

The Equipping Gifts

Key Verses:

Ephesians 4:7 NKJV - *But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.*

v.11-12 NKJV - *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...*

Objective:

In Ephesians 4, we find the office gifts, which are also called the equipping gifts. These are anointings given by the Holy Spirit for the training, teaching, leading, and protection of the church. As a result of these gifts, the Holy Spirit calls some particular people to certain positions in the church to function as equippers. In this lesson, we will give an overview of how these gifts operate in the church.

Five Categories of Spiritual Gifts

Note: The first three categories are comprised from 1 Corinthians 12:7-11. The Helps category is primarily found in Romans 12:4-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:28. The main list for the equipping gifts is found in Ephesians 4:11-12.

- 1) Revelation
- 2) Utterance
- 3) Power
- 4) Helps
- 5) Equipping

The equipping gifts are commonly called the five-fold ministry gifts.

1) Apostles

- a) The word “apostle” literally means, “sent one.”
- b) There are three classes of apostles seen in Scripture.
 - i) The Apostles of the _____ (Revelation 21:14)

These were the twelve apostles (Acts 1:21-26) who were eyewitness of Jesus Life, ministry, death, burial, and resurrection. Their purpose was to give testimony of His ministry to the world. Not even Paul could be an apostle in the same sense as the Apostles of the Lamb.

- ii) The _____ Apostles (Ephesians 2:20)

(1) These were apostles outside the 12. Here we find Paul, Barnabas, Apollos, and many others.

- (a) These men were somewhat different from the Apostles of the Lamb because they were not eyewitnesses of Christ’s life and resurrection, but they laid a foundation for the church.

(2) Modern Day Apostles

- (a) There are no apostles today in the same categories previously mentioned, but there are modern day apostles who are called with a powerful anointing to advance the Kingdom.

- (b) The work of the apostle today is to plant and establish churches, to go into new territory and pioneer churches, equip teams, and establish new ministries.

c) The Signs of an Apostle

- i) An apostle will have an extraordinary deep relationship with God.

Such was the case with Paul. He was taken up into the third heaven and received powerful revelation from Jesus Himself (2 Corinthians 12:2; Galatians

1:11, 12).

- ii) An apostle will manifest extraordinary spiritual _____.
- iii) An apostle will have signs, wonders, and miracles confirming their preaching (1 Corinthians 2:4).
- iv) An apostle is gifted and dedicated to _____ churches throughout the world.

(1) Once an apostolic church is established, the founding apostles exercise oversight and will set in equipping elders who know how to operate in giftings.

(2) New Testament apostles should only exercise oversight over churches they have established themselves or in the churches where they have been invited.

Note: Think of an apostle as a general contractor who has a knowledge of all the trades: structural, electrical, plumbing...so an apostle will have a general understanding of the prophetic, pastoral, evangelistic, and teaching offices.

2) Prophets

- a) Is there really such a thing as a New Testament prophet?

Yes, prophets are named among the normal New Testament ministries (1 Corinthians 12:28; Acts 13:1; Acts 15:32).

Whenever you start limiting God's ministry gifts to the first generation of His church in Acts, all of the power is gutted from the church!

- b) A prophet is a person in the New Testament church office who is specifically empowered with insight into the counsels of the Lord and serves as His spokesman.

Amos 3:7 NIV - Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.

- c) The Equipping Prophet

- i) The prophet is called to speak forth the words and direction given him by the the Spirit, always in context of the leading the _____ forward!

Acts 15:32 - And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words.

- i) The equipping gift is a special anointing upon a person who is called to lead, train, teach, and inspire God’s people to hear and obey God’s voice.

- ii) Modern day prophets will have the qualifications of an _____ (1 Timothy 3:1-7).

- iii) They will never contradict the “_____ of Jesus.” According to Revelation 19:10, “... the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

- iv) They will flow in harmony with the other elders.

- d) How do you identify a false prophet?

1 John 4:1 - Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

- i) They are normally motivated by self-interest.
- ii) They will not flow with the other equipping elders.
- iii) They will contradict the teachings and testimony of Christ.

Warning! Don’t go seeking a “prophetic word” like people in the world seek a reading from a psychic!

3) Evangelists

- a) The word “evangelist” is mentioned three times in the Bible (Ephesians 4:11; Acts 21:8; 2 Timothy 4:5).
- b) An evangelist is a “preacher of the gospel.” The message of the evangelist is mostly to unbelievers, unlike that of the prophet which is largely to the church. However,

part of the evangelist's function is also "for the equipping of the saints for the work of the saints for the work of ministry."

c) How do you identify the evangelist?

Philip the evangelist gives us the answer (Acts 8).

i) An evangelist has an extraordinarily big _____ for people.

Note: Philip was chosen as one of the original seven deacons (Acts 6:3-6). This proved he had a heart for people.

ii) His message was a simple revelation of _____ (Acts 8:5)!

iii) _____ signs accompanied his preaching (Acts 8:6, 7).

iv) People _____ to the simple of message of Christ.

v) The Evangelist is always seen working in harmony with the other ministry gifts.

Note: In Samaria, there is such an awakening that the apostles Peter and John are called in to establish the Kingdom.

vi) A true evangelist will value one _____ as much as a crowd in a large city (Acts 8:29-40)!

In the desert, he found, not a crowd, but one person in a chariot! He leads this person and the gospel is taken to Ethiopia through this convert.

Note: Paul charged Timothy with his responsibilities as a pastor and teacher, and also exhorted him to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Timothy 4:5). Therefore, an evangelist can refer to a person called to that distinct ministry, and the anointing to evangelize can operate on anyone as the Spirit enables him or her.

4) Pastors

a) The Greek word translated "pastor" is "poimen" which is most often refers to a

_____. Therefore, a pastor is one who leads, guides, tends, cherishes, feeds, and protects a flock.

b) As new converts began to gather together in groups or assemblies, there became a need of loving oversight and care. The Holy Spirit's answer for this was to anoint particular people to shepherd or pastor those gatherings of people.

c) How do you identify the pastor?

i) Real pastors are _____. They have an anointing for it.

Acts 20:28 - Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

ii) All pastors have a shepherd's heart (John 10:11-13).

(1) They _____ the sheep.

(2) They _____ the sheep.

(3) They _____ the sheep.

iii) True pastors will share in _____ for the gospel (2 Timothy 1:8).

iv) Real pastors refuse to be devastated by human or demonic _____.

(1) A shepherd will always have to deal with the wolf, an enemy who comes from outside the flock and desires to kill.

(2) He will also have to deal with the rebellious sheep. There are always challenging sheep inside of a flock.

v) Real pastors are committed to sound _____ and doctrine (2 Timothy 1:13).

vi) All shepherds _____ training reliable leaders (2 Timothy 2:2).

vii) Real pastors are free from youthful _____ (2 Timothy 2:22).

viii) True pastors avoid meaningless _____ (2 Timothy 2:23-25).

(1) You cannot be combative and argumentative about meaningless things while trying to equip people.

(2) In 2 Timothy 4:5 NIV, Paul tells him "... keep your head in all situations..."

5) Teachers

a) The teaching gift is a supernatural gift that equips the saints for the work of the ministry.

b) The equipping teacher develops _____ of the Word and _____ for the church.

c) The work of a teacher is to build up the body and not tear it down.

Ephesians 4:11-12 NKJV - He Himself gave some to be...pastors and teachers, v. 12 for the equipping of the saints for work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...

d) Three Consistent Traits of a Teacher

i) A teacher gets deep spiritual _____ from the Holy Spirit.

ii) A teacher has a _____ spirit and he himself has a desire to learn.

iii) He will operate in _____ to the other equipping gifts.



REFLECT

1. Discuss the importance of modern-day apostles as they establish new churches throughout the world.
2. Talk about the role of legitimate prophetic voices in our world today. How is this gift blessing the body of Christ?
3. Can you think of persons who have the gift of evangelism? Consider local people as well as internationally known evangelists in former and modern times.
4. How have persons equipped to be pastors (shepherds) in your life impacted you and your family over the years? How about presently?
5. Discuss examples of men or women operating in the office of teacher and then cite how God can use this equipping gift to strengthen His body.
6. Is it possible for persons to operate in more than one equipping gift? Can people operate in a five-fold gift without functioning in the office of a five-fold equipping minister?

ACT

Pray about how you can honor a person in your life who has deeply impacted you by exercising one or more of the equipping gifts discussed in this lesson. Perhaps you could send an email, write a thank-you note, or just pray a blessing over them for their contribution to your life.