

Ephesians 4:7-16 – God Gave Us A Gift

Leader's Guide

December 23, 2018

1. Read Ephesians 4:7-16 to familiarize yourself with the passage.

⁷ But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸ Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." ⁹ (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) ¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. Ephesians 4:7-16 (ESV)

2. Every Christian receives a spiritual gift to serve others when they are born again. What gift do you think God has given you? How have you seen it used for good in Christ's body?

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:7 (ESV)

Our spiritual gift is given not for us but for the good of others. One way to find our gift is ask how God appears to be using us for others good in the church.

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: 1 Peter 4:10 (ESV)

Each of us is given a unique gift from God to serve others in the church. We are stewards of that gift. We are accountable to God for how we use it.

So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church. 1 Corinthians 14:12 (ESV)

Paul encourages the Corinthians, as they are longing for special manifestations of God's Spirit, that they should long for manifestations of the Spirit that will do the most good for others.

3. Why did God give each of us a spiritual gift? What happens if we ignore our gift and don't use it?

- A. God gave each of us a spiritual gift to serve others in the church to help them grow in Christ. Using our spiritual gift also helps mature us in Christ. Using our gift enables the church to function like a healthy body with Christ as the head.
- B. If we ignore our gift, the health of the entire church suffers. If we ignore our gift, we don't grow mature in Christ.

Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up. 1 Corinthians 14:5 (ESV)

Spiritual gifts should be used to build up others in the church.

Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up. 1 Corinthians 14:12 (ESV)

One of the best things we can do in the church is to build others up with our spiritual gift.

Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. 1 Timothy 4:14-15 (ESV)

This is most likely Timothy's teaching gift. Paul wants to make sure he doesn't ignore his gift but that he uses it and grows it.

4. In the message, we learned the easiest way to find our spiritual gift. What was it?

- A. The easiest way to find your gift is to see what you are passionate about in the church. If you are passionate about greeting and hospitality, you are probably gifted by God in that area. If you are passionate about teaching, you are probably gifted by God in that area. As we learned, spiritual gifts from God are not limited to the gift lists in the New Testament. All of those lists are representative lists. God may gift us in service or in a variety of activities. For example, God may gift you in technology and he wants you to use that gift in the service of the church.
- B. Another way to find your gift is to see where others affirm what you are going in the church and you see spiritual fruit. When other people let you know they are blessed by the way you serve, it is a good indicator God has gifted you to serve in that area.
- C. Ask those you trust. Sometimes we are blind to our own gifts. It is never a bad idea to ask those we trust what gift they see in us.

5. Read Romans 12:3-8. What is Paul's primary concern about spiritual gifts in this passage? From what we learned in Ephesians 4:7-16, what is the danger Paul was trying to help them avoid?

⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷ if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. Romans 12:4-8 (ESV)

- A. Paul reminds us we are connected to one another and important for one another (we are individually members of one another). Paul doesn't want us to become spectators in church. He wants us involved serving others in the church. He is concerned when Christians don't use their gift to serve one another. When that happens, the body of Christ doesn't mature. We must realize the interconnectedness we have with one another as the body of Christ, with Jesus as our head.

6. Read 1 Corinthians 12:28-30. Paul orders this list of gifts. What surprises you about the order of gifts in the list? How does that change your thinking about the importance of different gifts?

28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 1 Corinthians 12:28-30 (ESV)

A. Paul ranks spiritual teachers as the third most important gift above gifts of miracles and healing. This emphasizes the important of Bible teaching in the church as more important than miraculous gifts. Paul also ranks the gift of administration above the gift of tongues. This is another instance where Paul sees a gift that we wouldn't consider extraordinary as extremely important because it serves others in the church.

7. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-14. Who determines our spiritual gifts? According to these verses, why is it important to use them?

4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8 For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. 12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many. 1 Corinthians 12:4–14 (ESV)

A. God is the one who determines our spiritual gift. He also determines the amount of the gift we receive (see Ephesians 4:7). This is why some people have stronger spiritual gifts than others.

B. It is important to use our gift because the church is a body. All portions of our body, even if they are not as prominent as other parts, are important to the health of the body. If we do not have a prominent gift, that doesn't mean our gift is unimportant in the church.

8. Read Ephesians 4:11-14. Why is it important to be involved in a local church where you can benefit from those gifted for teaching and shepherding? What is the danger of just listening to a gifted teacher online but not involving yourself in a local church?

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Ephesians 4:11–14 (ESV)

- A. Pastors, teachers, and evangelists are gifts to the church from God, just like apostles and prophets. Apostles and prophets were used by God to lay the foundation of the church and the apostolic testimony about Christ is given to us through the New Testament. Pastors, teachers and evangelists are given to the church by God for building up the body of Christ. Those who isolate themselves from teachers in the church will never grow to full spiritual maturity. We need gifted teaching and exposition to help us mature. Those who don't involve themselves in a local church don't have the benefit of a pastor who can shepherd their life by offering spiritual encouragement, correction and wisdom. Denying yourself the benefit of learning from those gifted to teach and shepherd in the church results in a lack of spiritual maturity and leaves people spiritually vulnerable to those who want to lead them spiritually astray.
- B. The danger of just listening to a gifted teacher online is you don't have a pastor in your life to encourage and correct. You don't have a body where you can use your spiritual gifts to encourage others. If you don't have a body to use your spiritual gifts, you end up stuck in spiritual infancy.

9. Why is it important for pastors and teachers to view their job as equipping the people to do the work of ministry, not see themselves as the ones who should do all the work of ministry?

A. If pastors try to do all the work of ministry, the church body will not grow strong in Christ. By doing all the work of ministry, the pastor is taking away the opportunity other people need to use their spiritual gift, which is essential for the health of the church and the maturity of the people. If the pastor tries to do all the work of ministry, he will limit the size of his church and experience burn-out. In addition, the pastor must realize he is not given all the gifts necessary for ministry. Others are gifted by God to accomplish areas of ministry better than he can.