

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
“THE PURPOSE OF THE GIFTS”
(EPHESIANS 4:12-16)
MAY 6, 2007

MEMORY VERSE

Ephesians 4:15-16, “Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 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.”

INTRODUCTION

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, “I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” We are not responsible for building the church. Jesus makes it very clear that He is the foundation and the master builder. We are simply the instruments and building blocks He uses to build with. Every person who places their faith in Jesus has been given at least one spiritual gift. Every Christian is a part of the church. God has chosen to glorify Himself on earth through the church and He has given the church the responsibility of making disciples of all the nations. This involves preaching, teaching, shepherding, nurturing, administration, evangelizing, serving, giving and many other tasks. If we had to fulfill this God-given responsibility as individuals, it would be impossible and we would give up without trying. But as the body of Christ we can accomplish more together than we ever could working by ourselves. Each of us has an important part in this mission and we need to work together, so the church can express the fullness of Christ. This is the truth that Christ communicates through Paul so clearly in the verses we are studying this week. As believers we must discover, develop and share our spiritual gifts so that we might strengthen and build up the church as a whole and ultimately glorify God by fulfilling the plans and purposes He has called us to as the body of Christ.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1. Read Ephesians 4:11-13. According to Paul, what has Christ given us and for what purpose? How does this result in unity in the body of Christ?

2. What are the responsibilities of the congregation and the leadership in the church?

3. According to Ephesians 4:14-16, what are the chief indicators of spiritual maturity and immaturity in the faith? How might these indicators positively or negatively impact the operation of the body of believers?

4. What do you think it means to speak the truth in love? (Ephesians 4:15)

5. What do the truths of Ephesians 4:15-16 suggest about an individual's spiritual growth and the collective growth of all believers?

OUR WALK WITH GOD

1. In Ephesians 4:13 Paul talks about the "unity of faith." What are some indicators that a church body has this kind of unity? How can you tell when a church body is lacking this type of unity?

2. Why do so many believers seem disinterested in attaining spiritual maturity? What can you do in your small group to encourage one another to strive after the spiritual maturity Paul discusses in this passage?

3. How do you think “speaking the truth in love” could help us “grow up into Christ?” Can you offer an example of speaking truth that was not done in love? Have you seen an example of speaking the truth in love?

GOING DEEPER

1. There are four passages that address the subject of spiritual gifts. Read Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Peter 4:8-11. What do you observe about spiritual gifts in these passages and how they should be used to build up the body of Christ?

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

“The desperate need of this hour, for the Church, is men and women with the “right stuff” – believers with the right attitudes toward the body, and the right actions in the body. One major lesson to be learned from team sports is that without teamwork you cannot win consistently. In the same way, the Church will never reach the world for Christ until we as Christians learn to operate as one body, the body of Christ. We each have a special place within the body, a God-given spiritual ability and a divine-designated role in the Church. If we fail to use our ability in fulfilling our role, then the whole body suffers and the cause of Christ suffers. We hold a tremendous position, and with that position comes a tremendous responsibility.”

“The Book of Ephesians” Eddie Rasnake

SUGGESTED SMALL GROUP STUDY FORMAT
“THE PURPOSE OF THE GIFTS” (EPHESIANS 4:12-16)
WEEK FOURTEEN – MAY 6, 2007

CONNECT 30 MINUTES

Time of Fellowship

Opening Prayer

Icebreaker Questions:

1. What is one job in the church you definitely would not ever want? (Elder, Pastor, Small Group leader, Sunday School Teacher, Treasurer, Ministry Assistant, etc.)
2. When you are feeling down, what helps you get “on top of it” again?

MEMORY VERSE (Memorize and say aloud in you group) 5 MINUTES

Ephesians 4:14-16, “Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 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.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS 35 MINUTES

PRAYER AND PERSONAL SHARING 30 MINUTES

1. Ask the Lord to provide you with opportunities this week to exercise your spiritual gift(s) to build up and strengthen the body of Christ. In your small groups agree to hold each other accountable for taking this step of worship and faith.
2. Continue to pray for our church and the direction the Lord is leading us in the future. Pray for our leaders to be humble and sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

3. Pray for the personal needs of one another in your group.