

Faithful in Ministry

By Adrian Rogers

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Main Scripture Text: Ephesians 4:7–16

“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”

EPHESIANS 4:7

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Introduction

Find Ephesians chapter 4, and then look up here.

¶ Many believe that Charles Spurgeon, outside of the Apostle Paul, was the greatest preacher who ever lived. Spurgeon told a story, a very interesting story. He told of a woman that had been a member of his congregation who was very poor, and she lived in the poor house—what they called “the poor house” in those days. And Spurgeon went to visit her to give her some comfort and some help. And when he was there in her room, he looked up on the wall, and there he saw framed a certificate, a piece of paper, sort of a legal document. And so, he went over and read it. And what it was was a document transferring great wealth to this woman. She didn’t know what it was. She had framed it and put it on her wall. What had happened is this: that she had served as a nurse and had taken care of an elderly man, and when he died, he left her his estate. She didn’t know what it was. She was untaught, unlearned. When, finally, the bank learned about it, they said, “We wondered who the old gentlemen left his estate to.”¶

Now, may I say this: that when the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, He left you an incredible giftedness. It may be that you have not yet discovered what you have in the Lord Jesus. I want to talk to you today about your spiritual gift. Could it be that you have it framed as a motto on the wall rather than having carried it to the bank to cash it and use it? Or could it be that you have left your gift under the tree, wrapped and unopened and, therefore, unappreciated? Let me tell you something: when God saved you, God saved you by His grace, but *God did not save you to sit, soak, and sour; God saved you to serve*. And you are saved by grace, and you serve by grace. And you are a gifted child.

Now, look with me in verse 7. Look in God’s Word—Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 7: “*But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*” (Ephesians 4:7) Now, if you don’t mind marking your Bible, would you underscore for me “every one”? Now, did that include you? Well indeed, it did, if you’re a child of God. Are you part of “every one”? Of course you are.

Now, God has given to you, precious friend, a spiritual gift. “*But unto every one of us is given grace.*” (Ephesians 4:7) Do you see the word *grace*? It’s the Greek word *charis*. It’s the word that we get our word *charismatic* from. You have a charismatic gift. Did you know that you’re a charismatic person? “Well,” you say, “I’m not charismatic.” Well, don’t think by *charismatic* that we mean somebody who has a ready smile, a firm handshake, and verbal ability. We say, “Well, that man is charismatic. He’d make a good politician.” That’s a corruption of the word *charismatic*. The word *charismatic*

merely means “a person who has been gifted by grace.” “[To] every one of us is given grace”—*charis*—“according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:7) You are a gifted child, but you may be like that poor woman, who does not understand what the gift is, and you don’t know how to use it. So, we’re going to be looking today at how you can discover and develop and deploy your spiritual gift and minister here in the body. Now, there are about four things I want you to see very quickly this morning.

I. The Gifts Delivered

And the very first thing is how the gifts are delivered. Verse 7: “*But unto every one of us is given*”—underscore the word *given*—“*given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*” (Ephesians 4:7) Now, God has given you a grace gift; therefore, do not insult God by saying God cannot use you. In the church, there can be no inferiority; there can be no superiority. We are what we are by the gift of God.

Now, what is a charismatic gift? Remember that every one of us has a charismatic gift. Every one of us has a charismatic gift. What is a charismatic gift? Here’s the definition: a grace gift, a charismatic gift, is a God-given ability for service and ministry. Got it? Got it—a God-given gift for service and ministry; a God-given spiritual ability for service and ministry. Now, it goes beyond natural talent. Talent is natural; spiritual gifts are supernatural. They’re supernatural in source, supernatural in nature, and supernatural in purpose.

Now, you do not choose your spiritual gift any more than you could choose your natural gifts. Laurie, that just sang for us, has a natural gift of music. She also has a supernatural spiritual gift. But her natural gift is a natural talent. You can develop your natural talents, but you don’t choose them any more than you could choose the color of your eyes or the color of your skin. You get that genetically by your first birth, and your talents are encoded in you genetically by your first birth. Your spiritual gift is given to you at your new birth. And, as your natural talents are natural, your spiritual gift is supernatural.

Now, how did you get this gift? Well, it is the gift of your ascended Lord. Look, if you will, in verse 8: “*Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high*”—who is that talking about? Jesus—“*he led captivity captive*”—who is that talking about? The devil—“*and gave gifts unto men*”—who is that talking about? You—“(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that hath ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)” (Ephesians 4:8–10)

Now, here’s what happened: The Lord Jesus descended. He came to this earth; lived a perfect life; suffered, bled, and died on the cross; was buried and rose again. When Jesus Christ died on that cross for us—when, with His blood, He purchased our

salvation—at the same time He broke Satan’s back. Satan’s kingdom came crashing down, and Satan and his malevolent forces were crushed by Calvary. And so, the Lord Jesus Christ, by His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, led captivity captive. Satan had taken the world captive, but Jesus took Satan captive. He led captivity captive.

Now, what the Apostle Paul is talking about here is a Roman triumph. When a Roman general would go off and fight the war for Rome, if he won the battle, he would come back to the city of Rome for a parade called “the triumph.” And in the triumph, the Roman general would come. The air would be filled with incense and perfume. He would be riding upon his white horse. There would be a parade. The priests would be there, swinging incense and perfume. And the people would be there, giving their praises to this general. Behind this general would come the conquered kings and generals behind him. They would have been stripped naked—absolutely naked. They would be chained to the conquering general’s chariot wheels, and they would be dragged along. The people would be praising the conquering general. They would be jeering and mocking these who’d been stripped and shamed and subdued, their power gone, their pride laid in the dust. And then, behind them would come servants bearing all of the spoils of the battle, the riches that had been conquered. They had been brought back to Rome to be given to the people of Rome.

Now, that’s the picture—that’s the picture that Paul is talking about here. The Lord Jesus ascended up on high. He led captivity captive. Satan’s kingdom is ruined, and the spoils of the battle are given to us. And the spoils of the battle, that is our grace gift to serve our great King. So, never despise or overlook your grace gift. It is a spiritual gift from our Conqueror, the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. The Gifts Described

Now, the second thing I want us to think about: not only the gifts as they are delivered, but the gifts as they’re described. What are these gifts? I would like for you to turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 12, would you, please? Just turn to that. You turn left to 1 Corinthians chapter 12, and we’ll find a list of gifts. And then, in Romans chapter 12, we’ll find another list. I want you to listen very carefully because you’re going to hear your name called in one of these gifts. You’re going to discover one or more of these that are your spiritual gift, I believe.

Now, I begin in verse 4—1 Corinthians 12, verse 4: *“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit”*—now, it’s the Holy Spirit who gives different gifts to the Church—*“And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord”*—that is, everything is not always done the same way, but it’s the Lord who’s doing it—*“And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the*

manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” (1 Corinthians 12:4–7) Now, what does that mean? In plain English, it means that God gave you a spiritual gift, not for your own enjoyment, but for your employment. Your spiritual gift is to bless the church, not to bless you. It is a tool, not a toy.

A. Wisdom

And then, he says in verse 8: *“For [by] one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom.”* (1 Corinthians 12:8) Now, what is the word of wisdom? That is supernatural insight into the mind of God. He’s not talking here about common sense; he’s talking about uncommon sense. People who have a word of wisdom make wonderful counselors.

B. Knowledge

“...to another the word of knowledge.” (1 Corinthians 12:8) This differs from wisdom in that it is the supernatural ability to know the things of God and apply the things of God. Knowledge puts wisdom to practical use. And there are people who have the gift of wisdom. Some will have the gift of knowledge. Some have these gifts combined, and they make wonderful, wonderful leaders and counselors.

C. Faith

Verse 9: *“To another faith by the same Spirit.”* (1 Corinthians 12:9) Now, all believers have faith or they could not be called a believer. You could not be saved without faith. But some people have a supernatural gift of faith. It’s described in the next chapter as mountain-moving faith. Thank God for these kinds of people. They are the visionaries. They are the pioneers. They are the people who are able to think big, to believe God for the big thing. And we have some of them in our church, and I thank God for them.

D. Healing

And then, *“another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit.”* (1 Corinthians 12:9) In the Greek language, this is literally plural—“gifts of healings.” There are healings for the body, soul, and mind; physical healing, psychological healing, spiritual healing (healing for the spirit). And I believe in the gift of healing, and some have been given this gift. And I am grateful for the gifts of healing.

E. Miracles

And then, he says, *“To another the working of miracles.”* (1 Corinthians 12:10) “Pastor Rogers, is the age of miracles past?” Absolutely not! “Well, do individuals have power to work miracles?” According to this, I believe that they do. I don’t think that is my gift. As a matter of fact, I’m quite certain that it is not my gift. But I am grateful for any who may have the gift to perform miracles. I remind you that Satan also has miraculous power so we need to be very, very careful. I also remind you that the gifts of healing generally came in clusters in the Bible. They were not normal in everyday Bible life. But we

cannot deny that God is a God of might and miracle.

F. Prophecy

“...to another prophecy.” (1 Corinthians 12:10) The word *prophecy* means “the ability to foretell and forth-tell,” primarily, not to foretell the future, but, primarily, to tell forth the will of God in a particular matter. Now, we don’t have to guess about what the gift of prophecy is because he says over here in the fourteenth chapter, in verse 3: “*But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification*”—what does edification mean? That means “to build people up.” An edifice is a building—“*and exhortation*”—what is exhortation? That is to encourage, to fire people up; to exhort; to cheer. And then—“*[to] comfort*.” (1 Corinthians 14:3) What does *comfort* mean? That means “to hold up and shore up people.” A prophet is somebody who builds up, fires up, and shores up the people of God. The fourteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians is given over to tell us how important the gift of prophecy is. Every church ought to pray that God will give prophets to the church, spokesmen who can speak for God. Maybe that is your gift, the gift of prophecy. And maybe God uses you to speak God’s Word.

G. Discernment

“...to another *[the] discerning of spirits*.” (1 Corinthians 12:10) Now, what does that mean? There are a lot of wild and wicked spirits in the world today. The Apostle John says, “*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but test*”—or, “*try*”—“*the spirits whether they [be] of God*.” (1 John 4:1) There’s a lot of spiritual wickedness, as well as spiritual righteousness, in the world today.

I was in the airport this past week. And I generally pray for those that I’m going to sit by and try to witness to them. A lady got on, sat by me, and I prayed, “O God, help me to find a way to talk to this woman about you.” She pulled out a book and began to read the book, and the book was about angels. And so, I’m looking over and kind of, with my eyes, eavesdropping on her reading, and I’m trying to find out what she’s reading. And I see the book is just full of New Age error, and there’s nothing in there based on the Bible or the Word of God. I said to this woman, “Tell me about angels.” “Oh,” she said, “well, angels are wonderful.” She said, “They’re all around, and,” she said, “they guide me.” I said, “They do?” She said, “Yes, they speak to me.” I said, “Oh.” She said, “And I speak to them, and I pray to them.” I said, “Well, that’s interesting.” I said, “What is that book based on?” She said, “What do you mean?” I said, “What is the authority of that book? How do you know that book is true?” “Well,” she said, “the angels speak to me.” I said, “Did you know, lady, that the Bible says that Satan can be transformed as an angel of light?” She looked at me like I’d shot her. And then I began to share with her the Lord Jesus Christ. And to shorten the story, I believe she was gloriously saved right there on that airplane as she prayed, and asked Christ into her heart as her personal

Lord and Savior, and said to me, “Mister, God put you on this airplane beside me.” I’ve written her to give her some material to help her to grow in the Christian life. But here was a woman, I believe, making contact with demon spirits and believing that she was in contact with angels sent from God, or whatever, because she did not have the basis of God’s Word. And we, in this day and age, need the Spirit to discern spirits.

H. Tongues

“...to another divers kinds of tongues.” (1 Corinthians 12:10) The word *tongues* here simply means “languages”—the ability to speak a language that you have never learned in school, to praise God. Tongues are not a sign to God’s people. Tongues are not for a sign to believers but to unbelievers. Now, tongues are not, primarily, a private prayer language. They are a tool of witnessing, primarily, to unsaved Jews.

How would the gift of tongues work today? Well, suppose, in this particular service, a busload of Russian tourists were to stop out here, and let’s suppose that they’re Jewish and they’ve never heard the gospel. They don’t know English—or maybe they do know English, but I don’t know Russian. They come and sit in this section right here. And God gives me, supernaturally, the charismatic gift of tongues. And I begin to praise God in fluent Russian, and they hear in the language where they were born. They say, “How does that man know Russian?” I don’t know Russian. God has supernaturally gifted me to speak to them in Russian. But most of you don’t know Russian. So, when I’m speaking in English, the Russians are not understanding. When I’m speaking in Russian, you’re not understanding. So, if God gives me the gift of tongues so I can praise God in their language, He has to give somebody else the gift of interpretation so you can understand what I’m saying when I’m speaking in Russian.

I. Interpretation

So, continue to read in verse 10: “to another...interpretation of languages.” (1 Corinthians 12:10) So, let’s suppose that Brother Whitmire has the gift of interpretation. I am praising God to those Russians, saying that God is great and God is glorious. They’re being convinced, especially if they’re Russian Jews. Brother Whitmire says to the rest of us, “What the pastor is saying is this,” and he interprets, having never learned Russian either, supernaturally the gift of tongues. And he has the gift of interpretation so that nobody is in the dark. Remember what we said—that every gift is given to the entire Body to profit withal. (1 Corinthians 12:7) Nobody is to come in a service and sit there and say, “I wonder what that meant.” If he occupies the room of the unlearned and we’re speaking in things he can’t understand, the Bible says he’ll think we’re crazy; he’ll think we’ve gone mad. Everybody is to understand the Word of God. Now, that is a gift of God.

J. Outreach

Now, you say, “Pastor Rogers, I don’t believe you’ve mentioned my gift yet.” Well, just turn to Romans chapter 12, and let’s look at another gift right here. And maybe you’re in this list. And just turn left to Romans chapter 12, and I begin again in verse 6: *“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy.”* (Romans 12:6) Now, we’ve already mentioned that, but it may be that God’s called you into preaching or jail services—missionary work to speak for God.

K. Ministry

“...or ministry, let us [minister].” (Romans 12:7) Now, what is ministry? That’s acts of service. We could just call that “general church work.” Our ushers today have the gift of ministry—in our Activities Program; those who manage the Grace Building; our secretaries, typing; ushering; coaching. And here’s a wonderful gift of ministry—working in the nursery today. Many of you ought to do that, and many of you have been gifted of God to change diapers. I’m serious! You say, “Well, God didn’t give me any gifts.” Why, if, in the name of Jesus, you can care for these little ones, you cannot even give a cup of cold water to one of these little babies in the name of the disciple and lose your reward. (Matthew 10:42; Mark 9:41) This is a gift that is so greatly needed. He mentions ministry.

L. Teaching

And then, he mentions teaching. Why, we have now a Sunday school that is, on Sunday mornings around here, exceeding on big Sundays, and perhaps today, over seven thousand people in Bible study. Well, who teaches all of these people? People who have been first of all taught and anointed and gifted of God to teach the Bible. That’s the spiritual gift of teaching. Maybe in a missionary organization. Maybe you don’t teach a class, but you’re a mother and God anoints you to teach your children supernaturally.

M. Exhortation

Then he mentions the gift of exhortation. What is the gift of exhortation? Gifted musicians who have not only vocal ability but the ability to move your heart often have the gift of exhortation. Those people who do visitation. Those people who do counseling that encourages—many times, they have the gift of exhortation. Is that your ability—just to cheer people on? Maybe you just have the ability to exhort your pastor and encourage me. I need it!

I heard about a little boy who wanted to be in a school play. He had his heart set on it, and his mother knew that he did not have the ability to be in that play. But she was afraid he’d be heartbroken if they didn’t give him a part. When he came home, the mother asked him, “How did it go? Did you get a part?” “Oh,” he said, “yes, I got a part.” She said, “What is it?” He said, “They gave me the job of clapping and cheering.” Well, I

like that. And he was so thrilled that that was his job to clap and to cheer. Maybe that's the gift that God has given you, and it is a needful gift in a church like this—the gift of exhortation.

N. Giving

Then he mentions the gift of giving right there. (Romans 12:8) What is that? That's the ability—the supernatural ability—to make and give money sacrificially and wisely. We have those.

O. Ruling

And then, he mentions the gift of ruling. (Romans 12:8) Those on our church staff, those who head committees, those who are in places of leadership, those who even coach teams in the Grace Building may have the gift of giving.

P. Mercy

Then he mentions the gift of mercy. (Romans 12:8) These are people who do hospital visitation. These are people who work, Brother Bernie, in our Benevolence Department. These are those, again, who counsel. These are those who go to the rest homes, and so forth.

III. The Gifts Developed

The gifts described. Now, here's the third thing: not only the gifts delivered and the gifts described, but think with me about the gifts developed. How is the gift developed? Well, turn back to Ephesians chapter 4, would you, right back where we were, and let's find out how your gift is developed. I begin now in Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 11: *“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ”* (Ephesians 4:11–12)—that is, the building up, the developing, of the Body of Christ.

A. Apostles and Prophets

Now, not only does God give to every one of us spiritual gifts, but God also gives to the church spiritual leaders. And so, he mentions some apostles and some prophets. (Ephesians 4:11) Now, we don't have apostles and prophets today in the biblical sense. There were twelve apostles and the prophets who wrote the Old Testament, and so forth. They're already in heaven. And he tells us in the second chapter that the church is *“built upon the foundation of the apostles and [the] prophets.”* (Ephesians 2:20) Now, we don't have prophets today and apostles, except in the secondary sense, but did you know you're looking at a man who can preach with the authority of a prophet and the authority of an apostle if I preach what the prophets and the apostles preached? You see, as long as I preach what they preach, I have the authority that they had. That's the

reason we have the Word of God that has inscripturated the message of the apostles and the prophets.

B. Evangelists

And then, he mentions evangelists. (Ephesians 4:11) These are the soul winners that bring people into the Body to help the Body to grow. And thank God that God gives to the church the evangelists, the soul winners, that bring people to Christ.

C. Pastor-Teachers

And then, he mentions, “*and some, pastors and teachers*” (Ephesians 4:11)—not pastors and then teachers, but pastor-teachers. It’s grouped together in the Greek language. The job of a pastor-teacher is to guide and feed the flock. I believe that’s the assignment that God has given to me. Here is God’s job description for me: I am God’s gift to you. Like it or not, you’re stuck with me. I am the pastor-teacher of this church.

Now, why does God give you a pastor-teacher? Well, so the pastor-teacher can do the work of the ministry? Wrong! The pastor-teacher is to help you to do the work of the ministry. Look at it: “*and some pastors and teachers; for*”—verse 12—“*the perfecting*”—the maturing—“*of the saints, for the work of the ministry.*” (Ephesians 4:11–12) The pastor-teacher is to help you to be mature, to discover and develop your spiritual gift, so you can do the work of the ministry. You say, “Pastor, that’s your job.” No, my job is to help you to do your job. My job is to help you to be mature so that you can find your spiritual gift and you can put your spiritual gift to work. And God has a ministry for you; God has a job for you. God did not save you to be a member of Bellevue Anonymous. God put you here to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, you’ve been called into the ministry. It is my job to put you to work for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, you say, “Well, I want God to use me.” Well, do you really? Do you really? Let me tell you something: *if you want God to use you, you need to stop praying for God to use you and get useable, and God will wear you out.* I mean, do you think that God doesn’t want to use you? “He hath set every member in the Body as it hath pleased Him.” (1 Corinthians 12:18) God has given you a spiritual gift.

Now, how can you know your spiritual gift? Let me give you about five principles to know your spiritual gift.

1. The Principle of Desire

Number one: There’s the principle of desire. What do you enjoy doing? I would be dishonest if I did not tell you I feel fitted for doing what I’m doing right now. I desire to do it. I love to do it. I would be disappointed if I could not do it. What do you do naturally? What do you enjoy doing? What do you feel that you do well?

2. The Principle of Discovery

Secondly, the principle of discovery. You will discover your gift as you endeavor to do it. Other people will say, “You know, you blessed me when you did that,” or, “You’ve been such a comfort to me,” or, “You’ve given me such wisdom here,” or, “You have the ability to lead in this area.” As Dr. Ironside used to say, “It’s a sad thing to hear a man who thinks he has the gift of preaching when no one else has the gift of listening.” You will discover your spiritual gift, and others will help you to discover it.

3. The Principle of Development

The third principle: the principle of desire, the principle of discovery, the principle of development. You need to stir up the gift of God. That’s what Paul told Timothy. You need to “*study to shew [yourself] approved unto God.*” (2 Timothy 2:15) If you have a gift, no matter what it is, it’s like a natural talent. Again, Laurie Foster has the talent to sing, but she has to develop it. And you have a spiritual gift, but you have to develop it and study and work. It’s not just all honey and no bees.

4. The Principle of Dependence

Now, next is the principle of dependence. Your spiritual gift must operate in the power of the Holy Spirit. Your gifts are supernatural, and they operate with supernatural power. Depend upon the Holy Spirit of God.

5. The Principle of Deployment

And then, there’s the principle of deployment. Put it to work. Go to work with other saints. Where do you understand your gift? In the Body, in the Church. Your gift is significant as it relates to other gifted people. It’s in the fellowship of the Church that you’re going to discover your place in the Body.

IV. The Gifts Displayed

Now, here’s the fourth thing and the final thing very quickly: I want you to see not only the gifts dispensed, and the gifts described, and the gifts developed, but I want you to think about the gifts displayed. What happens when all of us find our ministry? Well, look in verse 13: “*till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*” (Ephesians 4:13) Now, what he’s saying is that He’s given us gifts, and when these gifts work together, then the Body matures and the Body becomes like its head, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to be mature. Look in verse 13: “*unto a perfect man.*” (Ephesians 4:13) The word *perfect* here does not mean “sinless”; it means “mature.” Now, let me mention some ways we’re going to be mature, and then I’m finished.

A. Mature in Stature

First of all, you’re going to be mature in stature. That means you’re going to be like the

Lord Jesus Christ—*“unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”* (Ephesians 4:13) You can tell when the gifts are working in a church when the church becomes like the Lord Jesus Christ. When the gifts are operating, we’re becoming more and more like the Lord Jesus.

B. Mature in Stability

Mature in stature and mature in stability. Look in verse 14: *“that we [be] henceforth...no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about [by] every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”* (Ephesians 4:14) The false cults out there are getting Baptists and evangelical Christians going door to door. They do not evangelize. They don’t win souls. What they do is corrupt and deceive people who are immature who have not come to the measure of the stature of Christ. And people get *“[blown] about [by] every wind of doctrine.”* (Ephesians 4:14) But when the Body is healthy, when the gifts are operating, we become mature in stature, we become mature in stability. We’re not *“[blown] about [by] every wind of doctrine.”* (Ephesians 4:14)

C. Mature in Speech

Number three: We become mature in speech. Look in verse 15, if you will: *“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up.”* (Ephesians 4:15) Now, we’re to *“[speak] the truth in love.”* (Ephesians 4:15) If you speak the truth without love, that’s brutality. But if you speak in love without truth, that is hypocrisy. Immature people cannot blend the two. We have some people who are just already speaking the truth, but they have no love. Other people who talk about love, they have no truth. Truthless love and loveless truth are the signs of immature people.

D. Mature in Service

But when the gifts are working, we’re mature in stature, we’re mature in stability, we are mature in speech, and we are mature in service. Look in verse 16; here’s how it all works together: *“from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”* (Ephesians 4:16) Now, what does that mean? It speaks of flexible harmony. He talks about every joint. My elbow is a joint. You see that? It’s flexible. Now, what holds my forearm to my upper arm? My elbow. It’s a joint. It enables me to bend this arm. Now, it keeps me connected, but it’s flexible. And that’s the way the Body is: it is to be flexible harmony. My body works together because of the joints, and that’s the way God put the Body together. Every member has his ministry, and we’re held together by all of these joints.

Now, you know what happens to some people? We get stiff. We get spiritual arthritis. And rather than having this flexibility, we get rigid and firm because the Body is

not healthy. Oh, it's so wonderful to see a healthy Body—all of the joints just working together in harmony. The Greek word *joint* is *harmos*. It's the word we get *harmony* from. Now, when I studied human anatomy and physiology, I found out in college that we have synovial fluid that lubricates these joints. And when the cartilage gets dry, and the synovial fluid is not there, and it gets inflamed and swollen and it gets stiff and painful, then the body is not lubricated. What is the synovial fluid? It is love. When we love one another, then we don't inflame one another—we don't get stiff; we don't get rigid. We all have our gifts of God. And we become mature in stature: we become like Christ. We become mature in stability: we're not blown about. We become mature in speech: we know how to speak the truth in love. And we become mature, dear friend, in service: we serve one another, and the Body works together. Don't you want to be a part of a church like that? Say "amen." I know you do. And may God help us to find our place in the Body.

Conclusion

Look up here. I'm telling you, you are a gifted child. And don't you leave that thing framed and hanging on the wall. Find out what God wants you to do and get busy doing it.

You say, "Pastor, I just don't have any joy." Well, what do you do? "Well, Pastor, I come hear you preach." Do you think you've done God a wild favor when you've done that? Friend, if you're not serving, you won't have joy. The Greek word *charis* means, not only "grace," but it also means "joy." When you serve the Lord, that's when the juices of joy begin to flow.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Heads are bowed, and eyes are closed. Would you pray that God would show you your ministry in this body? Will you accept yourself, discover yourself, be yourself, and give yourself for the glory of God?

And those of you who've not yet been saved, remember you must be saved by grace before you can serve by grace. And you need to receive Jesus Christ now as your Lord and Savior. And if you've never truly been saved, this is a wonderful moment for you to be saved. God brought you here today to be saved. Those of you who are saved, begin to pray for those who may be near you who may not know the Lord Jesus. Say, "Lord, if that man, that woman, does not yet know you, may they now receive you." Pray for the person to your right and the person to your left right now, even if you know them. Pray, "Lord, if they need a closer walk, bless them."

And, if you're not certain of your salvation, I'm going to guide you in a little prayer, and, right now, you can pray and receive Christ as your personal Savior and Lord. Pray like this if you want to be saved: "Dear God, I know that you love me, and I know that you want to save me. Jesus, I believe you paid for my sins with your blood on the cross.

Thank you for paying my sin debt. Thank you for taking my place. Thank you for dying for me. Thank you, Lord, for your agony on the cross. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for your resurrection. I believe that God raised you from the dead. Lord Jesus, you told me if I would trust you, you would save me. I do trust you, Lord Jesus”—would you tell Him that?—“I do trust you, Lord Jesus, right now, this moment. I open my heart. I receive you into my life as my Lord and Savior. Come into my life. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Save me, Lord Jesus.”

Did you ask Him? “Save me, Lord Jesus.” Then, pray this way: “I receive it by faith. I don’t look for a sign. I don’t ask for a feeling. I stand on your Word. You’re now my Lord, my Savior, my God, and my friend. Thank you for saving me. Thank you for saving me. And now, Lord Jesus, by your grace, I will make it public. I will not be ashamed of you. You died for me. I will let it be known that I love you, and by your grace, I will live for you because you died for me. In your holy name I pray. Amen.”✠