

August 9, 2020 "We Support One Another" Bible Studies for Life

Point: God gives the church spiritual gifts to accomplish His work

Passages: Ephesians 4: 1-7, 11-13, 14-16

Setting - Paul referred to the work of the Holy Spirit in many of his letters. He highlighted the spiritual gifts in 1st Corinthians 12-14; Romans 12, and Ephesians 4. In these letters he especially noted the gifts provided by the Holy Spirit that enable the ministry of God's people. While the list of spiritual gifts differed a little in each book, the main purpose of the gifts was to support ministry for the "common good" (1 Cor 12:7).

Ephesians 4: 1-7

Paul urges his readers to live worthy of the calling they had received from the Lord. Paul meant that all Christians have a calling to serve Christ. A Christian should live, think, speak, and act in a way that glorifies Christ. In this passage Paul references 4 characteristics of a Christlike way of life that we should use daily: humility, gentleness, patience, and treating one another in love.

Paul often mentioned the need for unity. Christ is what unifies us. One body, the church, the body of Christ. One spirit, the Holy Spirit. We are called to one hope, the resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of our hope. Paul linked our hope to our experience of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1: 13-14). One Lord, a belief in one God. One faith, lordship of Christ. The word "faith" refers to trust and commitment. "Jesus is Lord" is a basic Christian confession of faith (Romans 10:9). One baptism, in the Spirit. Believers experience unity through their commitment to God. One God and Father of all, His omnipresence. In verse 7 Paul used grace in the general sense of God's gracious dealings with His people.

All Christians have at least one spiritual gift and they should use that gift wisely and creatively to the glory of God. Christians cannot pick and choose the gift they would like to have.

Lasting truths in Ephesians 4: 1-7

Church members work for the benefit of others in the body.

The qualities that characterize Christ should characterize the church body.

The church should be united in Christ.

Ephesians 4: 11-16

The spiritual gifts we receive are given by God and are to be used to equip us for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, to lead the body to keep unity around the truth of Jesus, and to lead the body to become more Christlike. All members are needed for the well-being of the body of Christ (1st Cor. 12: 12-25).

We need to mature in our faith. We need to imitate Christ in our decisions and actions (1st Cor. 11:1 and Phil. 2:5). With His Word and the power of His Holy Spirit, we in the body of Christ work together to accomplish His work.

Lasting truths in Ephesians 4: 11-16

God has gifted those who serve His church.

Those who shepherd the church encourage its members to do ministry together.

Gifts properly used promote unity and love.

The church body grows as people properly use their gifts.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for giving us spiritual gifts to do your work in the church and in the world. In the precious name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.