

The Goal of God's Gifts

Ephesians 4:12-13

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God's gifted leaders are to invest in people so that the church is built up to unity and maturity.

I. The job of the God's gifted leaders is to equip believers to do the work of the ministry. (v. 12a)

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching... (Acts 2:42a)

...and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." (Acts 6:4)

The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher. (Luke 6:40)

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. (Hebrews 13:7)

Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:9)

Therefore I urge you to imitate me. (1 Corinthians 4:16)

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:1)

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. (2 Timothy 2:2)

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea. Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord." (Colossians 4:16-17)

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

II. As everyone does their part, Christ's Church is built up. (v. 12b)

I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building. (1 Corinthians 3:6-9)

...everything we do, dear friends, is for your strengthening. (2 Corinthians 12:19b)

Because of this I am writing these things while absent, so that when I arrive I may not have to deal harshly with you by using my authority – the Lord gave it to me for building up, not for tearing down! (2 Corinthians 13:10)

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. (Romans 14:19)

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up. (Romans 15:1-2)

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13a)

III. Equipping and resulting service produces united faith through true knowledge of the Lord and His ways. (v. 13a)

How good and pleasant it is
when God's people live together in unity! (Psalms 133:1)

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

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17:20-23)

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:12)

The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out. (Proverbs 18:15)

Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, “In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.” Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?” Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. (Acts 19:13-16)

Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately. (Acts 18:24-26)

But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ’s triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere. (2 Corinthians 2:14)

But knowledge puffs up while love builds up. (1 Corinthians 8:1b)

...to those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, have been granted a faith just as precious as ours. May grace and peace be lavished on you as you grow in the rich knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord! I can pray this because his divine power has bestowed on us everything necessary for life and godliness through the rich knowledge of the one who called us by his own glory and excellence. (2 Peter 1:1-3)

Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. (Colossians 3:12-14)

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God. (Philippians 1:9-11)

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:17-19)

IV. Which results in true spiritual maturity and conformity to the image of Christ. (v. 13b)

He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me. (Colossians 1:28-29)

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son... (Romans 8:29a)

Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. (Colossians 4:12)

We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity ... (Hebrews 5:11-6:1a)

For we have all received from his fullness one gracious gift after another. (John 1:16 NET)

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. (James 1:2-6)