

The Equipping and Building Gifts

God's gifts to the church are the result of Christ's victory.

Ephesians 4:7¹

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸

Therefore He says:

*“When He ascended on high,
He led captivity captive,
And gave gifts to men.”*

1. What is the purpose of a “church”

a. The purpose of a “church” is NOT:

- i. Great programs for every age group with only a few people ministering
- ii. A unified city presence or political force and influence
- iii. In other words the church's purpose is not to bring change to culture and politics, (even though individual changes will often affect culture and politics).
 1. *God is not asking us to take over the world's system for His glory (dominionism²).*
- iv. Church growth is NOT numbers.

b. The purpose of a “church” is to build up the body of Christ.

- i. The church causes the sheep to grow up through teaching the gospel; that is the GOOD NEWS that:
 1. *We are children of God and deeply loved by Him by faith in Jesus (Gal. 3:26).*
 2. *We have everlasting life and will not perish by grace through faith (Jn 3:16, 1 Jn. 5:13).*
 3. *That we are completely, once and for all, forgiven (Eph. 1:7, Heb. 10).*
 4. *We are the righteousness of God in Christ, holy, perfected, blameless (2 Cor. 5:21, Col. 1:22).*
 5. *We are under the New Covenant and NOT under the Old (Heb. 8:13).*
 6. *God's Grace, undeserved favor is toward us. He is not our enemy (Rom. 5:10, Rom. 8:31).*
 7. *We are to prove all things and hold fast to what is good and not be tossed by lying winds of doctrine with mixture.*
- ii. True church growth is both individual and corporate development until we all come into a unity of the FAITH.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, scriptures for this lesson were taken from the New King James Version of the Holy Bible, Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

² To better understand what dominionism is and to become aware of its prevalence, we urge you to read the articles here: <http://www.apologeticsindex.org/l01.html>

2. The gifts listed in Ephesians 4 are apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherd-teachers.³

Ephesians 4:11-16⁴

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.

a. Equipping: *katartizō*, "to equip for service."-Wuest

b. Building: *oikodomeō*, a building, structure

1 Corinthians 3:9

For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

These gifts that Christ gave to the church are supposed to function more like a coach than what we typically see them function as today. In most churches the pastor is the one doing the work of the ministry. Instead, the pastor, teacher, etc. are supposed to train the members of the body, and then they are the actual players who get the job done.-Andrew Wommack's Living Commentary.

c. Those who have equipping-building gifts will be held responsible for how they build the body.

1 Corinthians 3:5-17

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. ⁷ So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. ⁸ Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. ⁹ For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. ¹⁰ According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. ¹¹ For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as

³ These gifts are also listed in 1 Corinthians 12:28-29

⁴ English Standard Version Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers.

The Gifts According to Grace Lesson 2 Equipping Gifts

through fire. ¹⁶ Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? ¹⁷ If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

Galatians 1:8-9

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

James 3:1

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

3. Jesus is all of these things.**a. Apostle****Hebrews 3:1**

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus

b. Prophet**Deuteronomy 18:15**

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.”

c. Evangelist**Luke 4:18**

“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind to set at liberty those who are oppressed.”

d. Shepherd-Teacher**1 Peter 2:25**

For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls

4. All of these gifts are in operation today. If they were needed in the first century to equip the saints and build the church, certainly they are needed today.

ROLES AND EXAMPLES**5. Apostle**

Apostolos, a *delegate*; specifically an *ambassador* of the Gospel; officially a *commissioner* of Christ (“apostle”), (with miraculous powers): - apostle, messenger, he that is sent.

a. Apostles were set apart and sent to be messengers of the Gospel. They often established churches through preaching and teaching.

The Gifts According to Grace Lesson 2 Equipping Gifts

- b. In the beginnings of the early church there were 12 apostles, the original 11, plus Matthias.**

Acts 2:41-43

Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. ⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and (the) fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. ⁴³ Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

Acts 4:33

And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.

- c. There is evidence to suggest that the gift of apostles was coupled with working of miracles.**

2 Corinthians 12:12

Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.

Acts 2:43

Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

- i. Some examples of these wonders.**

- 1. Peter's shadow.**

Acts 5:15

so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them.

- 2. Paul's apron**

Acts 19:12

So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

- 3. Phillip being translated**

Acts 8:38-40

So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. ³⁹ Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰ But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.

a. The word "caught" is the same word used for the saints being caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Phillip was carried over 30 miles.

- 4. However, signs and wonders were performed by others.**

Acts 6:8

And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.

- 5. These were not side shows. These wonders brought healing to God's people. They weren't meant to wow the crowds. There is no record of feathers**

The Gifts According to Grace Lesson 2 Equipping Gifts

falling from heaven, not one word of gems magically appearing in the apostles' hands, no stigmata, no gold dust falling or showing up on people's skin. These wonders directly benefitted the body of Christ.

- d. Some teach that the apostles were only for the early church and that there were only twelve. Yet 17 apostles are mentioned by name. If the early church needed apostles, certainly the church today needs them. Here are those mentioned by name beyond the twelve.**

i. Barnabas and Paul

Acts 14:14

But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out

ii. Andronicus and Junia (female)

Romans 16:7

Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

iii. Jesus' brother, James

Galatians 1:19

But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

- e. Another evidence that there were others who operated as apostles is that we see the Ephesians being commended for trying those who claimed to be apostles but were not. If it were only twelve apostles, there would be no need to test people.**

Revelation 2:2

"I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars."

6. Prophets

- a. prophētēsm a foreteller ("prophet"); by analogy an inspired speaker**

- b. The first New Testament prophet mentioned by name in the book of Acts is Agabus. He was accompanied by other prophets. He predicted a famine which came to pass. The Christians responded by sending help to the believers affected by the famine.**

Acts 11:27-30

And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸ Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. ²⁹ Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. ³⁰ This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

- i. Notice Agabus did not give directions of what to do. He simply delivered the message. He did not have authority to tell the believers what to do, but his message resulted in ministry to the saints in Judea.**

*The Gifts According to Grace Lesson 2 Equipping Gifts***c. Prophets were used by God to speak about callings to ministry.****Acts 13:1-2**

Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ² As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

i. This is not to say that a person will always be called in this way.**God can speak to an individual.****d. Prophets encouraged and strengthened through speaking.****Acts 15: 32**

Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words.

e. Philip had four daughters who prophesied. They were prophetesses.**Acts 21:8-9**

On the next day we who were Paul’s companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. ⁹ Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied.

i. Prophesied⁵: *prophēteuō*, to foretell events, divine, speak under inspiration, exercise the prophetic office: - prophesy.**ii. Acts 2:17**

And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,

That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;

*Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy (*propheteuo*).*

f. A New Covenant prophet foretells at times, but does not direct individuals of what to do.**Acts 21:10-14**

And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹ When he had come to us, he took Paul’s belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, “Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’”

¹² Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³ Then Paul answered, “What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

¹⁴ So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, “The will of the Lord be done.”

g. Prophetic utterances and ministries are to be judged by those hearing them.**1 Corinthians 14:29**

Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.

1 John 4:1

⁵ Unless otherwise noted, definitions are from Strong Concordance.

The Gifts According to Grace Lesson 2 Equipping Gifts

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

h. Prophets cannot claim that they cannot control themselves when speaking.

1 Corinthians 14:32

And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

7. Evangelists

a. euaggelistēs: a preacher of the gospel: - evangelist.

b. Only two people are mentioned by name as evangelists.

Acts 21:8

On the next day we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.

2 Timothy 4:5

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

c. Anyone who proclaims the good news might indeed be an evangelist.

i. The good news is not just preached to the unsaved, but to the saved.

ii. Paul preached the gospel to both groups. Although the scripture does not call him an evangelist, certainly, more than many others, he operated in this role.

iii. Those proclaiming the gospel are seen as a thing of beauty.

Romans 10:15

And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

8. Shepherd-Teachers

a. Commentators debate whether these are two different gifts or one.

Wuest offers the following:

The word "pastor" is poimēn, "a shepherd." The words "pastors" and "teachers" are in a construction called Granvill Sharp's rule which indicates that they refer to one individual. The one who shepherds God's flock is also a teacher of the Word, having both the gifts of shepherding and teaching the flock.-

Wuest

b. However, we do have examples of people being referred to only as "teachers".

Acts 13:1

Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

1 Corinthians 12:28a

The Gifts According to Grace Lesson 2 Equipping Gifts

And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers.

- c. **The word “pastor” when referring to a calling does not appear again in scripture except in reference to Jesus being our Shepherd.**
- d. **Our use of the word “pastor” does not convey in English the message of what a pastor does. The word used in Ephesians 4 is *poimēn*, a *shepherd* (literally or figuratively): - shepherd, pastor. (For example, in Spanish, the word pastor also means shepherd.)**
- e. **However, the verb form does occur and with reference to being an overseer. Thus, it is proper to refer to someone who is called as a pastor as an overseer. (The word “bishop” is used in some translations.)**

Acts 20:28

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

1 Peter 5:1-4

*The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: ² Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, **servicing as overseers**, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; ³ nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; ⁴ and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*

- f. **Special qualifications for overseers are given.**

1 Timothy 3:1-7 ESV

The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. ²Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, ⁵for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? ⁶He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

Titus 1:7-9 ESV (Notice the reference to teaching sound doctrine.)

For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, ⁸but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. ⁹He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

- i. **God's steward: *oikonomos*, a house distributor (that is, manager), or overseer, that is, an employee in that capacity; by extension a fiscal**

The Gifts According to Grace Lesson 2 Equipping Gifts

agent (treasurer); figuratively a preacher (of the Gospel): - chamberlain, governor, steward.

PROPER PERSPECTIVES

9. The purposes for these gifts are to 1) equip the saints for the work of the ministry, and 2) to build up the body of Christ:

a. Until we all:

- i. Attain to the unity of the faith
- ii. Attain to the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God
- iii. Are mature
- iv. Reach the measure of the fullness of Christ

b. So that we:

i. **May no longer be children**

"Children" is *nēpios*, literally, "that which does not talk," thus, "an infant, a little child." It is the opposite of *teleios*, "mature."-Wuest

1. Tossed to and fro by waves

"Tossed to and fro" is *kludōnizō*, a nautical term meaning, "to be tossed by the waves," metaphorically, "to be agitated mentally," like the waves.-Wuest

2. Carried about by every

"Carried about" is *peripherō*, "to carry around." The verb has the idea of carrying about in circles.-Wuest

a. Wind of doctrine

"Doctrine" is didaskalia, "teaching." Vincent says, "The different teachings of philosophers or of religious quacks are represented as winds, blowing the unstable soul in every direction."-Wuest

b. Human cunning

The word "sleight" was translated from the Greek word "KUBEIA" which was the name for a cube for dice playing. It literally meant "gambling" (Strong). In the same way that "card sharks" deceive with the sleight of hand, Paul is saying people also deceive immature Christians, promising them everything, but delivering nothing. This is the only time this word was used in the Bible.-Andrew Wommack's Living Commentary.

c. Craftiness in deceitful schemes

"Cunning craftiness" is panourgia, "cunning, knavishness, treacherous deceitfulness." The words, "whereby they lie in wait to deceive," resolve themselves into the following: "Lie in wait" is methodeia, "a deliberate planning or system." Our word "method" comes from this Greek word. Expositors offers the translation, "in craftiness, furthering the scheming, deceitful art which has for its result the false way of life that strays fatally from the truth."-Wuest

ii. **Rather that we may**

1. Speak the truth in love so that

The Gifts According to Grace Lesson 2 Equipping Gifts

- a. We grow up in every way into Him who is the head
- b. “Speaking the truth” does not refer to the Law. It is talking about what is actual. We speak what is real. In context, as opposed to the winds and waves spoken in deception, we are to speak true doctrines. These do not confuse, but mature and stabilize.
- c. “In love” is as opposed to teaching for deceptive and selfish motives. We teach the truth not to advance ourselves or to subjugate people, but to build up and establish the body of Christ; His sheep.

10. These are called to “labor in the gospel” and have the right to “live of the gospel”; in other words, to receive financial support from the saints so that they may dedicate themselves to their work.

1 Corinthians 9:9-14

For it is written in the law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.” Is it oxen God is concerned about? ¹⁰ Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. ¹¹ If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? ¹² If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more?

Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ. ¹³ Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? ¹⁴ Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

11. Those who labor in the gospel have the option to work to support themselves. (It is not REQUIRED that a minister ONLY work in ministry.)

1 Corinthians 9:15-18

But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it would be better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void. ¹⁶ For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! ¹⁷ For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. ¹⁸ What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.

12. These callings usually involve personal sacrifice beyond what others in the body of Christ might experience.

1 Corinthians 4:7-15

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. ⁸ We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— ¹⁰ always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. ¹¹ For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our

The Gifts According to Grace Lesson 2 Equipping Gifts

mortal flesh. ¹² So then death is working in us, but life in you. ¹³ And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I believed and therefore I spoke,” we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴ knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. ¹⁵ For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

IMPROPER PERSPECTIVES

- 13. Titles: While Paul acknowledged he was an apostle, no one called him “Apostle Paul”. In the book of Acts, Paul was simply called Paul.**

Matthew 23:8-12

But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. ⁹ Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. ¹⁰ And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. ¹¹ But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. ¹² And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

- 14. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherd-teachers are NOT one step (or perhaps many steps) higher above other members of the body of Christ in just about every way (more anointed, more favored by God, more in-tune spiritually, a high class of Christian); i.e., clergy vs. laity**

Matthew 20:25-28

“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. ²⁶ Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. ²⁷ And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave— ²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

- 15. These gifts do not qualify this person to be beyond evaluation of what they say and do. “Touching God’s anointed” referred to killing King Saul.**
- 16. These ministries do not have authority to intimidate, suppress, or oppress God’s people or to make decision for them about their personal lives.**