

Lesson 4

EQUIP AND EDIFY THE SAINTS

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12).

As we grow in Christ, we begin to get a spiritual understanding of God's faithfulness. When we continue to read God's Word, pray, and remain in church fellowship, we realize that all temptation is common to man. We're not alone and we are all in this together.

To strengthen our faith, the Lord gave apostles (one sent by God to deliver His message), prophets (one who speaks God's truth), evangelists (one who shares the gospel), pastors (one who oversees God's people), and teachers (one who teaches God's Word).

1. In addition to strengthening our faith, why did God give us apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers? Write Ephesians 4:12.

The word *equipping* in the KJV translation is "perfecting." This term means "setting a broken bone" or "putting something into the correct place." Pastors and teachers are to guide and direct us into a spiritual condition acceptable to God, where we can mature in our spiritual character. The purpose of the church is to develop us in our faith for that place of service that each one of us might fulfill the ministry that God has called us to.

2. Write Ephesians 4:13.

Have you ever wondered why it seems the pastor goes over the same teaching Sunday after Sunday, year after year? Because we have by no means "come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God." We have not become "a perfect man." Nor have we come "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

Ministers have to keep teaching the doctrines of Christ to chip away at our old nature and allow the work of the Holy Spirit to conform us into the image of Christ. And so God is faithful to give us apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to keep on discipling us for the benefit of our maturity so we are more like Jesus.

3. Write Ephesians 4:14.

Throughout history, there have been many spiritual fads, and people follow after them looking for some kind of exotic, spiritual experience. But these winds of doctrine are just gimmicks that cause instability and confusion.

4. Write Ephesians 4:15.

Using the Word of God is often compared to a light. When God's teachers speak the truth in love, it exposes error, like a light shining in a dark place. When the pastor teaches verse by verse from the Bible, darkness is dispelled and exposes error, trickery, and deception.

5. Write Isaiah 28:10.

There is no spiritual gift of criticism. True spiritual growth occurs in the sphere of God's love, speaking God's Word. It calms and settles, guides and directs. God's teachers are to talk about the truth in love that we might grow up into Jesus, who is the head of the church.

6. Write Ephesians 4:16.

To equip God's people, the prerequisite is speaking the truth in love "by what every joint supplies." *Joint* means "member." We are all members of the body of Christ. It is Jesus who lovingly joins us together with distinct functions and gifts to supply church growth.

7. Write 1 Corinthians 12:4-7.

If you are an eye in the body of Christ, so to speak, then it would be challenging for you to grip something, like a hand. Or if God's called you to be a hand, it's awfully hard then to see. Jesus fitly joins us together. We each have our place, and we each must fulfill the place that God has put us in the body, so the body functions fully and is equipped and edified.

8. Looking at 1 Corinthians 12:8-11, list the spiritual gifts for the profit of the church body.

God is faithful to perfect you for that place of service that you might fulfill the ministry that He has called you to fulfill. As believers, we have been called by God to serve Him. When we serve Him and fulfill that ministry, this equips and edifies God's people.

9. Write Hebrews 10:24-25.