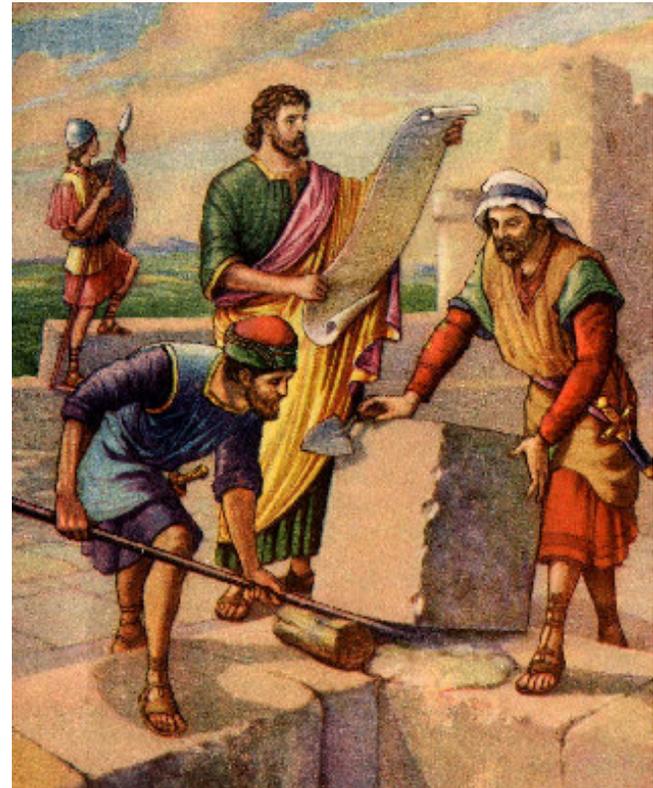


1-Jan-02

Shepherd's Storybook III-2

Ministry 2

**Build Up the Body Using Spiritual Gifts  
to Serve One Another**



Deborah is talking with Learner and his wife Sara in their house. She laughs with joy and says, "I see what grace means! I receive the same forgiveness and kindness from God, as every other member of God's flock! The Lord Jesus will let me serve Him right away. I want to show Him my gratitude by serving Him with all my heart." She takes Sara's hand, "I can start now! Can I help you with the housework so you will have more time to prepare your Bible stories for the children?"

Learner exclaims, "This is amazing! I did not realize how soon new Christians could serve God. Mr. Wise told me that there are many ways for new believers to serve others in the congregation and the community. The Holy Spirit gives jobs to everyone in the congregation."

Deborah says, "Please explain this. How does the Spirit of God give each person a task?"

Learner hands her a Bible study that Mr. Wise left. She reads, "The Holy Spirit does at least five things in our lives:

**First**, the Holy Spirit regenerates us, as John 3:1-8 reveals. We are born again of the Spirit. Even though our body is dead in sin, our spirits are alive in Christ.

**Second**, the Holy Spirit seals us. Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:12-13 that the Holy Spirit is like a seal placed on us, guaranteeing God's promise to save us.

**Third**, the Holy Spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ, as 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 reveals. He makes us want to live for God.

**Fourth**, the Holy Spirit gives each of us spiritual gifts, as Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 reveal. He empowers each of us to do some job for Christ. These gifts are not to serve ourselves, but are to build up the whole congregation. Good leaders help everyone in the congregation to use their gifts to serve the whole congregation.

**Fifth**, He produces fruit in us, Galatians 5:22-23. Even though God forgives us completely when we come to Him and we want to do what pleases Him, Romans chapter 7 says we still fight a battle inside ourselves. The new person inside of us wants to do what is right, but

Find in **Nehemiah 8:1-6 and 9:3:**

What did the leaders read to the people, that brought a great revival and God's blessing? Sara brings the men coffee and Helper tells his teacher Learner, "I am impressed that the people built the huge wall in only fifty-two days after it had lain in ruins for so very many years. I hope I can be a firm and steadfast leader like Nehemiah. He cared very much about the problems in his congregation and in his community."

"Yes," Learner replies. "When Nehemiah prayed for his congregation and the leaders of his country, he asked for forgiveness for himself and for them. He asked God for wise plans to serve people with love. He spoke honestly to his congregation about the problems he saw and they carefully made plans to deal with them." He asks his wife Sara to join them as he prays, "Lord, I need your help. I want to follow Nehemiah's example and inspire our people to keep on working when they face opposition. We want everyone to use their spiritual gifts to serve others."

Helper says, "I will write a song about Nehemiah, to encourage other leaders to follow his example."

### Practical Work

- Use the list of spiritual gifts and Biblical models above to help everyone in your congregation, including new Christians and children, to use their gifts to build up the church.
- Lead humbly, like Nehemiah, confessing your own sins to God first and asking Him to give you wise plans as you inspire and organize the congregation to do great things for Him.

### Exercise

Study the book of Nehemiah to find the following things (This is a long exercise, but worth the effort). Look in **Nehemiah 1:1-11** to find:

- How did Nehemiah feel about the trouble his people were in?
- What did Nehemiah pray, about his sin and the sin of his people?  
Find in Nehemiah chapter 2:
- What did God do in answer to Nehemiah's prayer while Nehemiah was still serving the king?
- What did Nehemiah do in Jerusalem before he talked to anyone about his plan?
- What did Nehemiah do to get the people to start working on the wall?

Find in **Nehemiah chapter 3**:

- How did Nehemiah organize the workers?  
Find in Nehemiah chapter 4:
- What opposition did the workers face?
- How did Nehemiah organize the people to overcome the opposition?
- What kind of example did Nehemiah show for the people to follow?

Find in **Nehemiah 6:15-17**:

- In how many days did the people build the wall?
- What did the surrounding nations feel when they saw how God blessed His people?

sometimes, the old person that resides in our earthly flesh pushes us into sin. Until we die, we struggle to follow God. The Holy Spirit gives us power and strengthens His qualities in us. Some people grow very quickly into spiritual maturity but others take many years. As we respond to God in faith, we learn how to be more and more like Jesus. We look forward to the time when we will be raised to glory to a life without sin."

Deborah writes down the Bible passages to study later. Sara adds, "God has given you spiritual gifts to serve others. For example, Learner has the gift to be an administrator like Nehemiah. I am a teacher like Ezra. Helper is a shepherd like the Ephesian elders. He helps shepherd the people in our congregation. Others in the congregation are workers who serve closely together like Aquila and Priscilla. Let me read to you the examples of spiritual gifts in the Bible and of how people used them. We use these examples to encourage everyone to find their job in the congregation." Sara reads the list that Mr. Wise left them, to teach to others.



### Exercise

Using the Spiritual Gifts Listed in **Romans 12:3-8**.

Following is the list of spiritual gifts that Sara shows Deborah. If you can, mark the activities for which God has given you the spiritual gifts to make them easy for you to do:

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- Serve like Samuel in 1 Samuel 1:20-28.
- Prophecy like John the Baptist in John 1:26-34.
- Give like Barnabas in Acts 4:36-37
- Teach like Ezra in Nehemiah 8
- Encourage (exhort) like Paul did for the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:17-38
- Lead like Moses in Exodus 18:13-26, or Nehemiah in Nehemiah chapters 2-3
- Show mercy like David did in 1 Samuel: 24

### Other Gifts from **1 Corinthians 12:4-11**

- Speak with words of wisdom like Solomon in 1 Kings 3:5-28
- Speak with knowledge like James who warned of the danger of uncontrolled tongues, in James 3.
- Exercise faith like Abraham did when he saw the stars and believed God's promise, in Genesis 15:1-6, or the leper and the centurion in Matthew 8:1-13
- Heal like Jesus in Mark 2:1-12, or Peter in Acts 3:1-16
- Do miracles like Elijah in 1 Kings 18:16-46
- Discern spirits like Paul did in Acts 13:6-12
- Speak in tongues like Cornelius' household did in Acts 10:44-48
- Interpret tongues like the Corinthians were instructed in 1 Corinthians 14:26-28

### More Gifts from **Ephesians 4:11-16**

- Go to neglected fields as an apostle like Paul and Barnabas in Acts chapters 13-14
- Announce the Good News as an evangelist like Philip in Acts 8:26-40
- Pastor (shepherd) like the Ephesian elders were instructed in Acts 20:28-34

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After going over this list, Deborah helps Sara with her housework. The next morning Sara visits Deborah and hears her explaining to her brother everything that she had learned the night before, recalling the spiritual gifts and persons who modeled their use in the Bible.

Deborah tells Sara, "I read the entire study that you gave me."

They talk about the spiritual gifts that God has given to people in their church. Sara says, "I think my husband Learner has the same spiritual gift as Nehemiah the Builder. This leader organized his people to finish a job that others said was impossible. The Jewish people had abandoned God. He had let them be conquered by their enemies. Their capital city, Jerusalem, was destroyed and they were taken to a foreign country. They later returned home as God had promised, but they did not rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. The walls had lain in ruins for a hundred years. Nehemiah heard about this and went to help. He was a true leader."

Deborah asks, "What spiritual gifts do I have?"

Sara replies, "It's a bit soon to tell for sure, but it looks like you might have Samuel's gift of serving others. Samuel willingly took care of God's Temple. Like him, you were eager to help me. And it sounds like you may also have the gift of teaching like Ezra. You taught your brother very well. It will be a joy to see how God develops your abilities to serve."

Later that day Learner returns home with his brother Helper. His wife Sara tells them about the discussion she had with Deborah about spiritual gifts. "I told her you have the gift of leadership like Nehemiah."

Learner replies, "I hope so. Helper, let us review the study that Mr. Wise left us about Nehemiah to discover the qualities of a good leader."