groups (family, play, interest, association). This is simply the outworking of the fact that God has made us relational creatures! It is rooted in our wiring as human beings.
 - ii. Do some cultures form more groups than others? (E.g., urban settings are said to produce more groups than rural/traditional settings)
- b. How are groups regulated?
- c. How are group norms determined? (ecology, group history, common human core, intergroup interaction, etc.)
- d. How is membership determined? (Individual/collective and power distance factors such as fate, birth, choice and active allegiance; bounded set vs centered set; etc.)
- e. How are role and status determined and regulated?

Role is the acting out of the status accorded you by your culture, subculture, and/or group within a social institutional setting. Abuse of your role can either result in ostracism or popularity (depending on how your abuse is perceived by the society).

Status is the position assigned to an individual by his/her culture, subculture, and/or group within the social institutional setting. Everyone has number of status situations within his social setting (father, son, brother, uncle, nephew, teacher, etc.). Status confers certain rights and protections, but also places certain obligations and responsibilities.

There are two major implications for the cross-cultural worker:

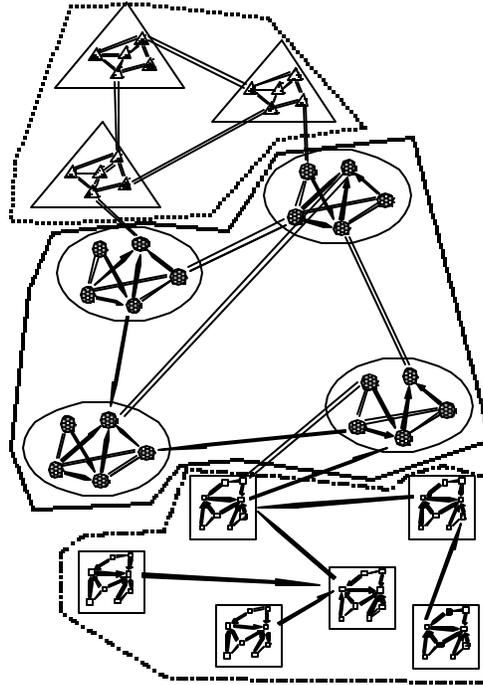
- i. He/she should be aware of his/her status and seek to respond within it, especially during the early part of his term of service.
- ii. He/she should also be aware of the status of the respondents--what is their position in society and how will their profession of faith affect the community's response? Possibilities include (Hesselgrave, Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally, pp. 336-43):
 - (1) Marginals (whose faith response may sociologically prevent others who are "normal" within the society from professing faith)
 - (2) Influential individuals (who may bring many others along with them into the new faith)
 - (a) *Formal* leaders (those who possess prestige influence by virtue of occupying key positions of prominence and power in the community)
 - (b) *Opinion* leaders (those who exercise personal influence in the community by force of personality, competency, and communication ability)
 - (3) Good speakers or orators (who will be able to persuasively communicate the new faith)
 - (4) Sponsors (who will lend social legitimacy to the new faith)

- (5) Mediators (who will be able to explain the new faith in a socially non-threatening way)
- f. What types of things do group norms address?
 - i. Perpetuating the group's existence (how **cohesive** is the group; does it foster dependence or independence?)
 - ii. Maintaining group loyalty (how **supportive** is the group, especially in a crisis?; how **affirming** is the group?)
 - iii. Regulating how members are to relate to each other (how **approachable** is the leadership of the group by a group member?)
 - iv. Determining group goals
 - v. Regulating majorities and minorities within groups ("face" is an issue here)
 - vi. Making decisions (majority, consensus, autocracy, etc.)
 - vii. Understanding and dealing with other groups and/or people not of the group
- g. How much control can a group have over an individual member?
 - i. Jonestown
 - ii. Asch's experiments in the 1950s in conformity to obviously false standards as replicated in other cultures (Mann, "Cultural Influences on Group Processes")
 - (1) The level of conformity found by Asch in the US was obtained in Belgium thirty years later
 - (2) Cultures with strong sanctions against non-conformity give particularly high levels of conformity
 - (3) In the UK, conformity was not found (why not??)
 - (4) Cultures with strong ingroup orientation yield high conformity when members of the ingroup are the confederates, but low conformity when outgroup confederates are used.
- h. How does change occur in groups?
- i. How are new groups formed? What are the social dynamics and pressures, and how can we understand them in the cross cultural setting?
- 9. Important considerations for understanding groups include (Dodd, Dynamics, pp. 102-5):
 - a. Group size: the smaller the group, the tighter the observations of each person by the whole group and (thus) the greater the pressure to conform.
 - b. Frequency of contact: Usually, the more interaction between members of the group, the greater the positive feelings toward other group members.
 - c. Cohesiveness: the degree of group attraction for group members; implies a unity of group-centeredness and loyalty. General principles of cohesion include:
 - i. Highly cohesive groups have fewer deviants in their decisions.
 - ii. Cohesive groups are more likely to be influenced by persuasive communication.

- iii. Members of a highly cohesive group communicate frequently, and the communication is distributed more evenly among group members.
 - iv. Members of a highly cohesive group offer mutual support and tend to reject threatening messages.
 - v. The higher the cohesiveness of the group, the stronger the pressure for individuals to conform.
- d. Group salience: the importance of the group, or the value the individual places on the group. Resistance to changing group norms is directly related to the group's degree of salience. This is a very important consideration in understanding cult members and how to reach them.
- e. Clarity of group norms: The greater the ambiguity of norms, the less control the group has over its members. When ambiguity is present, group interaction may increase to reduce the ambiguity (depending on the value placed on uncertainty reduction by the group).
- f. Homogeneity: The similarity among group members. The foundation for the so-called Homogeneous Unit Principle (HUP) in church growth:
- Men do not like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers.

This principle states an undeniable fact. Human beings do build barriers around their societies. More exactly we may say that the ways in which each society lives and speaks, dresses and works, of necessity set it off from other societies. The world's population is a mosaic and each piece has a separate life of its own that seems strange and often unlovely to men and women of other places. (McGavran, Understanding (1990 ed.), p. 163).

"It takes no great acumen to see that when marked differences of color, stature, income, cleanliness, and education are present, men understand the gospel better when expounded by their own kind of people. They prefer to join churches whose members look, talk, and act like themselves. (McGavran, Understanding (1980 ed.), p. 227)
- g. Issues: The issues that confront the reference group are the issues that influence the members.
- h. Affiliative needs of group members: all members of a group have affiliative needs (they want to feel like they belong) met by the group to some extent.
- i. Goal-directed reasons for group membership: Some people join groups because they already hold to the goals of the group. Membership in these cases serves to reinforce their own beliefs and goals.
10. Networking: Every individual within a group (as well as the group as a whole) is connected with a limited number of group members (or other groups). The sum of these networked relationships forms the person's concept of the group and his/her role in it. We can analyze these networks by means of diagrams showing the relational links of each member in a group, organization, or network.



11. Hypotheses about group structures in intercultural communication (adapted in part from Hesselgrave, Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally, pp. 377-8):
- a. Key factors: form of individualism/collectivism, power distance, and contextuality,
 - b. The more closely communication follows the patterns of the prevailing group network structures, the more effective it will be.
 - c. People communicate more to others of their own group, i.e., interpersonal communication is usually horizontal.
 - d. Interpersonal, horizontal communication within groups lends itself best to effecting voluntary changes of attitude and behavior.
 - e. The more face-to-face the group, the more difficult it becomes for the outsider to establish effective communication (and, therefore, the more important it is that communication be based on personal friendship).
 - f. In all groups, the initial communication of the gospel should be to responsible, accepted members of the group who are, therefore, good potential channels of communication.
 - g. The more heterogeneous the group, the more flexible and variegated the communicative approach to its included networks must be.
 - h. In face-to-face groups, consideration should be given to communicating the gospel first to someone at the top (or someone near the top) who is more capable of making decisions and presenting the gospel to the larger group.
 - i. The more cohesive, homogeneous and face-to-face the group, the more likely it is that communication will be along established network lines and that decisions will be collective.
 - j. The more cohesive, homogeneous and face-to-face the society, the more time-conscious the communicator must be if he is to effect lasting changes.

12. For personal reflection: Selected biblical texts related to individualism/collectivism

Collectivism

Romans 12:4: Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Romans 12:10: Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

1 Corinthians 12:7: Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:12: The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-- and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Philippians 2:1: If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Individualism

Acts 17:27: God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.

Romans 12:1: Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 14:5: One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

1 Corinthians 7:24: Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to.

1 Corinthians 12:7: Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:27: Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

1 Corinthians 16:2: On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

2 Corinthians 5:10: For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

2 Corinthians 9:7: Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Galatians 6:4: Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, 5 for each one should carry his own load.

Ephesians 4:7: But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

Ephesians 5:33: However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

James 1:14: but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.

1 Peter 4:10: Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

Revelation 20:12: And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened,

which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

Revelation 20:15: If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:27: Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.