

# “Unity Of The Christian Faith And Spiritual Gifts” Ephesians 4:1-16

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**Teaching Aim:** To stress the need for believers to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, realizing that we won't always agree on every point. To illustrate Christ is the giver of spiritual gifts and the giver of gifted people to His church. To challenge every believer to find his or her spiritual gift (or gifts) and then use them for the glory of God and to help build the church toward the fullness of Christian maturity.

## DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD'S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

### Part I: Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:1-6)

1. For the second time in this book, Paul reveals that he is a prisoner of the Lord (**vs. 1**). (See **Eph. 3:1**) At the time of this writing, Paul was under house arrest in Rome. Why do you think he described himself as a prisoner of the Lord? What other three books (along with the Book of Ephesians) are known as Paul's "*prison epistles*?" (Hint: Google it!) Today we are told that Christians should "*walk*" with the Lord on a daily basis. What does this mean? How is your walk with the Lord today?
  
2. According to **verse 2**, what four qualities are essential for maintaining a spirit of unity in the church? Define the meaning of each quality and explain how each applies to the church setting today. What does the word "*endeavor*" mean (**vs. 3**)? (See Dictionary) Why do you think it's so hard to keep "*the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*" in the church setting? What happens when a church breaks their unity and does not keep the peace?
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  
3. Oneness is the theme of **verses 4-6**. What are the seven areas of oneness Paul uses to illustrate unity within the Godhead and unity within the Christian faith in general? Discuss the significance of each.

1.	5.
2.	6.
3.	7.
4.	

4. If Christ has called His church to unity, why are there thousands of different denominations today? Are there times when churches shouldn't be in unity with one another? If so, when? Why is it so important for Bible believing, Bible teaching churches to be united as one? (See **John 17:20-21**)

## **Part II: Christ's distribution of spiritual gifts to His people (Eph. 4:7-13)**

1. "Grace" means "unmerited favor," but the word can also be used to refer to "God's empowering" His people for a specific task. According to **verse 7**, who receives this grace? How much of this gift does each person receive? According to **verses 7 & 8**, how does Jesus Christ relate to this distribution?
2. **Verse 8** is a reference to **Psa. 68:18** and refers to God's triumphant ascension to the temple in Jerusalem. Where do we find Christ triumphantly ascending to in **verse 8**? What captives is He leading to this wonderful place? What kind of gifts does the resurrected and glorified Lord give to His people (**vs. 8**)?
3. Spiritual gifts are not talents or natural abilities, but special gifts that were given to us after salvation for the purpose of building up of the body of Christ (the church). Make a list of every spiritual gift you find recorded in **1 Cor. 12:4-11, 27-31; Rom. 12:3-8 and Eph. 4:11**. Which spiritual gift (or gifts) do you think you have received from God? How can serving in various areas of ministry help you find your spiritual gifts? How can other people help you find your gifts as well?
4. Some believe **verse 9** refers to the incarnation of Jesus Christ, others to His burial, still others to **1 Pet. 3:18-19** when He preached to the disobedient spirits in prison from the time of Noah. What is your interpretation of **verse 9**? Why?

5. What did Jesus do after He defeated Satan on the cross and later rose from the dead (**vv. 10-11**) Why is the ascension of Jesus Christ important to every Christian? How did Jesus ascending on high and leading captivity captive affect the Old Testament saints/believers that had been in sheol? What will every person be required to do at the last judgment; some willingly, some by force? (**See Phil. 2:5-11**)
  
6. What is the meaning of the word “Apostle” (**vs. 11**)? (See Bible Dictionary) What was required to be an apostle of Jesus Christ in the fullest sense of the word? (**See Acts 1:21-26**) If this is the case, how did Paul qualify as an Apostle? (**See Acts 9:1-16**) Does the Bible reveal any apostles other than the original twelve? (**See Acts 14:4; 1 Cor. 15:7; 1 Thess. 2:6; Rom. 16:7 Phil. 2:25**) NOTE: This lesser kind of apostles were individuals sent out by the church. Are there still apostles in this sense in the church today? What are some names that they might be called by today?
  
7. What was the function of the New Testament prophet (**vs. 11**)? What two ways do we see the spiritual gift of prophecy being exercised in the Bible? What is the main role today? What is the role of an evangelist? Who were some of the greatest evangelists in the history of the Christian church? What is the spiritual gift of evangelism? Does every Christian have the spiritual gift of evangelism? Is every believer required to evangelize? (**See Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15**)
  
8. The two words “pastors” and “teachers” may very well point to one office (**vs. 11**). How is the role of a pastor similar to that of a shepherd? Who is the Good Shepherd? (See **John 10:14**) What does the Good Shepherd do for His sheep? What is the Biblical role of the elder/pastor? (**See 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-4**) How many times is the word pastor found in the Bible? (See **Eph. 4:11**) How about the word elder? (See Concordance) Why is it that we hear more about pastors today than we do about elders?
  
9. Why did God give “some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers?” (**See verse 12**) According to **verse 13**, what is the purpose behind this training? When should the training stop?

### **Part III: Growing up in all things into Him who is the Head – Christ (Eph. 4:14-16)**

1. Why is the nautical theme a good illustration for the believer who isn't grounded on the Word of God? (**vs. 14**) What is the meaning of the word "*doctrine*?" (See Dictionary) Why is it important for every Christian to receive solid Biblical teaching today?
2. What is the difference between simply "*speaking the truth*," and "*speaking the truth in love*" (**vs. 15**)? How can speaking the truth in love help people to grow spiritually? What makes the human body such an excellent illustration for how the church should function? According to **verse 16**, does every believer have a special role in the church? It has been said, "*Love is the glue that keeps the whole church together.*" Why is it important for every Christian to love? (See **Matt. 22:36-40**)
3. How are you using your spiritual gifts to build the body of Christ (or church) up today? If you are not sure what your spiritual gifts are, please consider taking the following spiritual gifts assessment test along with personality profile online at a minor cost:  
<https://uniquelyyou.org/>

Note: The Uniquely You assessment is the best I have found. For the cost of a book you can find out what your spiritual gifts are and how you interact with other people.

### **Miner's Corner ~ *Manna to live by!***

- As Christians, our walk with Christ (meaning our Christian conduct) should be worthy of the special calling we have in Jesus.
- It is important for every Christian to work at keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- Christians are not to have unity simply for unity's sake, but are called to have "*unity of the faith*" (a oneness in the core beliefs of Christianity and in our love for Jesus Christ).
- Every believer has been given at least one spiritual gift; most have been given more. What are your spiritual gifts and how are you using them to build up the body of Christ today?
- God has given gifted people (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) for the purpose of building up the church both numerically and to help Christians grow in their understanding of the Christian faith.
- Everyone is called to do their part in the body of Christ; you have been gifted for such a time as this!

