

Striving TOGETHER to PERFECTION

Ephesians 4:1-16

1 John 3:1-10

Matthew 25:14-29



God's Eternal Purpose

- Are you one of God's special people? (1 Peter 2:9; Titus 2:11-14)
- Many think they are and actually are not!!! (Matthew 7:21-23)

Goals and Discipleship

Where Are We and Where We Going

Examining Ourselves

- (2 Corinthians 7:1) Paul, by the authority of Christ, calls the saints to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. We cannot cleanse ourselves apart from examining ourselves as commanded in 2 Corinthians 13:5.
- (1 John 3:3) EVERYONE who has the hope of being with Christ in heaven PURIFIES HIMSELF, just as He is pure.
- REVIVAL - when God's people REPENT. Repentance: Cease in doing things (including Church) in a way that seems right and comfortable for me and start doing everything as God has revealed in His Word. (Luke 4:4)

Am I BEING Saved?

★ Salvation is an ONGOING process.

→ A **past** salvation – “I was saved.” (Ephesians 2:5, 8; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5) **THIS IS REGENERATION – BEING BORN-AGAIN!**

FREED FROM THE PENALTY OF SIN.

→ A **present** salvation – “I am being saved.” (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 2:15; Romans 13:11; Philippians 2:12)

THIS IS SANCTIFICATION – BEING MADE INTO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST.

GIVEN POWER OVER SIN. FREEING FROM THE PLEASURE OF SIN. (1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 2:15; 3:18; 4:16; Rom 6:14, 19-22; 13:11)

→ A **future** salvation (Romans 5:9-10; 1 Cor 3:15; Rom 8:23; Heb 9:28)

**THIS IS GLORIFICATION – BEING GLORIFIED
FREED FROM THE PRESENCE OF SIN.**

★ ALL THREE ARE NECESSARY TO BE FINALLY SAVED.

★ Am I BEING saved?

Completed and Ongoing TRUTHS

- Christians are COMPLETE in Christ in heaven. They are becoming more and more like Christ in time. (Colossians 2:10; **2 Cor 3:18; 4:16**)
- Christians are forgiven all their sins because of the work of Christ, but in time they confess and repent of their sins. (Isaiah 43:25; 1 John 1:8-9)
- Christians have eternal life, yet in time, they are appointed once to die! (Romans 6:23; John 11:25-26; Hebrews 9:28)
- In Christ, Christians are PERFECT, but here in time we are exhorted to “Be perfect as your Father in Heaven”. (Matthew 5:48; Philippians 3:12-14)
- In Christ, Christians are sanctified, but here in time we are being sanctified! (Hebrews 2:11; 10:14; Jude 1)

A Letter to a Local Church (Ephesians 4)

Walk Worthy of Our Calling (Ephesians 4:1-3)

- Paul’s peace with the eternal purpose of God - He understood he was a prisoner of Christ and not the Romans! (Eph 3:1)
- Meaning of the word “worthy” - “balancing the scales”.
- Walking and learning from Christ. (Matthew 11:29; 1 John 2:6)
- How to walk worthy:
 - Lowliness → Gentleness → Longsuffering
 - Bearing with one another in love
- Working hard at KEEPING the Unity of the Spirit.
 - Meaning of the word “endeavoring”.
 - Present tense; active voice, participle, PLURAL.
- Stewards of the “unity of the Spirit”
 - Being filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18)
 - Walking in the Spirit (Galatians 5:18) being led by the Word of God (God’s lamp - Psalm 119:105; Isaiah 48:1-18.
 - Being led by the Spirit and following the Spirit showing ourselves to be the children of God. (Romans 8:5, 9)
 - Each church member is a steward of this unity.

Unity of the Spirit - Seven 1's (Ephesians 4:4-6)

- **One BODY** - one Head giving direction to one body with many members. There is no teaching of Christians doing their own thing, their own way, without being a active, serving member of a local church.
- **One Spirit** - all members have the SAME Spirit.
- **One Hope** - being like Christ - 1 John 3:1-3
→ BECAUSE of this hope we persevere! (Romans 8:23-25)
- **One Lord** - Christ is the Owner, Master, & Ruler of ALL.
- **One Faith** - This is OBJECTIVE faith - the faith "which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). This is the faith we all are to earnestly contend for.
★ In the Body, there is diversity in gifts but not doctrine.
- **One Baptism** - all true Christians are "baptized" into the Body at regeneration - when they are born-again. (1 Corinthians 12:13)
- **One God and Father** - one Father; one family that does the will of the Father. (1 John 3:1-3; Matthew 7:21; 12:50)

God Gifts ALL His Children (vv. 7-10)

- This grace is NOT salvation grace. It is enabling power to use God's given gifts for His glory and for the good of the members of the Body.
- Therefore, each of us – every Christian – has been given grace and gifts to be used.
 - ★ "He gave gifts to men" – Christ gives gifts; He does not offer gifts.
 - ★ Gifts are not determined by a person's preference, talents, or abilities.
 - ★ Gifts are given according to God's sovereign will..
 - ★ Gifts are given to fulfill God's plan and purpose.
 - ★ Gifts are NOT interchangeable. An eye cannot take the place of a hand. An ear cannot replace of a foot.
→ ILLUSTRATION: the setting up of the Tabernacle in the wilderness.
- GOD determined what each family was to do. (Numbers 3-4)
 - ★ Gifts are given according to God's measure!
 - ★ A Christian has no say in what his/her gift is – it is decided by God.
 - ★ Spiritual gifts are like DNA. A spiritual gift is a "gift" of God that God forms for each of His children to be used for His purpose; to fulfill His plan for the individual, church, and world.
 - ★ We are commanded to be good stewards of the gifts God has given us. (1 Peter 4:10-11)

God Gifts His Churches with Leaders/Teachers (v. 11)

- Define offices.
- Qualifications. God determines the qualifications for his leaders. (1 Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9)
- Mistakes over the past two centuries.

Purpose of God-Given Gifts (vv. 12-16)

- (v. 12) **Equipping** of the saints for the work of ministering.
 - (v. 12) **Edifying** (building up) the whole Body of Christ - the Church.
 - (v. 13) **Growing** into the unity of **the** faith.
 - (v. 13) **Growing** in the knowledge of the Son of God. (Colossians 1:9-10)
 - (vv. 13, 15, 16) **Growing** into a **“perfect man”**, to “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”
 - (v. 14) So that, she, the Church, is **not tossed to and fro** carried about by every wind of doctrine by deceit.
- ★ **This is NOT about INDIVIDUALS. It IS about a BODY of individuals.**

Responsibilities of Leaders and Congregation (vv. 12-15)

• **Responsibilities of God’s Leaders/Teachers**

- 1 Corinthians 11:1 “Imitate me as I imitate Christ.”
- 2 Timothy 2:15 - Be diligent, approved of God, a hard worker, rightly dividing the word of truth.
- 1 Timothy 4:12-16 - Be an example; read, study doctrine, grow in such a way that others can see the evidence.
- 1 Timothy 5:17; 2 Timothy 4:1-4 - Labor in the word and doctrine and **PREACH** (herald with all authority) the Word of God. (Titus 2:15)
- 1 Corinthians 15:10
- Hebrews 13:17 - Oversee the souls of his flock. (Acts 20:28)
- Ezekiel 3:16-21 - Watch over your flock warning the righteous and the unrighteous.

• **Responsibilities of God’s Congregation**

- Hebrews 13:17 - Submit to their authority and teachings.
- 1 Corinthians 11:1 - Imitate them! (1 Cor 4:16; Philip 3:17; 1 Thess 1:6; 2 Thess 3:7, 9)
- Jeremiah 6:16-17 - LISTEN and FOLLOW their warnings.
 - **WARNING: Zechariah 7:11-12**
- Do exactly what is **written** in the Word of God. (James 1:22; Luke 6:46; 1 John 2:3-4)

Are We Being Church?

- Is our walk worthy of our calling? By God’s standard?
- Do we work hard at keeping “the unity of the Spirit”?
- Are we of one mind, one understanding, having one mouth?
- Are we good stewards of God’s gifts/grace?
- Are we doing our part so that the **WHOLE BODY** grow into what God wants it to be?
 - Or are we simply self-centered in our beliefs?
- Will you “refuse to heed, shrug your shoulders, and stop up your ears!”
- Or will you be a doers of what was said tonight? (Hebrews 2:1; James 1:22)