



WORD FOR LIFE CHURCH MINISTRIES

IN CHRIST: BELIEVING AND LIVING BECAUSE OF JESUS
a study of Ephesians

Spring 2024

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Ephesians 4:7-16

In Christ: Believing and Living Because of Jesus

Continuing with the theme of the unity by which believers should operate, this next section focuses on the ways in which the community of faith is strengthened by the diversity of gifts Jesus has given to the church. Remember, believers are to be united in the faith we profess in the One who holds us together, and one way He has enabled us to unite is by calling some to different work. All of this is to mature us—i.e., grow us up—in Him.

Themes

Chapter: Strengthened by the Gospel | *Section:* Unity for maturing believers in Christ.

Reflection Questions: How has the Holy Spirit empowered you to contribute to the maturation of your local church and the Church universal? In what ways have you entrusted who you are to Jesus' plan to "perfect" the church?

Key Terms

- *Gifts* (v. 8): Refers to a specific present. So, to "give gifts to His people" expresses God's enabling of people by means of God's provision to particular people. They are spiritual gifts because the Holy Spirit is the agency by which the gifts are to be employed for Godly purposes. [See Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-31; Ephesians 4:11]
- *Apostles* (v. 11): [apostolous—a messenger, delegate, or ambassador; one commissioned by another as a representative. One sent by Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel]. The definition speaks of individuals who function in this way, not of a broadly given gift (as in John 13:16). In this way, the gift is the person, not what we view as spiritual gifts.

Note that Paul is not attempting to limit apostleship to only a select few. He is expressing God's grace as received by humanity through apostles. The limited number of apostles is generally taken from Matthew 10:2, Mark 3:14 and 6:30, Luke 6:13, Acts 1:2.

- *Prophets* (v. 11): [*pro* (beforehand) and *phemi* (asserting one idea over another, especially the spoken word)—one who speaks forth, in this context, by the inspiration of God.] One who declares the word of God revealed from the mind of God as a forthteller ("interpreter") but also includes predictions of the future as a foreteller ("seer"). *1 Corinthians 14:4-5; 1 Peter 1:19-21*
- *Evangelists* (v. 11): [a bringer of good news, someone with a vocational calling from God to announce the Good News of the Gospel.] While all Christians are to share the Gospel, evangelists do so as a vocational ministry. Paul is a good example of an evangelist.



- *Shepherds* (v. 11): [*poimenas*/feeder, protector, and leader of a flock of people (metaphorically). One whom the “Lord raises up to care for the total well-being of the Lord’s flock.” The job description is provided in John 21:15-17. In our context, the pastor shepherds a local flock/church.
- *Teachers* (v. 11): [*didaskalos* an instructor; one who teaches] The Bible regards teachers as ones who lead by virtue of their theological competence. In this verse, the teacher is so because of Holy Spirit-enablement.

Chapter Outline

Bible study note: The spiritual gifts listed in this chapter refer to those who operate in particular callings. The persons’/’offices’ in this text overlap with what is commonly known as spiritual gifts, but the focus here is on the people who are figures of Christ’s grace. In this context, “grace” refers to ability or capacity made possible because of God’s favor.

I. **Ephesians 4:7-10 – The Giver of Spiritual Gifts**

Jesus is the giver of gifts and He is generous, authoritative, and intentional. This makes sense because the gifts He gives are for the good of the Church He left behind and for which He will return. To understand the gifts, we must understand the giver.

- A. **The Generosity of the Giver.** Jesus gave gifts _____, meaning that we do not earn or deserve them. They are acts of grace that He distributes according to His own _____. Recall Paul’s testimony from 3:7-9.

- B. **The Victory of the Giver.** By virtue of His _____, Jesus is victorious over sin, death, hell, and the grave. Though previously held captive to each of these, anyone who belongs to Jesus will be a partaker of His victory.
Psalm 68:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18;

- C. **The Authority of the Giver.** At Calvary, Jesus completed God’s work for Him. When He ascended, God restored Him to his place of honor and authority. Out of this authority, Jesus extends grace and calls His followers to continue His work. *1 Corinthians 15:27-28; Ephesians 1:17, 19-22; Philippians 2:9-11*



NOTES: _____

II. Ephesians 4:11-13 – The Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

Emphasis is placed on the fact that Jesus appoints persons to receive His grace to serve, care for, unite, and mature believers. Yes, these persons have received gifts to serve, but we must remember that the persons who serve in these ways are also gifts. So, we honor and celebrate the person and the gift.

- A. Equip the saints for the _____ .
- B. To build up the _____ of Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 12:1-11
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17

NOTES: _____

III. Ephesians 4:14-16 – The Potential of United Believers

Believers' potential comes into focus in these three verses. As we read them, several questions help guide how we receive and respond to the matter of individual and corporate spiritual maturity.

- A. **Potential and intention** (4:14a). *What have you decided concerning our spiritual maturity?*
- This is a directive concerning how we respond to God's grace. Pay careful attention to the idea that the concern is for the makeup of the collective as a result of each individual's spiritual maturity.
- B. **Potential and attention** (4:14b). *To whom or to what are you paying attention?*
- There can be too many cooks in your "spiritual kitchen." What sounds good and works well in other groups may not be ideal for another. Then, there are others with impure, evil intentions who must be avoided (1 Peter 2:1-3).
 - Take care that the Gospel remains the main thing. *Romans 14:1-6; Galatians 1:6-9*
- C. **Potential and direction** (4:15-16). *How will we mature together?*



- _____ . Growing in the direction of Christ, taking on His character, believing His word, and doing His work. *Philippians 2:5-8*
- _____ . Trusting that God's path is right and determining to stay on it. Honoring what God does for others while remaining faithful to our own journey. *Matthew 7:13-14; 11:28-30; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 5:1*
- _____ . Learning to love more than wanting to win. Measuring our words to ensure righteousness and care in our conversation. *Proverbs 27:6; Ephesians 4:2; James 3:6-12*
- _____ . Resisting isolation when there are opportunities to come together and/or collaborate. *Proverbs 15:22; 1 Corinthians 14:26 Hebrews 10:15*

NOTES: _____
