

4:1-3 One big happy family. Father-God's plan for making all his children one family was not well received by the Jews so they got the Father's messenger, Paul, put in a Roman prison and later put to death to shut him up and stop his influence. But Paul writes letters under the direction of the Holy Spirit that have influence for all time in all the world. Paul begins this part of the letter to the Ephesians (and to the world-wide church of every time) "... I, a _____ for _____ the Lord..." As spiritual father and pastor, he _____ the kids to be one big happy family. He exhorts them to look higher than their petty differences and to live a life _____ of their _____ -- a calling to be ambassadors of the Kingdom of God in a world without God and without hope. He exhorts them to be _____ and _____, to be _____ with each other and to make _____ for each other's _____. He says they should do this not so much because he was asking them to play nice but to consider the affection and _____ that they had for each other and do it for that reason. He reminds them that the _____ will help them have perspective and keep them _____. He says to _____ each other together by working to stay at _____ with each other.

HOLY SPIRIT: It is important that we understand that the Holy Spirit is person - a personality -- just like Jesus and talk to Him just like we talk to Jesus or the Father. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit have a perfect oneness. So commonly in Acts the Holy Spirit is spoken of as the "spirit of Jesus." Likewise, Jesus said, "I and the Father are one."

4:4-6 One-ness is reality. "We are _____ body, we have the _____ spirit, and we have been _____ to the _____ glorious _____. There is only one _____, one _____, only one _____, and there is only one _____ and _____, who is _____ us all, and _____ us _____, and living _____ us _____."

BAPTISM: People fight over whether baptism is something we do (believer's baptism) or something God does (sacramental baptism/sometimes includes babies). We look around and we find sincere, godly, Spirit-filled Christians who do baptism different from us. Baptism was not intended to divide us but make us one.

4:7-11 Special Gift to each Christian. Every one has a _____ gift from God that makes them useful to the church community. Paul explains what happened. Jesus in the time between his death and resurrection was active. He descended—he came _____ into the miserable, bodiless after-life place called SHEOL where all who died, both good and evil, were consigned for eternity because all sinned. Because their sin was paid for, Jesus was able to set the righteous dead free from Sheol and he _____ to the heights of heaven, leading a crowd of those once _____. In the highest heaven those made righteous by His holy life's blood are seated now in the heavenly places with Christ (Ephesians 2:6) and rule with him. His rule fills the entire _____. As Jesus passed through this earth, he gave _____ to those remaining on earth to help them rule on earth on his behalf until he comes again.

GIFT: Jesus puts a gift into ordinary people that makes them extraordinary in the effect of their lives. "The members of

the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men who had had no special training. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus." Acts 4:13 The wise and mature Christian realizes that sometimes the amazing things they do "is not I but Christ working in me."

Therefore, we are humble and grateful that the Lord has privileged us to serve with him.

4:11-12 The specially gifted people. The second kind of gift is the leaders God gives to the church community. These people were able to do their gift and teach others to work in the same gift. Five are listed here: (1) _____, who are able to plant churches and create God's type of organization. (2) _____, who can receive revelation from God – the eyes of the community. (3) _____, who have a charm and a persuasiveness of speech that convinces people to come to Christ. (4) _____, who have wise and loving ways of keeping the church family living together as a happy family.

(5) _____, who are able to explain the Bible in practical ways to the people. The responsibility of these men and women with leadership connected with an ability is not to do the work of the church themselves but to _____ God's people to do his _____ according to the gifting in them, thereby _____ up the church which the world can see is doing the same things Jesus did – his speaking, his helping hands, his prayers of healing and deliverance, his loving presence, his compelling presence—literally a community of people – that a world without hope and without God can see they "have been with Jesus."

• **GOD'S PEOPLE:** The Lord did not intend that professional clergy would do the bulk of the ministry of the church. He did not intend that some would claim to be "the" anointed ones. He intended that the "greatest among us to be the servant of all." Matthew 20:25f He intended that His leaders would equip every single believer, great and small, young and old, to do ministry. So the Lord gives each person a "calling/special gift." Leaders are to create opportunities and equip each person to be His gift to the world and build His kingdom.

1 Peter 2:8,9

• **EQUIP:** "This list of gifts is by no means exhaustive. Similar lists appear in Paul's other letters. When he said that the purpose of these gifts is "to train (equip) Christ's followers, he used an interesting Greek word. This word was not only used by doctors when setting a dislocated bone, but it was also used by fishermen to describe the mending of nets. Paul used it here to describe the result of exercising gifts in the church. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers all equip God's people just as doctors treat someone by setting a broken bone or as a fisherman equips himself by mending his net. This organic, living, interrelated body that we're part of in the church needs to be coordinated, mended, put together at the joints so that it can go out into the world and do Christ's work." (Eugene Peterson)

4:13-16 The Matured Christian—Grown up to be like Jesus: When you have a church community of people with skilled, encouraging, Christ-gifted and Christ-led leadership, the kids are enabled to grow up and to quit bickering and politicking and have a

_____ based on _____ -- a trusting in God to deal with the things of their life—and
_____ of God's son – who shows them what they really are like and becoming until they
really are _____ and full _____ and measure up to the full _____
of Christ. Growing out of our childish ways means we know where we are going and what to
do, no longer forever _____ our minds about what we _____. No longer
lead astray by _____ ideas. No longer suckers for false teachers and shepherds
who tell us _____ that sound like _____. Instead we will hold to the _____
in _____, always knowing that truth without _____ is off base somehow,
becoming more and _____ like _____, getting his mind, and agreeing with him
as the _____ of his _____, the _____. Under Jesus' _____,
everybody in the congregation has a useful contribution and fits in well with the rest of the
people, doing the good God created them to do. In this kind of church community, everybody
helps everybody else _____ and the life in the church is _____ and
_____ in making a difference in the world and full of _____.

WHAT DOES THIS SCRIPTURE MEAN TO YOU? _____