

Our Spiritual Gifts
The Five-fold Gifted Workers
Ephesians 4:1-16 (NASB 2020)
May 2023

Learning objectives

- Explain a misquotation of Psalm 68.
- Define five kinds of gifted worker.
- Describe their work.
- Affirm the purposes of their work.

Structural outline of Eph. 4:1-16

Exhortation: walk worthily 1-3

Explanation 1: our unity 4-6

Explanation 2: Christ's gift 7-10

Explanation 3: 'Five-fold' workers 11

Purpose 1: To equip us 12

Purpose 2: To mature us 13

Purpose 3: To conform us 14-15

Purpose 4: To edify us 16

Exhortation: Walk worthily 1-3

¹ Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Query: What calling? See Eph. 1:18

Query: What is the bond of peace? See Eph. 2:15

Explanation 1: Our unity 4-6

⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you also were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

Query: In all whom? All human beings?

Explanation 2: Christ's gift 7-10

⁷ But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸ Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE THE CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO PEOPLE."

Query: When did this happen?

"You ascended the high mount, leading captives in your train and receiving gifts from people." Psa. 68:18

⁹ (Now this expression, “He ascended,” what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)

Explanation 3: ‘Five-fold’ workers 11

¹¹ And He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers, ...

Greek: He himself gave **the** apostles, **and the** prophets, **and the** evangelists, **and the** pastors **and** teachers. **the** = plural definite article; **and** = *dè*, used in lists; **and** = *kaí*, conjunction. Since these nouns are in the plural, pastors and teachers are closely associated, but are not necessarily the same persons.

The apostles (‘sent ones’)

1. Jesus himself: “Our Apostle and High Priest”. Heb. 3:1
2. The twelve: Commissioned by Jesus. Luke 6:13
3. Church planters: Sent by the Spirit. 1 Thess. 2:6
4. Messengers: Sent by churches. 2 Cor. 8:23
5. James: Jerusalem church. Gal. 1:19
6. Couples: Andronicus and Junia. Rom. 16:7
7. Charlatans: Deceitful Christians. 2 Cor. 11:13

Definition: Apostles envision and work to plant new churches in neglected regions, towns and communities, in order to gather, to grow, and to multiply Christians, leaders and gatherings.

Query: Are there apostles, today?

Reply 1: No. For they all died in the first century CE, nor is there need for new doctrine.

Reply 2: Yes. We call them mission strategists or consultants, church planters, movement leaders, missionaries, or missionaries.

The prophets

1. Agabus: “Thus says the Holy Spirit” Acts 28:25
2. Antioch: Church leaders with teachers. Acts 13:1
3. Foundational: With apostles. Eph. 2:20
4. Doctrine: Revealed the mystery about Christ and the church. Eph. 3:5
5. In churches: Speak and weigh messages. 1 Cor. 14:29
6. Orderly: Remain subject to each other. 1 Cor. 14:32

Definition: Prophets receive and declare truth about God, his will, his work, his promises and his warnings, in order to bring others into obedience to him.

Query: Are there prophets, today?

Reply 1: No. For we now have the New Testament scriptures.

Reply 2: Yes. We call them preachers, apologists, exhorters, defenders of the faith.

The evangelists

1. Authors: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
2. Philip: the evangelist. Acts 21:8
3. Timothy: 2 Tim. 4:5
4. Peter: First to Jews and to Gentiles. Acts 15:7
5. Paul: testify to the gospel of God's grace. Acts 20:24
6. Role: to father new believers. 1 Cor. 4:15

Definition: Evangelists speak and write about Messiah Jesus, his life, his teaching, his death, his resurrection, and his promises, in order to bring others to faith in him.

Query: Are there evangelists, today?

Reply 1: No. For we now have the four canonical Gospels.

Reply 2: Yes. We call them soul winners, street preachers, Jesus freaks, fishermen, even evangelists.

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The pastors

1. Jesus: Compassion. Matt. 9:36
2. Jesus: Good Shepherd. John 10:11
3. Jesus: Great shepherd. Heb. 13:20
4. Jesus: Guardian of souls. 1 Pet. 2:25
5. Elders & Overseers: Acts 20:17, 28
6. Overseers: Acts 20:28-29
7. Elders: willingly, not for gain nor for fame. 1 Pet. 5:1-3
8. May be paid. 1 Cor. 9:7-11

Definition: Pastors teach, exhort, counsel, reprove, and comfort Christians, serving as models, coordinating the exercise of spiritual gifts in gatherings, in order to guard and to grow flocks, in quality and in quantity.

Query: Are there pastors, today?

Reply 1: No. For we now have qualified clergy who implement denominational rules and policies.

Reply 2: Yes. We call them elders, groups shepherds, counsellors, facilitators, trainers, even pastors

The teachers

1. Jesus: "You are right, for so I am." John 13:13
2. Antioch: with prophets. Acts 13:1
3. Churches: third after apostles and prophets.
4. Commercial: tickle ears. 2 Tim. 4:3

Our Spiritual Gifts: Five-fold workers

5. Paul: Preacher, apostle and teacher. 2 Tim. 1:11
6. Content: Faith and truth. 1 Tim. 2:7
7. Mature: You ought to be. Heb. 5:12
8. Immature: Not many of you. Jam. 3:1
9. False: Cause heresies. 2 Pet. 2:1

Definition: Teachers read, interpret, explain, and proclaim the Scriptures to others, in order to inform their mind, to strengthen their faith, and to motivate them to obey Jesus' commandments.

Query: Are there teachers, today?

Reply 1: No. For we now have systematic theology and a statement of faith, which we consult.

Reply 2: Yes. We call them teaching elders, pulpiteers, class-room instructors, biblical scholars, and discovery bible-study leaders.

Purpose 1: To equip us 12

for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ; ...

Purpose 2: To mature us 13

¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Purpose 3: To conform us 14-15

¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of people, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, that is, Christ, ...

Purpose 4: To edify us 16

¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

| Apostle | Prophet | Evangelist | Shepherd | Teacher |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Extends churches into neglected regions and communities | Strengthens new believers in their faith and obedience | Expands churches in a region and community by winning others | Leads churches in developing their ministries and in training workers | Matures churches in their faith, hope, love, obedience and outreach. |
| Requires vision, mission, courage and endurance | Requires insight, revelation and compassion | Requires passion, power and confidence | Requires purpose, goals, skills and knowledge | Requires clarity, knowledge, and conviction |
| Skills include team formation, evangelism, church planting and leader formation | Skills include prayer, hearing from God, Bible knowledge and persuasion | Skills include tactics, miracles, story-telling, persuasion and baptism | Skills include group dynamics, organization, exhortation and counselling | Skills include analysis, teaching, problem solving, and biblical application |
| Initiates outreach, spiritual warfare, mobilizes and empowers workers, plans all phases | Speaks to strength, comfort and edify new believers to remain faithful to Christ and one to another | Initiates continual effort to penetrate homes, baptize the repentant and launch new churches | Identifies members' gifts and plans ministry around them, in generational chains | Steps in wherever invited to discern needs, propose solutions, teach doctrine and defend the faith |
| Goal = new disciples, churches, leaders and apostles | Goal = hear from God, make faithful disciples, warn of coming dangers | Goal = believers continually making new believers and disciples | Goal = raising up new leaders for new ministries and new churches | Goal = sound faith, consistent obedience to Christ |
| Sins by showing favoritism, exploiting for gain, disallowing new workers | Sins by condemning the immature or by repeating old ideas | Sins by reporting false gains, fake miracles, or seeking financial advantage | Sins by stealing sheep, disallowing new leaders or seeking undue authority | Sins by pedantry, neglect of Scripture, or criticizing the other four gifts |