

THE BELIEVER IS TO WALK WORTHY OF HIS CALLING

EPHESIANS 04:01–06

DIVISION OVERVIEW: (Eph. 04:01– 06:09) Believers

How is the believer to live as he walks day by day throughout life? This chapter begins a discussion on the walk of the Christian believer. We are choosing to use the word walk instead of the word *life* because it is a more descriptive word of the day by day *walk* of the believer's life. The instructions are very practical. Up until now the instructions have dealt with doctrine:

- => the eternal plan of God for Christian believers.
- => the great blessings of God.
- => the knowledge and power of God.
- => the work of God's mercy and the gift of God's grace: our great salvation.
- => reconciliation and peace.
- => the church — the true church — the new body of people God is creating to be the citizens of the new heavens and earth.

We have seen great theological truths revealing the *believer's position in Christ* — truths that show the believer soaring in the heavenlies! But now, coming down to earth and dealing with where we are: How are we to live day by day? How does our *position in Christ* work itself out in our lives? How does Christ help us deal with the trials, problems, difficulties and sufferings of day to day living? The believer's walk is the subject of Ephesians from this point on.

- A. The Believer is to Walk Worthy of His Calling, Eph. 4:1-6.
 - B. The Believer is to Walk by Using His Gifts, Eph. 4:7-16.
 - C. The Believer is to Walk Differently From the Gentiles, Eph. 4:17-24.
 - D. The Believer is to Walk Putting Off the Garments of the Old Person, Eph. 4:25-32.
 - E. The Believer is to Walk Following God, Eph. 5:1-7.
 - F. The Believer is to Walk as a Child of Light, Eph. 5:8-14.
 - G. The Believer is to Walk Carefully and Strictly, Eph. 5:15-21.
 - H. The Believing Wife and Husband are to Walk in a Spirit of Submission and Love, Eph. 5:22-33.
 - I. Believing Children and Parents are to Walk Under God's Authority, Eph. 6:1-4.
 - J. Believing Slaves and Masters (Employers and Employees) are to Walk Under God's Authority, Eph. 6:5-9.
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Introduction: (Eph. 04:01–06)

We owe God more than we could ever pay. God has taken His own dear Son and...

- provided the Ideal and Perfect righteousness for us.
- provided a Substitute to die for us — to actually bear our punishment for having rejected, rebelled and cursed God, and for having broken God’s law.
- provided deliverance from death for us through the reconciliation of Christ.
- provided a new life for us — a life of love, joy, peace and power through the Holy Spirit living within us.
- provided the absolute assurance of living eternally with God forever and ever.
- provided so much more that even an eternity could not describe it.

God has honoured us as much as a creature can be honoured. He has seated us with Christ in the heavenlies to rule and reign with Christ forever and ever. God has done so much for us that He could do no more than what He has done. We do not see it all yet, for we are still on this earth — left here to be witnesses to the great and glorious salvation that is in Christ Jesus. But the day is soon coming when we will experience it all. God is going to make a new heavens and earth that will be perfect, in which there will be no suffering and no death, and we shall live eternally, ruling and reigning with Christ.

As stated, we owe God; we owe God so much that we could never even begin to pay Him. What then can we do? Very little, but there is one thing that we must do: we must walk worthy of our calling. We must walk worthy of the honoured position to which God has exalted us.

- I. The way to walk worthy (vv. 1-2).
- II. The purpose for walking worthy: to keep the unity, the peace (v. 3).
- III. The seven basic reasons (vv. 4-6).

I. Ephesians 04:01–02 Believers Walk Worthy

How can the believer walk worthy? What must the believer do to please God as he lives day by day...

- at work? • with fellow believers? • at play?
- with family? • at school? • with friends?
- at church? • with neighbours? • at home?

Once a person believes in Jesus Christ and becomes a member of God’s people and of God’s church, what must he do to walk worthy of God’s great calling — to bring honour to the name of Christ and His church?

1. The believer must walk with all humility (see *Humility*, Ph. 2:3).
2. The believer must walk with all gentleness (see *Gentleness*, Gal. 5:22-23).

3. The believer must walk with patience (see *Patience*, Gal. 5:22-23).
4. The believer must walk bearing with one another in love (see *Love*, Gal. 5:22-23. Also see *Love*, Gal. 5:13-15.)

II. *Ephesians 04:03 Purpose for Walking Worthy: Unity*

The purpose for walking worthy is onefold — unity. Believers are to work at keeping the peace so that they can stay bound together in the unity of God's Spirit. Jesus Christ has broken down all walls and barriers existing between men. Everyone can now be saved:

- all nationalities • the poor • the red
- all peoples • the rich • the yellow
- all languages • the white • the black

Every person is precious in the sight of God. When a person approaches God through Jesus Christ, he comes like everyone else: on the same ground and on the same level. He is no better and no worse than anyone else: he is a man who stands in need of God's forgiveness; and he, along with everyone else, is bowing before Christ and accepting Him as his Lord and Master. The man, just like everyone else, is subjecting himself to become the servant of Christ. Wealth, position and social status — it is all forgotten. The only thing that matters is the salvation and life which Christ offers.

The point is this: when a person comes to Christ in such a spirit, the Spirit of God enters his life and binds the person to all other believers. There is a great spiritual *bond of peace* wrought by the Spirit of God between all believers. All divisiveness, differences and prejudices are set aside; and a spirit of love, peace and unity exist.

Within the church there is a *prevailing spirit of peace* wrought by God's Spirit. However, note a tragic fact: not every believer walks in the Spirit — not all the time. Too often, believers allow self and the *old life* to re-enter the picture — their old...

- prejudices • differences • hurts • jealousies
- complaints • criticisms • pride • arrogance
- comparisons • dislikes • grumblings • gripes

The result is catastrophic for the church: divisiveness and a disturbance of the peace and spirit of unity. This is the reason for this charge. Note the words *make every effort* (spoudazontes). The Greek means being diligent, working to take care and to do one's very best, and to make haste to do it. The only way to walk worthy of God's great calling is to work at keeping the peace and unity which God has given us. Nothing cuts the heart of God like divisiveness between His people, divisiveness which tears apart His church. The very thing God is doing is creating a new body of people to live together in the love and unity of His Son. He is going to create a new heavens and earth in which there will be no other spirit. Therefore, He expects us to live in the love and unity of His Spirit now.

1 Cor 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

2 Cor 13:11 Finally, brothers, good-bye. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

Eph 4:3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Phil 1:27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel.

1 Pet 3:8 Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.

III. *Ephesians 04:04–06* **Reasons for Walking Worthy**

There are seven basic reasons why we should walk worthy and strive to keep the peace and unity of God's Spirit *in the church*. Note what has just been said, for the point needs to be stressed: there is great need to keep the peace and unity *within the church*. Far too often the church is the place where the peace and unity of believers fly apart. Again, there are seven reasons why this should never happen — seven reasons why believers should always walk in the peace and unity of the Spirit.

1. There is only “*one body*.” There are not two bodies nor several bodies of believers. However, in this imperfect world, there are many different denominations and churches. But note what God is doing: God is *creating only one body of people* who trust and follow His dear Son. When a person places his trust in Jesus Christ, God does six things to the believer that place him into the body of Christ:
 - ⇒ God gives a *new birth* to the believer — quickens him spiritually — causes him to be born again (Jn. 1:12-13; 3:3-6; Tit. 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 Jn. 5:1). God makes a new creation, *a new person, a new self, a new man* out of the believer (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10).
 - ⇒ God places His divine nature into the believer (2 Pet. 1:4).
 - ⇒ God puts His Holy Spirit into the believer, actually has His Spirit enter the believer's body. The believer's body becomes a temple for the presence of God's Spirit (Jn. 14:16-17; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20).
 - ⇒ God causes the believer to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23).
 - ⇒ God places the believer into the *new body of people* He is creating, that is, into the body of Christ, His church.

1 Cor 12:13 For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Note the last two experiences in particular. There is no way a believer can be in conflict with another believer unless he is walking after the flesh (sinful nature) and is in a backslidden condition. There are just some things that are contrary to love and joy and peace that hurt and damage the body...

- an ill spirit
- seeking our own way
- reactions
- forming cliques
- feeling superior
- selfishness
- struggling for position
- envy
- self-centred differences
- anger

Such things have no place in the church, not in the *new body* which God is creating. There is only one body of true believers, not two — not one body over here and another body over there. This is the reason we are to strive to keep the peace and the unity of the Spirit. There is only one body, and only as we keep the peace and unity of the body can we walk worthy of God's great calling.

Rom 12:5 *So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.*

1 Cor 12:27 *Now you are the body of Christ [the church], and each one of you is a part of it.*

Eph 1:23 *[The church] Which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

Eph 4:12 *To prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.*

Col 1:24 *Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.*

Col 2:19 *He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.*

2. There is only "one Spirit." The same Spirit that dwells within one member of the body dwells in all members of the body.

=> It is God's Spirit that causes a man to be born again.

John 3:5-6 *Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."*

John 6:63 *"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life."*

Rom 8:11 *And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.*

=> It is God's Spirit that calls and gifts and directs each member to fit in and work within the body.

Acts 13:2 While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

Rom 8:14 Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

1 Cor 12:7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. (see 12:8f)

The point is this: each member is to do his part in carrying out the mission of the body — for Christ. Acting independent of the body is of another spirit, for there is only One Spirit creating the body of Christ.

3. There is only "one hope." Every genuine believer has the same hope: the great day of redemption. It is to be a new world created perfectly for Christ Jesus and His people. Life in the new heavens and earth will be a life of love, joy and peace — a life of oneness and unity and brotherhood — all perfected. What God is after is for us to live as we shall live in the future. Our future lives in the new heavens and earth are to be the pattern for the way we live together now. We shall be redeemed and reconciled to God and to each other — all living together in a perfect world of love, joy and peace forever and ever. The hope for eternity — the hope that fills our hearts for such a world — is to be the driving force that stirs us to live together in peace and unity.

Rom 15:4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Col 1:4-5 Because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints — the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel.

Titus 2:12-13 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

1 Pet 1:3-4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade — kept in heaven for you.

1 Pet 1:15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.

1 John 2:2-3 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands.

4. There is only "one Lord." There is only one Master and King. Every believer has knelt before the same Lord to become His subject and to receive His orders. As His subjects, believers are unequivocally instructed...

- to live as He said: holy, righteous and pure, bearing the fruit of His Spirit (Gal. 5:19-21).
- to carry out His orders as one body (Mt. 7:21-23; 1 Cor. 12:5; Ph. 2:9-11).

Mat 7:21-23 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”

1 Cor 12:5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

Phil 2:9-11 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

5. There is only “one faith.” There are not two faiths nor several faiths. There is only one faith that leads into God’s presence and that is the faith founded by the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other approach to God. If a person wishes to live with God — to be approved and accepted by Him — that person has to approach God through the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The point is this: every believer has come to God in the very same way — by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith in Him is the only way, the only true faith. Therefore, standing before God and having come to Him through the same faith, there is no room for any differences. We all stand on the same ground, on the same level: the ground and level of faith.

Gal 1:23 They only heard the report: “The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.”

Jude 1:3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

6. There is only “one baptism.” All believers have given public witness to their faith by submitting to the ordinance of water baptism. Each has been identified as being members of the same body because each has been initiated through the same ritual. Therefore, having entered the church through the same ordinance, we should not become divisive. Divisiveness denies and brings shame to the meaning of the ordinance. Divisiveness is a reflection of the depth of our commitment. It shows that our sincerity in being baptised was lacking, greatly lacking. It shows that we care little for Christ and for our baptism experience, for the great ordinance which initiated us into the church.

Rom 6:3 *Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death?*

1 Cor 12:13 *For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*

Gal 3:27 *For all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*

7. There is only “*one God and Father of all.*” This is probably a primitive confession of faith.

⇒ “One God”: God is creator of all and as such is supreme over all.

⇒ “One Father of all”: as Father, God loves all. The Christian belief begins with God as love.

⇒ “Over all”: God controls all.

The point is striking: If there is only one God and Father of all believers, how then could He be leading two believers to stand toe to toe against each other? The answer is obvious: He could not. One or both believers are following their own fleshly, carnal ways. Someone is not following the only God and Father.

Mark 12:29 *“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.’”*

1 Tim 2:5-6 *For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time.*

1 John 5:7 *For there are three that testify: ■*

THE BELIEVER IS TO WALK BY USING HIS GIFTS EPHESIANS 04:07–16

Introduction

Note the word “but.” It is strong. As studied in the previous passage, the church is one body, and every member is to strive to keep the oneness and unity of the Spirit. But believers are not only a unity, they are a diversity. There are differences between believers. What are those differences? They are gifts, special abilities given by God which are to be used to strengthen believers and to reach the world and minister to it. Gifts — spiritual gifts given by God — are the subject of the present passage. The believer is to walk using the gifts God has given him. (See Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:1-14:40.)

- I. Every believer is gifted (v. 7).
- II. Every believer’s gift has cost the greatest possible price (vv. 8-10).
- III. Every believer’s gift is Christ-centred (v. 11).
- IV. Every believer’s gift has a threefold purpose (vv. 12-16).

I. Ephesians 04:07 Every Believer Has Spiritual Gifts

Every believer is gifted. Note the words, “But to each one of us grace has been given...as Christ apportioned it.” There is not a single believer exempted or left out; Christ has given every believer some spiritual gift. It is important to note what is meant by spiritual gifts. A spiritual gift does not mean the natural ability or talent of a person. God, of course, keeps natural abilities and talents in mind when He gifts a person, but spiritual gifts are special gifts given to believers. They are highly specialized gifts — gifts that are given to build up believers in the church, in witnessing and ministering to the world. The point to note is that every genuine believer has received a spiritual gift, a highly specialized gift. He has received his gift to carry out the ministry of the Lord upon the earth.

Note another significant point. Jesus Christ gives us the grace to use our gifts. Grace means the strength, wisdom, courage, motivation, love, concern, care and power — all the favour and blessings of Christ. Whatever is needed to use the gift, Christ gives us. He measures out the exact amount of grace needed for the maximum use of a gift.

Thought 1. What a glorious truth! What a spark of encouragement! Everyone of us is gifted by Christ — gifted with a highly specialized gift. And we have the measure of grace — whatever measure is needed — to use our gifts. Christ pours out His grace upon us, equipping us to carry out our task upon earth. This is significant, for it means that our gift is the gift of Christ. It is the very best gift *for us*. We should not be displeased with our gift, nor covet to be like someone else and have his gift. Christ has placed us and given us the very best gift for us — if we are truly His, yielded and committed to serve Him.

Mat 25:15 “To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.”

Rom 12:3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

Rom 12:6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.

1 Cor 4:7 For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?

1 Cor 12:4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.

1 Cor 12:7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

II. **Ephesians 04:08–10** *The Great Cost of the Spiritual Gifts*

Every believer’s gift has cost the greatest possible price.

1. Note the picture. The picture of Christ giving gifts to men is dramatic. It is the picture of an ancient king who has conquered his enemies. The king is sitting astride his white stallion and riding under the arch of triumph as he enters the city. Teeming thousands shout their adoration and praise. Following in his train is his army. And then following his army they come, the enemy stumbling along on foot in chains, looking like the defeated foe they are. They had initially come to fight tooth and nail to subject the people of the great king to their tyranny. But now they come to offer gifts to the great conqueror. The conqueror receives the gifts and in turn bestows the gifts upon his own people. (See Psa. 68:18.)

There are great enemies of man — enemies that attack time and time again — enemies that try to make man aimless and meaningless.

=> There is the great enemy of alienation and separation. Alienation is the energy and tendency that tries to shut God and others out of a person’s life. Tragically, alienation results in a sense of emptiness, uselessness and loneliness.

=> There are two great enemies that snap away all meaning for man — sin and death.

However, Christ has gone to war in behalf of man. Christ has conquered all enemies that make life useless and meaningless. Now He gives the greatest gift of all — the gift of meaning, purpose and significance in life. He fills life with all that a man could possibly desire and use. He gives the greatest gifts, gifts that keep a person busy with the most meaningful and purposeful life imaginable.

Thought 1. If Christ has really given such meaning and purpose to life, why then are so many people bored with their work and life? Why are so many (even believers)

dissatisfied, empty, without purpose and wanting a change? Scripture tells us, and it tells us plainly.

- 1) A person has not committed his life to Christ — not fully, not totally. He does not really deny himself and follow Christ.

Luke 9:23 *Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”*

- 2) A person has not sacrificed himself, all he is and has, to serve Christ and mankind. A person has not committed himself to a life of service. Real life is found *only* in service. God has ordained it so.

Mat 16:25 *“For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.”*

Mat 23:11 *“The greatest among you will be your servant.”*

Luke 22:26 *“But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.”*

John 4:35 *“Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.”*

- 3) A person lives and sows to his flesh (sinful nature) instead of the Spirit.

Gal 6:8 *The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*

2. Note the great cost Christ paid to gain the right to gift believers. He had to die and descend into the lower earthly regions. F.F. Bruce points out that the “earthly” or “lower regions” of the earth may mean three things: the earth to which Christ came; the sepulchre in which the Lord’s body was laid; or Hades — the abode of the dead (Acts 2:25-35; see Psa. 16:10; 110:1). (*The Epistle to the Ephesians*, p. 83.) (See *Hell, Jesus Christ, Triumph*, 1 Pet. 3:19-20.)

In allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture, the correct interpretation would seem to be “Hades.” When other Scriptures contrast the descent of Christ with the ascent of Christ, the two farthest extremes seem to be indicated.

- a. In Rom. 10:6-7 “ascending into heaven” is contrasted with “descending into the abyss [deep]” — the abode of the dead.
- b. In Ph. 2:8f, Christ humbling Himself to the lowest “depths of death” is contrasted with Him being “exalted to the highest” heavens by God.
- c. In Mt. 12:40, Christ being “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” is taken from Jonah 2:3-4 “in the heart of the seas.” In light of these facts, Christ’s descending into the lower parts of the earth must mean more than Christ just being placed in a sepulchre. It must mean *the place of departed spirits* or *the abode of the dead*.

The point is this: Jesus Christ had to die and experience hell for men in order to gain the right to gift men. That is the enormous price our gifts cost. If He had not died, then we could not be saved or gifted with spiritual gifts. There would be no purpose or significance to life — not beyond a few short years upon this earth. All we would have to look forward to would be death. But Christ has died, and He has conquered all the enemies of man — conquered them in order to gain the right to save and gift us.

John 12:31 *“Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.”*

Eph 4:8-9 *This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.” (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions?)*

Eph 4:10 *He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)*

Col 2:15 *And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*

Heb 2:14 *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil.*

1 Pet 3:18-20 *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water.*

1 John 3:8 *He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.*

3. The great value of what Christ did is glorious. He died that He might ascend above the heavens and fill all things, that is, fill the whole universe with His presence. Jesus Christ is the Sovereign Majesty of the universe. He is seated at the right hand of God the Father, and He rules and reigns over all. He is now able to save and gift men. But remember: it is because He paid the greatest price possible. He died for us — died to gain the right to pour His grace and gifts out upon us.

Luke 22:69 *“But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.”*

Eph 1:19-20 *And his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.*

Phil 2:8-9 *And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name.*

Rev 5:12 *In a loud voice they sang: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!”*

III. Ephesians 04:011 Christ-centred Spiritual Gifts

Every believer’s gift is Christ-centred. Note the words, “He who gave.” It is Christ and Christ alone who gives spiritual gifts to men. Men cannot work up the gifts, nor give the gifts to other men. Christ alone possesses the spiritual gifts to give to men. Five gifts are mentioned here.

1. The gift of an *apostle*. The word *apostle* (apostolos) means to send out. An apostle is a representative, an ambassador, a person who is sent out into one country to represent another country. Three things are true of the apostle.

=> He belongs to the One who has sent him out.

=> He is commissioned to be sent out.

=> He possesses all the authority and power of the One who sends him out.

The word “apostle” has both a narrow and a broad usage in the New Testament.

- a. The narrow sense. It refers to the twelve apostles and to Paul as an apostle (Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor. 9:1). In this narrow sense there were at least two basic qualifications.
 - 1) The apostle was a man chosen directly by the Lord Himself or by the Holy Spirit (cp. Mt. 10:1-2; Mk. 3;13-14; Lk. 6:13; Acts 9:6, 15; 13:2; 22:10, 14-15; Rom. 1:1). He was a man who had either seen or been a companion of the Lord Jesus.
 - 2) The apostle was a man who had been an eyewitness of the resurrected Lord (Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor. 9:1).
- b. The broad sense. The word “apostle” refers to other men who preached the gospel. It is used of two missionaries, Barnabas (Acts 14:4, 14, 17) and Silas (1 Th.2:6); and two messengers, Titus (2 Cor. 8:23) and Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25). There is also a possibility that James, the Lord’s brother (Gal. 1:19) and Andronicus and Junia (Rom. 16:7) are referred to as apostles.

In the narrow sense, the gift of an apostle was bound to die out because of the unique qualifications to receive the gift. But historically, in the broad sense, there is perhaps a sense in which the qualifications and gift itself are still given and used by the Lord. The Lord’s servant of any generation must *see* the Lord and know Him intimately. Similarly, the servant must personally *see and experience* the power of the resurrection. Certainly there are some in every generation who have *seen* the Lord

Jesus and who *know* and *experience* the power of the Lord's resurrection. Perhaps the Lord Jesus endues them with the very special gift of an apostle to be used throughout His most precious domain — the church.

2. The gift of a *prophet*. This is the gift of speaking under the inspiration of God's Spirit. It includes both prediction and proclamation, and neither one should be minimized despite the abuse of the gift.

There is no question, the gift to predict events has been abused to the point of the ridiculous. However, the abuse of a gift does not eliminate the fact that the Spirit of God sometimes gives believers a glimpse into coming events in order to prepare and strengthen them to face the events.

However, the major function of prophecy is clearly stated by Scripture, and the fact should be heeded by all believers:

1 Cor 14:3 *But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.*

3. The gift of an *evangelist*. This is the gift of carrying the gospel all over the world. It is the gift that specializes in proclaiming the gospel to the lost of the world. It would include both what we call the evangelist and the missionary.

Acts 21:8 *Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven.* (cp. Acts 8:26-40)

Eph 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 Tim 4:5 *But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.*

4. The gift of a *pastor* (poimenas). This word means shepherd. A.T. Robertson points out that the Lord Jesus told Peter to shepherd His sheep (Jn. 21:16), that Peter told other ministers to shepherd the flock of God (1 Pet. 5:2), and that Paul told the elders (ministers) of Ephesus to shepherd the church of God for which Christ had died (Acts 20:28) (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. 4, p. 53.) The traits of a shepherd can be seen by looking at the references to Christ as the shepherd of believers. The pastor is an under-shepherd to the Chief Shepherd, Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - a. The shepherd knows the sheep; He knows each one by name. This is said to have been a fact among shepherds and their sheep in Jesus' day. Shepherds actually knew each sheep individually, even in large herds. The fact is certainly true with Christ and His sheep.

2 Tim 2:19 *Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."*

John 10:14 *“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me.”*

1 Cor 8:3 *But the man who loves God is known by God.*

Isa 43:1 *But now, this is what the LORD says — he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.”*

- b. The shepherd feeds the sheep even if He has to gather them in His arms and carry them to the feasting pasture.

Isa 40:11 *He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.*

- c. The shepherd guides the sheep to the pasture and away from the rough places and precipices.

Psa 23:1-4 *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

- d. The shepherd seeks and saves the sheep who get lost.

Mat 18:12 *“What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?”*

Ezek 34:16 *I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.*

- e. The shepherd protects the sheep. He even sacrifices His life for the sheep.

John 10:11 *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”*

Heb 13:20 *May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep.*

- f. The shepherd restores the sheep who go astray and return.

1 Pet 2:25 *For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

- g. The shepherd rewards the sheep for obedience and faithfulness.

1 Pet 5:4 *And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.*

- h. The shepherd shall keep the sheep separate from the goats.

Mat 25:32-33 *“All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.”*

5. The gift of a *teacher*. Some commentators consider teaching to be part of the gift of the pastor, that is, the pastor is the pastor-teacher. The function of the teacher is the gift to instruct believers in the truth of God and His Word. It is the gift to root and ground people in doctrine, reproof, correction and righteousness. Teaching is a high calling, one of the greatest of callings. Teaching is ranked second only to the spiritual gifts of apostle and prophet (Acts 13:1; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11). Every apostle, prophet and pastor has the gift of teaching, but every teacher is not an apostle or prophet or pastor. The gift of teaching bears one of the largest responsibilities given by God; therefore, the teacher will be required to give a strict account to God for his faithfulness in using his gift (see *Teacher*, Jas. 3:1).

The spiritual gift of teaching is the gift of understanding and communicating the Word of God, of edifying believers in the truths of God’s Word. It involves understanding, interpreting, arranging and communicating the Word of God. The gift of teaching is given to the believer who commits his life to the Word of God, to sharing its glorious truths with God’s people.

Mat 28:19-20 *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

Acts 20:32 *“Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”*

1 Cor 12:28 *And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.*

Eph 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 Tim 2:15 *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

2 Tim 3:16 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.*

1 Pet 2:2-3 *Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

Acts 17:11 Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

IV. Ephesians 04:12–16 Purpose of the Spiritual Gifts

Every believer's gift has a threefold purpose. Note a significant fact: the five gifts described above are gifts that involve speech or proclamation. They are very specialized gifts, gifts that are usually looked upon as being the official or professional gifts of the church. They are not given in full measure to every believer although every believer...

- should be as an apostle in that he is serving Christ in a very special ministry and faithfully using the gift God has given him.
 - should be as a prophet in that he is daily proclaiming God's Word.
 - should be as an evangelist in that he is bearing witness to the lost.
 - should be as a pastor in that he is shepherding and caring for people all the time.
 - should be as a teacher in that he is teaching the truths of God's Word to all whom he knows.
1. There is an immediate purpose for the professional or office-bearing gifts in the church and among God's people. It is to equip believers to do the work of the ministry. The word *prepare* (*katartizo*) means to equip for service and ministry. This is critical to see, for the office bearer in the church *is not* to be the only one who goes about doing the work of the ministry. In fact, his *primary task* is to be an equipper, a person who makes disciples and *prepares others* to serve Christ (see *Discipleship*, Mt. 28:19-20). Note another critical point: the very purpose for equipping laymen is so that the body of Christ, the church, may be built up. This is a significant point, for it means that the church cannot be built up without the members themselves doing the work of the ministry. All believers within a church must be involved in the work of the ministry. As Wuest says: "This is an order that the Body of Christ, the Church might be built up, by additions to its membership in lost souls being saved, and by the building up of individual saints." (Wuest, Kenneth S. *Ephesians and Colossians*. "Wuest Word Studies," Vol. 1. Grand Rapids. MI: Eerdmans, 1953, p. 101.)

If the work of the ministry was left up to the professional ministers, the task would never get done, for there are too few official ministers. Lay persons must be equipped to reach the lost and to minister to the needs of a world reeling under the weight of evil and suffering and death.
 2. There is an eternal purpose for the office-bearing or professional gifts. It can be stated no clearer than what the verse itself says. It says three things:
 - a. The minister of God works to bring about a perfect unity among God's people. The minister of God is called...

- to bring peace and reconciliation to the church.
- to lead people into perfect harmony and oneness of spirit.
- to shepherd people out of cliques, divisiveness, murmuring, grumbling, griping and all the other sins that militate against a perfect unity.

1 Cor 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

2 Cor 13:11 Finally, brothers, good-bye. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

Eph 4:3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Phil 1:27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel.

1 Pet 3:8 Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another: be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.

- b. The minister of God works to bring about the knowledge of the Son of God.

Hosea 6:3 “Let us acknowledge the Lord; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth.”

John 8:31-32 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

John 17:3 “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”

Phil 3:10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.

Col 1:10 And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.

- c. The minister of God works to bring about a mature person, a person who attains to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

1 Cor 13:11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.

Heb 5:14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Heb 6:1 *Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God.*

2 Pet 1:5-6 *For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness.*

2 Pet 3:18 *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.*

1 Tim 4:15 *Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress.*

3. There is the personal purpose for the professional or office-bearing gifts. This purpose also involves three parts.
 - a. That we no longer be children [“infants”] and immature, being led astray by false teaching. Again, the verse is the best commentary on itself. Ministers are given to us to keep us from being children, “tossed back and forth, and blown here and there by every wind of [false] teaching.” We must always remember, there is such a thing as...
 - “the cunning and craftiness of men”: deceivers, cheaters in the faith, men who will cheat us out of the truth.
 - “deceitful scheming”: deceivers who act clever and have novel ideas that sound correct, but they are only deceptions of the truth.

Note that such men are plentiful, so plentiful that they are just lying, waiting to deceive.

Mat 7:15 *“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.”*

Mat 15:9 *“They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.”*

Acts 20:30 *Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.*

Rom 16:18 *For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people.*

Heb 13:9 *Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods, which are of no value to those who eat them.*

2 Pet 2:1 *But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them — bringing swift destruction on themselves.*

2 John 1:7 *Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.*

- b. That we grow up in all things — in Christ. Note there is only one way to do this: by speaking and proclaiming the truth. This is the task of the minister.

John 15:3 *“You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.”*

John 17:17 *“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”*

1 Pet 1:22 *Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.*

- c. That we do our part in building up the church. Note that every *ligament or every believer supplies* something to the body of Christ (the church). And what every ligament or believer supplies is very significant. Note how the significance is stressed: Christ takes every ligament or believer and the believer...

- is joined and held together with all the other believers.
- has his work compacted with that supplied by other believers.
- has an effective and productive work along with that measured by other believers.
- helps to increase the body.
- helps to edify the body in love.

What more could be said about the contribution made by every believer? What greater challenge could be given to a believer? We must give all we are and have to get the job done. Much is at stake for each of us. An eternal weight of responsibility rests upon every single believer, for each one is responsible for reaching people and building them up. Some people will never be reached and ministered to if a single one of us comes up short. For this reason, everyone of us is gifted by Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Cor 12:4-7 *There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

1 Tim 4:15 *Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress.*

2 Cor 3:18 *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

Psa 92:12 *The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon.*

Prov 4:18 *The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. ■*