

BUILT TO GROW

SPIRITUAL GIFTS



MANY GIFTS ONE SPIRIT

Jesus calls every believer to live worthy of their calling, serve with their gifting, and grow toward maturity—for the health of the whole body.

HERE'S THE TENSION:

We want the benefits of belonging to the church, without always embracing the responsibility of being the church.

So the question becomes:

What does Jesus actually expect from His people when it comes to life in the church?

“The gospel creates a community of servants, not a collection of consumers.”

~ Tim Keller

1. We are all called to live _____ of Christ together.

Ephesians 4:1–6 NLT

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort

to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.

Notes:

A life worthy of Christ looks like:

- Humility
- Gentleness
- Patience
- Forbearance
- A fierce commitment to unity
- Being bound together by peace

2. We are all _____ by Christ for the good of the body.

Ephesians 4:7–10 NLT

However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. That is why the Scriptures say,

“When he ascended to the heights,

he led a crowd of captives

and gave gifts to his people."

Notice that it says "he ascended." This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself.

Notes:

Spiritual gifts are not given primarily for personal fulfillment they are given for corporate formation.

3. We are all called to grow toward spiritual

Ephesians 4:11–16 NLT

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Notes:

Personal Application

So how do you discern God's will for your life—especially when it comes to your gifting and role in the church?

1. Anchor yourself in Scripture

- Study what God says about the body, gifts, and maturity
- Let Scripture shape your expectations
- Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you

2. Pray for clarity and obedience

- Ask God to reveal how He has wired you
- Ask Him where He wants you to serve
- Be open to direction—not just confirmation

3. Seek wise input

- Ask trusted believers: "Do you see this gifting in me?"

- Invite honest feedback
- Use tools (like spiritual gifts assessments) as conversation starters, not final authority

Life Group Discussion

1. Get to Know You

When you're part of a group or team, what's harder for you: dealing with conflict, staying committed, or finding your role?

Why do you think that is? Why do you think that particular challenge affects you the most?

2. Digging Deeper

Paul connects unity (Ephesians 4:1–6), spiritual gifts (4:7–10), and maturity in Christ (4:11–16) as essential parts of the Christian life.

Which quality in Ephesians 4:2 (humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another in love) is most difficult for you to practice—and why?

Why do you think unity in the church requires intentional effort rather than happening naturally?

How does seeing spiritual gifts as something given for the good of the body challenge the way we often approach church?

3. Living It Out

Paul teaches that a healthy church grows through unity, service, and spiritual maturity.

Is there one step you could take this week:

- toward unity in a strained relationship,
- toward using your gifts to serve others, or
- toward greater spiritual maturity in your walk with Christ?

What would that step look like practically this week?

Spiritual Gifts

Affirmations of the power of the Spirit of God present in the world abound in both the OT and NT. God's Spirit empowers individuals from the time of Moses and the wilderness wanderings (Num. 11:25, 29) and is often linked especially with the gift of prophecy (Isa. 42:1; 61:1–2; Joel 2:28–29 [MT 3:1–2]; Zech. 12:10). The Israelite judges (e.g., Othniel, Judg. 3:10) received confirmation for their leadership through the gift of the Spirit of the Lord, and Isaiah prophesies that the “shoot from the stump of Jesse” will be the one on whom the Spirit of the Lord shall rest (Isa. 11:1–2). This text, moreover, specifies what the signs (traditionally, “gifts”) of this Spirit will be: “wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and fear of the Lord.” To this list, the LXX adds “piety,” rounding out the number to seven. These OT references constitute at best implicit gifts of the Spirit; only in the Christian texts do we find a more precise vocabulary referring to spiritual gifts.

Paul speaks often of the Spirit's presence and empowerment within the Christian community. In Gal. 5:22 he lists the “fruits” of the Spirit as “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” These fruits are common to all spiritual manifestation and are given equally to every person. In contrast to the spiritual fruits, Paul uses two different Greek terms to identify the gifts of the Spirit: *tá pneumatiká* (“spiritual gifts”; e.g., 1 Cor. 14:1) or simply *tá charísmata* (“gifts,

charisms"; e.g., Rom. 12:6). Gk. *pneumatiká* stresses that these gifts derive solely from the Spirit (*pneúma*); *charísmata* highlights the fact that they are entirely gratuitous, the effect of God's grace (*cháris*). For Paul, there are two essential characteristics of these spiritual gifts. First, there is one Spirit who is the source of all gifts and empowerment (1 Cor. 12:4); therefore any manifestation of the Spirit ought to be a sign and source of unity. Second, the gifts of the Spirit differ and are bestowed on individuals in different forms but always for the common good (1 Cor. 12:7) and not for the individual's benefit alone. It was a fundamental misunderstanding of these principles at Corinth that caused Paul to clarify his position so vehemently in 1 Cor. 12–14.

Three times in 1 Cor. 12 Paul lists the gifts of the Spirit (vv. 8–10, 28, 29–30), and gives a fourth list again in Rom. 12:6–8. No two lists are exactly alike, and each mixes both technically "spiritual" gifts with ordinary gifts of practical ministry. The lists are meant to be representative and not exhaustive, and their variety attests to their *ad hoc* nature. The various gifts enumerated fall into three general categories. First, there are gifts of "utterance" like "utterance of wisdom, utterance of knowledge" (1 Cor. 12:8), prophecy (vv. 10, 28, 29; Rom. 12:6), discernment of spirits (1 Cor. 12:10), teaching (v. 28; Rom. 12:7; cf. 1 Cor. 14:6), speaking or interpreting tongues (1 Cor. 12:10, 28, 30; cf. 14:5, 13). Second, there are gifts of practical ministry like helping, administration (1 Cor. 12:28), serving, comforting, contributing, giving aid, and working acts of mercy (Rom. 12:7–8). Finally, there are gifts of wonder-working like healing, miracles, acts of powerful faith (1 Cor. 12:9–10, 28–30).

One list seems to designate a hierarchy of gifts by its ordinal counting of "first apostles, second prophets, third teachers" (1 Cor. 12:28), but the ordinal references do not continue in the list. Surely, for Paul, the gift of apostleship is prior to any other, and in a sense encompasses the rest. It is the primary category Paul uses in his letters to identify himself and the one gift he prizes most of all. Whatever the gift, however, its value is measured by the degree to which the gift builds up the one body of Christ.¹

¹ Barbara E. Bowe, "[Spiritual Gifts](#)," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1249.