

Session Eight: Gifts of the Spirit

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[0 : 00] Hey, welcome back to Gospel Growth.

This is our Life on Life discipleship course, and we're talking together right now! about how we grow up in the gospel. So far, we've talked about how we grow together, how God sanctifies us, the beauty and the importance of prayer, why and how we read the Bible, how we fight sin.

I mean, this is all great stuff, right? And so now we wanna take a few minutes and we wanna talk about how God has gifted us by the Spirit to grow together, okay?

And I wanna say this just at the beginning, we're only gonna sort of scratch the surface of this.

That's how this feels with all of these. You know, we're just kind of just getting in there. But even if we just began, if you and I just began to believe and live out the surface level of what we're about to talk about, man, it could be dynamic.

It could change our whole church. It could change our community. If we just began to live out this surface level stuff, it would be incredible. So I'm gonna read us a little bit of a lengthy passage of scripture that really will help us get an idea for this topic.

[1 : 15] Ephesians 4, verses 1 through 16. I therefore, Paul says, a prisoner of the Lord urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called. With all humility and gentleness and with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace, there is one body and one Spirit.

Just as you were called into the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

So that's a lot, right? Now he's gonna transition to say, but grace was given to each one of us. So there's this unity, but then there's this diversity. According to the measure of Christ's gift, therefore it says, when he, Jesus, ascended on high, he led a host of captives and he gave gifts to men.

In saying he ascended, what does it mean but that he also descended into the lower regions, the earth. He who descended is the one who ascended far above the heavens that he might fill all things.

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, the teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ until we attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood.

[2 : 41] There's that sort of growth kind of, you know, picture there to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes.

No, rather, speaking the truth and love to one another, we are to grow up. There we go. We're 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. Okay, there's a lot. Big mouthful there, right?

Essentially what we've got here is a beautiful church of what, a beautiful picture of what church should be like, right? A gifted body. Now we talked about this some in gathering around the gospel, but I want to come back to it just for a few minutes and kind of double click on it a little bit because it's helpful for us to understand if we're going to grow up in the gospel, this idea of being gifted uniquely for that growth is one of the things the Bible tells us that we need to understand.

So the first thing I want to just pull from this passage is that we are each gifted differently by grace. Every single believer has been given gifts of the Spirit from Jesus by grace, right?

[4 : 03] Verse seven, but grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. God has saved us and put us into this unified body, but he's given us a diversity of gifts. We

see a little list of spiritual gifts here.

We see another list in Ephesians 4. We see another list in, sorry, Ephesians 4, 1 Corinthians 12 and in Romans 12, right? And we also see throughout the Bible different places where the Spirit of God gives people in unique ways, right?

So this is a sort of a whole Bible topic, but we really see it specifically in these three chapters. Okay, that's the first thing. The second thing is all this comes from one God.

This one God gives us all in these different ways. We saw that in verses four through six. Now, this is worth noting. I think sometimes it sounds weird to say, you know, that we've received a gift from the Spirit or, you know, the Spirit made me good at that or gifted me in that way.

That can sound a little hokey or weird or whatever. But what's the alternative? I think we've got two options. One, we can acknowledge that God made us good at this and so God gets the credit.

[5 : 12] Right? Or we can pretend that we're naturally good at this or that we learned this or we got this from our parents or we got this from some friend and then we get the credit, right?

And that doesn't feel like a better alternative. It feels like it would be better just to sound a little weird and say, you know what, man? God is just, I can't explain it. He just made me good at this, right?

He just gifted me in this way. That puts the credit on him.

I don't have anything special. He's really special. That's a better way forward then. And so it's just good to acknowledge, hey, this comes from God. We know that from a Bible standpoint, but then it's good to just acknowledge that all the time just to get into a rhythm of giving God the credit.

Another thing that we need to say is that gifts sometimes lead to competition or coveting. We spoke about this briefly, I think already, but it's good just to kind of get back to how quickly this subject of gifts can be a source of division.

We see that bad with the Corinthian church. In fact, the whole of 1 Corinthians chapter 12 is written to try to address this whole thing, right? But we need to remember the context that we read about these gifts in Ephesians 4.

[6 : 14] The first few verses that sounded disconnected are actually really connected because they build a culture where we don't compete and we don't covet. They build a culture that's just way more conducive for our growth.

Let me just read those verses to you again. Paul says, I want you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called. I want to see humility and gentleness and patience and I want to see you bearing with one another in love and eager to maintain the unity.

This is a great environment for growth. This is good soil and good water and good air and good light. I mean, those are good things to keep us from getting to the place where we covet or compete, right?

These gifts should not lead to us trying to be better than everybody else or acting like Eeyore because we're not gifted like somebody else. We shouldn't compete. We shouldn't covet.

We should be content with who God's made us to be. We should be thankful for how God's made other people. That's the type of people we should be, okay? We've got way too much to do, people to love and people to reach.

[7 : 17] The enemy wants to distract us and get us to use these gifts against each other and we just can't let him do that, right? So what are the ways that God intends us to use the gifts? Just super quick.

First, our gifts are for building up others toward maturity, okay? We saw that in verses 12 through 14. It's not so that we would gain popularity.

It's not so that we could be celebrities. These are for building up others to maturity, to help Jesus's body be all that it can be. We see that again in verse 16.

When each part is working properly, it makes the body grow. This is the goal, is that I'm doing my part and you're doing your part and together we're making each other better. We're growing together because we're playing our part.

We're using the gifts that God's given us. The second thing we can say is that our gifts are for advancing the mission, okay? So they're for building up others in the church and they're for advancing the mission.

[8 : 13] There's this little phrase that we catch here in this Ephesians 4 passage in verse 10. It says that Jesus, so that he could fill all things. We get this picture, this kind of motif throughout the Bible where God's kingdom is spreading, it's advancing, his glory is spreading and we want to see

God's glory fill the earth like water covers the sea.

We want to see it flood eastern North Carolina like waters cover the sea and so a big part of us using our gifts is going, man, Jesus, we want to see you glorified. A vast majority of the miracles that happened in the New Testament happened outside of a church meeting.

They happened in the modern day equivalent of movie theaters and gas stations and grocery stores and schools and places of work and just walking down the road.

We're meant to use our gifts so that the mission advances. And then the last thing I want us to look at is how we grow together by really engaging our gifts. We're not to be passive about these things. What does that sound like? That's like, okay, God, yeah, you made me go to these things so if you want to use me, you know where I'm at, you know where I live. That would make you a terrible, if we were on a sports team, you'd be a terrible teammate, right?

[9 : 23] You want to be more like that? Put me in coach. I'm ready to play. So as we begin to discover who God's made us to be and how he's gifted us, we're not to lean back, arms folded. Well, if God wants to use me, he'll write it on the wall with his finger.

No, we're meant to lean in and eagerly be desperate to use our gifts so that others can be built up and so the mission can be advanced. I love how we see it in Romans 12, 6.

Having these gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, like all the stuff we've just talked about, let us use them. Let's use them. Don't be passive about it.

Use them, right? And so this is a big thing. We're to lean into every moment with our ears open and our eyes open. We're listening and we're watching to see how can God use us to make a difference?

How can God use us to build up someone else? Or how could God use us to advance his mission? Jesus went around like that. Everywhere he went, he saw people's pain and their struggles and he was always, all kinds of moments, weddings, funerals, you know, just getting some water.

[10 : 24] Everywhere he went, this was happening and so it's good lessons for us. I mean, this is, the Holy Spirit lives in us. He dwells in us. He's gifted us. Let's use these gifts to build up others and to advance the mission of Jesus.

As you get together in your groups, man, I think you could talk about, look at these different lists in the Bible and go, hey, which one of these do you think I am? And I think you've got this gift and man, I'd like this gift.

Can we pray that I'll get this gift so I can be better at building up others? I can be better at advancing the mission. Those are the types of things you can do in your group. I think it'd be really incredible to do that together. And then, man, I think just meditate on this last little verse together. Hebrews 10, 24. I love this. Let us, the people of God, disciples of Jesus, let us consider, let's think, let's ponder how to stir up one another toward love and good works.

Man, just think about that. That's what God wants for you. That's what God wants for me. And that's what I said. If we just start scratching the surface of this, if we just begin to think, okay, God has made me a certain way. He wants to use me.

[11 : 28] How can I do that? How can I do that? We start showing up on Sundays and community groups and our life on life groups. We start thinking through, man, we will change our community, right? We'll change our church.

We'll change people's lives. It's a powerful thing. Stoked you guys are gonna get a chance to talk about it now. God bless you. Thank you. Thank you.