

# Session 2

## THE GIFTS YOU BRING

*Ephesians 4:7-16*

### Memory Verse

*From him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building itself up in love by the proper working of each individual part.*

– EPHESIANS 4:16, CSB




## The Gifts You Bring

**THEOLOGICAL THEME:** The Lord gave all believers gifts for specific purposes. We should be intentional about using our gifts to bring glory to God and support the body of Christ. Paul wrote to the Ephesians about the gifts and their roles in the local church.

What kind of gift giver are you? Do you spend an inordinate amount of time searching for the perfect gift to bless the recipient? Do you grab something last minute and hope they love it anyway? Do you send a gift card and let the person just get whatever they want? There are many different types of givers just as there are different ways to accept gifts.

Think about how you tend to give and receive gifts. Can you remember getting a gift that changed your life in some way? Some people know us so well that they can give us the types of gifts that affect our lives in big ways. Knowing someone well plays a significant role in knowing what gift they need or will use the most. Today we will see the Lord knows exactly what gifts to give to His people and how those gifts should be used to make a difference for the kingdom's sake.

 What kind of gift giver are you? Who gives you gifts that make a big difference in your life?

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 What is the gift you've received that stands out to you the most and why?

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## Session Summary

In his letter to the church in Ephesus, Paul reminded them about the gift of grace they had been given through Jesus Christ. He stressed that the gifts God gives are not based on what people do but what they need. He gives us gifts because of His great love for us, and all our gifts are given of the Spirit instead of being something anyone can earn or manipulate. It is important to realize the difference in the way God gives gifts as opposed to the way people give gifts.

The Lord knows everything about us and has an end goal in mind. His gifts come with an eternal, significant purpose. In today's passage, Paul specifically mentioned some of the gifts and their important roles in the church body. When people with these gifts work together the way God designed, individual believers and the church will be impacted. This portion of Paul's letter was meant to help early Christians recognize how to mature spiritually and live out their faith to become more like Jesus. The same message helps believers today.

### 1. The Giving of Gifts (Ephesians 4:7-10)

Paul wrote this letter to the church at Ephesus to help them know how to live as Christians. Though written to a specific audience, it is also applicable to the church today. In seeking to remind the believers of the gifts God had given them, Paul started with grace. To understand the importance and significance of spiritual gifts, we should first grasp the gift of grace. Paul stressed that this grace was given to us based on the work of Jesus and had nothing to do with our earning or deserving it.



Why is it important to recognize we do not earn gifts from the Lord?

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Spiritual gifts follow this same pattern. No one earns their gifts. God gives them to all who follow Him. They are free, unmerited gifts just like grace. Paul reminded the Ephesians that the gifts from God are grounded in what occurred when Jesus ascended into heaven after the resurrection. This marked His ultimate victory over sin and death.

In writing of Jesus's ascending and leading a host of captives, Paul referenced Psalm 68. These words paint a picture of a military leader who has beaten all the enemies, taken captives, and is returning home. Jesus was victorious over all that the enemy threw at Him, and He ascended back to the Father's side in heaven.

**?** How does the image of Jesus as a victorious military leader speak to you? How does this highlight Jesus's authority and power to give spiritual gifts?

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Pointing back to the resurrection was a reminder of the encouragement Jesus gave His followers just before He left them. Before Jesus's death, He told the disciples it was better for Him to go so that He could send the Helper to be with them (John 16:7). Jesus was not leaving them abandoned and helpless. The Holy Spirit, the third member of the Trinity, is God and along with His presence, believers received gifts of the Spirit. In Ephesians, Paul connected the giving of gifts to the very nature of God. He loves His people and not only sent Jesus as our gift of grace. He also gives other spiritual gifts so that we can live in a way that honors Him and furthers His kingdom.

**?** Application: How is your daily life impacted by God's grace to you? How might you live in response to this moving forward?

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## 2. The Purpose of Gifts (Ephesians 4:11-12)

Referring to Jesus, Paul wrote that He was the one who established the roles of the different gifts. These gifts are not dependent on or dictated by people but are the work and appointment of Jesus. The gifts of the Spirit should be considered as divine institutions and not human creations. Paul's wording describing the different gifts makes it clear that there is divine purpose behind the distribution of each gift.

**?** Why does it matter whether these gifts are divine institutions or human creations?

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The gifts mentioned by Paul here are not an exhaustive list, but he referenced several gifts specifically. The roles he named are purposefully distinct.

**?** Why do you think Paul was so specific about the purpose of these gifts? How might the Ephesians (and we) be tempted to use them wrongly?

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We have established that the gifts are given to equip the saints, but what are the saints equipped for? The saints are equipped to build up the body of Christ as a whole. There is no room for selfish ambition, personal agendas, or pride. The purpose these specific roles is so that the church will be strengthened as Christ's representative body in the world.

**?** Application: How are you being equipped for the work of the ministry so that the body of Christ is strengthened through your involvement? What responsibility do you have in this?

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### 3. The Goal of Gifts (Ephesians 4:13-16)

After stating the purpose, Paul expressed the end goal of the gifts. Unity among believers in the body of Christ is paramount to the work of the ministry. Paul stated the goal as unity of the faith. He urged the body to be unified around the knowledge of the Son of God. When the gifts are used together, the body is equipped for the ministry, and we have greater knowledge of and intimacy with the Lord. That is the goal.

**?** How does unity within the body of Christ contribute toward or detract from the church's pursuit of God's mission to make His name known in the world?

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As the body of Christ experiences greater unity, the saints mature in their faith. The more a believer matures in his or her faith, the more he or she becomes like Jesus. We see this in individuals and the collective church body. We should not just age chronologically as believers—we should also grow up in our faith and develop more into the likeness of Christ.

Paul explained as Christians grow in maturity, they will be more stable in their faith. No longer will they be tossed about like children, following whoever says the most appealing things. Christian maturity means growing stronger in your faith and convictions as you balance everything against the unchanging Word of God. Christians are to be strong enough to resist the temptation to believe the teachings of the world and fall prey to making decisions based on the opinion of people instead of the wisdom of God.

**?** How do you see people falling prey to making decision based on what is popular or politically correct instead of biblical wisdom?

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Those who are mature in Christ will not be as susceptible to spiritual deceit. To stand firm on God's Word, a person must know it. Part of equipping the saints is teaching them the Word. As the body grows and matures in faith, people make a difference in the world because they do not give in to the passing fads and lies the world throws at them.

We have focused much on the body of Christ as a whole, but for the body to function correctly, the individual pieces must function properly too. Just as a human body is held together by joints and ligaments, every part of the body of Christ is connected. It's clear when the body works well and when it doesn't. The same is true of the church. When the individuals who make up the body of Christ do their part to grow and mature in a coordinated effort, the church fulfills God's intended purpose in the world.


**?** Application: How well would you say you function as an individual who is connected to the whole body of Christ? What needs to change for you to fulfill your role?

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## Conclusion

As Christ followers, we need to recognize the spiritual gifts God gives us and use them for the purpose He designed. Not everyone receives the same gifts and not every gift is used for the same purpose. Gifts from the Lord are different than gifts from people because spiritual gifts are based on Jesus, not on us. We are gifted as God designates and not based on our own efforts or merit.


Paul listed several gifts that make up the body of the church. It is important to understand these roles and the value they bring when working together as God intends. The gifts are meant for the good of the body of Christ and with the goal of equipping the saints, or fellow believers, for the work of the ministry. It is powerful to see what happens when believers work together in unity to equip others for ministry. This leads everyone to mature in their faith and become more like Jesus.

 What is something new you learned about spiritual gifts from this passage? Do you know your spiritual gift(s)? How can you find out?

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 What do you need to do differently to use your gifts for the work of the ministry?

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 How should all spiritual gifts have the goal of spreading the name of Jesus throughout the world?

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## Here's How to Become a Christ-Follower:

*Read the following verses and ask after each one: "What does this say to me?"*

- **All have sinned:** Romans 3:23 & 1 John 1:8
- **The wages of sin:** Romans 6:23 & John 3:18
- **But while we were sinners, salvation was provided:** Romans 5:8
- **Become a Christ-follower:** Romans 10:9-10 Confess and Believe

## Accepting Christ is Just the Beginning:

Next Steps:

- Publicly profess your faith by being baptized (Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 3:21; Romans 6:4).
- Join a church which follows the Bible, where you can grow in your faith through prayer, Bible study and fellowship with other Christians.
- Get involved in groups for encouragement and accountability.
- Begin a daily personal worship experience with God where you study the Bible and pray.
- Share with others what Jesus has done for you. Tell your story (Romans 10:14; Matthew 28:19-20).
- Begin to live for God (Romans 12:1-2, 9-18; James 1:19-27).





# FOR NEXT WEEK

## Leaders Who Make Leaders

### Main Passages

- 2 Timothy 2:1-26

### Session Outline

1. Make Leaders (2 Timothy 2:1-2)
2. Stay Focused (2 Timothy 2:14-15)
3. Prepare Yourself (2 Timothy 2:22-26)

### Memorize

*From him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building itself up in love by the proper working of each individual part.*

- Ephesians 4:16, CSB

### References

<sup>1</sup>David S. Dockery, "Ephesians," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1876.

### Prayer

1. What gifts do you believe God has given you? Ask God for guidance on how to use your gifts to bring Him glory and build up the body.
2. Pray over someone in your community and the gifts God has given them to use for His glory.