

Body Building

Long Beach Alliance Church • November 9, 2014 • Pastor Chris Lankford

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ...

~Ephesians 4:11-12 (ESV)

1) Building Diversity Within Spirit Unity

- A) Following the emphasis on a unified “oneness” under “one God and Father of all” (Ephesians 4:1-6), “BUT grace...” (4:7) introduces new and more specific information about the “one body” (4:4), Christ’s church.
- B) Like turning a coin over to view the difference between ‘heads or tails,’ Paul flips the seven-fold oneness (a ‘picture’ of unity, 4:4-6) of ‘walking worthy of the calling’ to explore diversity in Christ’s church. While the seven ‘one’s’ represent the fullness of grace for all God’s family (4:6), there is also a more specified “grace given to each one of us” (4:7), the diverse family members making up Christ’s church.
- C) Christ’s grace is given “according to the measure of Christ’s gift” (4:7), specifically provided according to the needs of His church (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:7, 11) and in conjunction with the capacities of our faith (cf. Romans 12:3). The capacity of one’s faith grows as we study God’s Word, the Bible (cf. Romans 10:17), putting into practice the things we study and understand in our relationship with Christ (e.g. Romans 4:17-21).
- D) Reflecting back on Psalm 68:18, the gifts which God gives to the church are also revealed as a fulfillment of prophecy with a re-framed result for the church. “Therefore it says...” (Ephesians 4:8) views Christ as the One ascending (since ascending could only happen by the One who descended – Ephesians 4:9), victoriously bringing gifts to God of “a host of captives” (Psalms 68:18 & Ephesians 4:8).
- E) Re-framing the concept, Christ victoriously saves the captives, and simultaneously provides His church (the body of Christ) with gifts (4:8), which are the captives themselves! You have been saved with a purpose and calling, to be a gifted member of the body of Christ. You are the diversity which comes from union in Christ!
- F) Bringing it together, ‘walking worthily’ (4:1) means those who are redeemed from captive slavery are also strategically given back to the church as gifts by Christ (4:8-10). God gives diverse gifts of people (Spiritual identity) along with related capacities (Spiritual abilities) for the church.

2) Body Building with Jesus

- A) Biblical lists of Spiritual gifts sometimes emphasize positional giftings (4:11; see also 1 Corinthians 12:28-30), and at other times emphasize functional gifts (4:12; see also Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; 1 Peter 4:10-11). Both list types are meant to convey intentional and comprehensive provision by Christ for His church.
- B) Among the Ephesians, Paul is particularly concerned with church leadership (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors/teachers – 4:11) equipping God’s people for “the work of ministry” with the goal of “building up the body of Christ” (4:12). The goal of “building up” includes growth in numerical size (apostles, evangelists) as well as organic growth of “the body” in spiritual depth (prophets, pastors/teachers) for Christ’s church.

Growth Group Guide

“body building” (ephesians 4:7-12) november 9-14, 2014

Take Off!

●
What was the most practical, useful gift you’ve ever received?

●●
What is the “gift” (4:7) Christ graciously gave?

●●
How does 4:8-10 explain Christ’s ability to give such a gift?

●●
How are “the saints” equipped and what are they “equipped” for (4:12)?

Take It Home!

How can we live out these ideas from the Bible?

●●●
Who has “equipped” you for “ministry?” How? Who can continue to empower you with more training?

●●●
How do your skills, your position, and your passion “build up” Christ’s church?

Take It Further!

Want to study more? Read here outside group time

●●●●
How does 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 also explain many of the concepts from Ephesians 4:4-12?