

**Diversity in Balance**

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In a world where every snowflake is different and millions of varieties of flora and fauna exist, should we not expect the same of people? My time at VCSU has greatly enhanced my realization and appreciation of the differences between people. Sometimes these differences were surprising considering the outward similarities that seemingly existed between people. However, it became apparent that every individual approaches each problem, project, and question with a different background, worldview, and experiences, from which ensues different answers.

Being an online student gives me, I believe, an advantageous viewpoint on this subject. I often work and communicate with people I have never met; thus, the possibility of my developing prejudice regarding outward appearances is diminished. I can learn a great deal about people from a position unclouded by what I see.

In my experience taking online music courses at VCSU, I have had several chances to collaborate with other students, creating questionnaires, analyzing musical selections, reviewing and commenting on each other's work, and researching and building solutions to problems in the music industry. What I have constantly found incredible is that even though we are all college students who have completed many of the same courses, we can come up with very different answers. Take, for example, analyzing a piece of music. A group of girls who have studied three semesters of music theory together can listen to the same piece and still use a different thought process that results in disagreement on the theoretical breakdown. However, these experiences have all taught me something important.

To me, diversity is bringing everything that, combined, forms us as individuals to unite with the unique attributes of those around us. By combining experiences and counter-balancing strengths and weaknesses, we can work together and accomplish a lot more. The various opinions and perspectives of others can provide safeguards, additional knowledge, and fresh ideas. Furthermore, we should use our

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own talents and expertise to serve others and improve our world. Nevertheless, working with others is not always easy. We, by nature, are selfish and think highly of our perspectives and ideas. But, we, again, were originally created to work alongside other individuals. Thus, what can be the greatest challenge, valuing and working with other people, can also be the greatest blessing.

Even though diversity is wonderful and should be esteemed, excessively promoting its importance can lead to our abandoning solid truths and convictions simply because others do not agree. The Word of God should be our foundation for all reasoning and the unifying basis of all our diversities. Thus, while we should love people enough to understand their perspectives and learn from them, we cannot embrace things contrary to the laws of God.

Acknowledging and appreciating differences are important skills that aid us in understanding other people, solving problems, and thoroughly thinking through our own thought processes and ideas. However, we must assess the input of others based on God's Word – the same God who initially created our numerous and fascinating diversities.