

Understanding Spiritual Gifts

Part 2

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River of Life-Pastor Joe Daltorio

Understanding Spiritual Gifts

Leadership Gifts - Ephesians 4:1-11

1. The five gifts of Ephesians 4 are the basic infrastructure for the Church and the rest of the gifts
2. These five leadership anointings equip the rest of The Body of Christ to function in their gifts

Ephesians 4:

¹¹It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹²to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:

¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. – NIV (1984)

Verses 11-12: God gave leaders to mature the Body of Christ.

1. Why is the Church often immature?

- We don't recognize, honor, and commission gifts in the Church.
- How can we eliminate key leadership gifts like Apostle & Prophet and expect the Church to operate as God wants?
- The Church will never mature if we don't allow God to properly develop and deploy His gifts in our midst.
- Western Church has focused on clergy-laity distinction where clergy have gifts and very few others have any purpose in the church!
- This is so far from the design of God for the Church! It has created consumers rather than disciple-makers!

Verses 11-12: God gave leaders to mature the Body of Christ.

1. God never ordained the Church to produce consumers and passive attendees.
 - The only option the Word gives us is that He wants disciples who fully understand their identity and purpose.
 - Knowing your giftings is a major part of understanding our identity and purpose.
 - Each person comes to the Church with something to give and the need to receive from others.
 - So notice exactly why these leadership gifts are given:
 - To do the work of ministry? **NO!**
 - To prepare God's people for works of service so the Body of Christ will be built up!

The five-fold ministry gifts of Ephesians 4 are Leadership Giftings

1. Ephesians 4:11 *It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,*
2. “He gave **some to be**” - not all Christians will fit into one of these gifts.
3. These are leadership gifts, or offices, that are given as gifts to the Church.
4. Generally, people who have these callings tend to serve for life, sometimes vocationally as a major part of their life calling.

Some people tend to see a hierarchy of spiritual authority here

1. apostles rule over prophets, prophets out-rank evangelists, etc. In fact - that is not supportable in The Word
2. The perversion of these equipping or leadership gifts is to rule over in an authoritarian way.
3. Jesus said he who wants to be a leader must be a servant of all.

Mark 9:35 Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all." - NIV

4. If anything, there is a wonderful inter-working of these gifts relating to the maturity of the local body.

Are these gifts still for the Church today?

1. Why do we stress three in evangelical circles - pastor, evangelist and teacher - and not **apostles** and **prophets**?
2. This has to be one of the greatest examples of twisting Scripture and violating the rule of context in the contemporary Church.
3. We won't need these gifts once we reach the unity of faith and maturity of which Paul speaks in Ephesians 4
 - Have we *ALREADY become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*
4. Apostleship and prophetic ministry are being restored in these days to equip the Church for the final harvest and return of Christ!

What is the stated purpose for these gifts?

Purpose:

- To prepare God's people for works of service.
- These leadership offices are given to equip all believers to serve.
- Each person has a clear identity and function in the Body of Christ.
- So the Body of Christ may be built up
- Each part understanding their connectedness and function in The Church
- The goal is that the Church matures, attaining the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

How will we know when the Church is functioning like God designed it to?

What Does a Mature Church Look Like?:

- We won't act like spiritual infants
 - Easily offendable
 - Not yet able to reproduce – Make other disciples
 - Self-centered and needy
- We won't be blown here and there by every passing doctrine
 - This has been an unfortunate legacy of the American Church
 - Taken in by false teachers
 - Like the church in Corinth – Personality-driven leadership
- The fruit of love will be evident in the Church
- Each person understanding their identity, their gifts and how they are to serve the Lord!

How will we know when the Church is functioning like God designed it to? (CONTEXT)

Paul goes on in Ephesians Chapters 4-6 to talk about the Ways of God and what mature followers of Jesus look like.

- Vs. 16 – Each person connected to Christ in a life-giving relationship and in healthy relationship with others in the church
- Vs. 17-24 – Not given over to sensuality and sexual immorality. We have put those old things off and are now renewed in our hearts and minds.
- Vs. 25 – We have stopped lying to ourselves and others and have learned to speak the truth in love
- Vs. 26 – We are not given to anger or rage, but we have learned to control our anger and resolve it in a way that honors God and builds others up.

How will we know when the Church is functioning like God designed it to? (CONTEXT)

Paul goes on in Ephesians Chapters 4-6 to talk about the Ways of God and what mature followers of Jesus look like.

- Vs. 27-29 – We have eliminated unwholesome speech and have learned to bless others and build them up!
- Vs 30-31 – We have stopped grieving the Holy Spirit by :
 - Getting rid of unforgiveness and bitterness
 - Eliminating rage, anger, and violence from our hearts
 - We have stopped slandering others and have eliminated malicious behavior toward others from our lives.
- Vs. 32 - We have learned to be kind and compassionate toward others: Showing a readiness to forgive those who sin against us or offend us.

How will we know when the Church is functioning like God designed it to? (CONTEXT)

Paul goes on in Ephesians Chapters 5 to talk about the Ways of God and what mature followers of Jesus look like.

- Vs. 5:1 – Be imitators of God
- Vs 5:3-7 Eliminate these things from your life
 - Not a hint of sexual immorality
 - Not greedy
 - No obscenity in our speech, no coarse talk
 - No idolatry – things that displace our love of God
- In Chapter 5 & 6 – He goes on to address
 - Not to be drunk with wine-BUT filled with the Holy Spirit
 - How we look at authority in the family and the workplace
- Then at the end – We are ready for teaching on spiritual warfare

Let's Define the Five Gifts of Ephesians

Apostle - (Apostoloi) Literally means a messenger or ambassador of God's Kingdom

- 1. Apostles are master builders who bring the gospel message to those who have not heard**
- 2. They are foundation layers in the church - building and setting up the rest of the leadership**
 - *Ephesians 2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone;*
- 3. They are endowed with special authority to do their task. Miracles and Healing are a mark of apostleship**
 - *2 Corinthians 12:12 the things that mark an apostle - signs, wonders and miracles - were done among you with great perseverance.*

Let's Define the Five Gifts of Ephesians

Apostle - (Apostoloi) Literally means a messenger or ambassador of God's Kingdom

Were there more than twelve apostles?

- The twelve seem to have a special place.
- Revelation 21:14 *And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

But many others besides the twelve are referred to as apostles

- Romans 16:7 *Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.*

Let's Define the Five Gifts of Ephesians

Apostle - In some cases the word “apostoloi” is applied to others, but the interpreter’s bias has kept them from using the direct translation “apostle”

- 2 Corinthians 8:23 *As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brothers, they are **representatives (apostoloi)** of the churches and an honor to Christ. – (NIV)*
- Philippians 2:25 *But I think it is necessary to send back to you, Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your **messenger (apostoloi)**, whom you sent to take care of my needs. – (NIV)*

Let's Define the Five Gifts of Ephesians

Apostles were the supreme servants of the Church, revered by many, despised by some local leaders, but certainly not hierarchical leaders who ruled over all!

- *1 Corinthians 4:9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles at last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.*
- *Apostles are spiritual fathers/ mothers that nurture leaders and provide a sense of safety and security in the Church*

Let's Define the Five Gifts of Ephesians

Apostles Role:

1. One of the best translations “Sent ones” or Ambassadors
2. Sent to establish or put in order (Paul’s admonition to Timothy)
3. Create an atmosphere for the other gifts to grow and develop
4. Appointing and Supporting local leaders
5. Apostles can be:
 - Trans-local – Moving from city to city or region to region
 - Can be residential/regional – Like Paul in Ephesus/ Impacting all seven churches in Revelation
 - Can open up an entire people group or region to the Gospel
 - Can restore things that have been lost to the church
6. Authority confirmed by a life “poured out” for people

Let's Define the Five Gifts of Ephesians

Identifying Marks:

1. Recognizable Intimacy with Jesus (Acts 4:13, Mark 3:13-14)
2. Operating in supernatural realm (Acts 2:43; 2 Corinthians 12:12)
3. Intercessor at regional, national or international level
4. Trustworthy with money & church resources (Acts 4, Acts 20, Ephesians 4)
5. Authority to discipline and pronounce judgment (Acts 5:1, Matthew 18:18-20, 1 Timothy 1:19-20, 1 Corinthians 5:5, 2 Corinthians 2)
6. Lay down their lives for the church (2 Corinthians 6, 2 Corinthians 11, Galatians 6:17)

Let's Define the Five Gifts of Ephesians

Identifying Marks:

7. Fathers and Mothers

- [1 Corinthians 4:14](#) I am writing this not to shame you but to warn you as my dear children. [15](#)Even if you had ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. [16](#)Therefore I urge you to imitate me. [17](#)For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.
- [18](#)Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you. [19](#)But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. [20](#)For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. [21](#)What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a rod of discipline, or shall I come in love and with a gentle spirit?

Beware the abuse of authority and abuse of apostolic authority!

- Those who make much of titles and honor of men are not apostles!
- Those who see apostles as leaders who rule over pastors misunderstand the co-labor that occurs between pastors and apostles. These are gifts that need mutual honor.
- Jesus taught that to be the greatest you had to be servant of all - This is more true with apostles than any other type of leadership.
- Most apostles paid their very lives to take the faith to new borders.
- Listen to the words of Paul:
- 2 Corinthians 6:1-13

¹As God's fellow-workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. ²For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation. ³We put no stumbling-block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. ⁴Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; ⁵in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; ⁶in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; ⁷in truthful speech and in the power - NIV