



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Equipping the Saints

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The setting is a Roman prison (60-62 A.D.) and Paul is addressing the established Christian (mostly Gentile) church in Ephesus where he was a pastor for several years. In this letter, Paul counters the false teachings that had started to plague the church and additionally provides encouragement and instruction in sound doctrine. While the first three chapters deal with doctrine, the church and the spiritual blessings in Christ, in the last three chapters Paul describes responsibilities of the Christian life. In the fourth chapter of Ephesians, Paul begins to describe how a Christian should live. Paul shares that Christ assist us by giving men to help equip us for the kingdom work. (Ephesians 4:11-16)

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 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. (4:11-13 NASB)

Christ gave gifted men to the church. Paul shares that while God gave a spiritual gift to each believer, He also gave a gift to these saints, gifted men that were to equip (Gr. 'katartismos' to perfect, completion, to make fully ready) these saints, the church. For what reason? For the work of service, ministry and that the church may be build up, grow and mature in the unity, faith and knowledge of Christ. Some were apostles, men chosen, directed and commissioned by Christ to be apostles. Some were prophets, (this reference is to NT prophets) men that were provided by God with particular insights to doctrine of faith. (3:5) Some were evangelists, men that shared the gospel as traveling missionaries. Some are pastor-teachers, men that nourish the saints with the Word of God and equip them for service. The saints then are to perform the work of the ministry. Each saint shares in the growth, unity, faith and maturity of the church. What is the result of this equipping?

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 men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; (4:14)

Christians are expected to grow in their spiritual knowledge and wisdom. Just as a child grows from being a baby to an adult, believers are to grow in our walk with God. Believers become spiritually nourished to grow and mature through the reading, pondering and application of the Bible, prayer (6:17-18) and additionally through the Spirit gifted pastor-teacher who feeds the saints to grow in their knowledge and wisdom of God. The growth in spiritual knowledge and wisdom will allow the maturing believer to stand firm (6:14) and not be misled or confused through discernment of doctrine that is true, verses that which is false or misleading. How are we to communicate the truth?

but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 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.(4:15-16)

Churches are built up, edified and equipped through the preaching of the Word of God in love, and not through man-made entertainment, programs or drives. The physical body needs food to live and grow. The body of Christ, the church, needs spiritual food to grow and mature. When this body is complete, Christ will return to take His body home.

For Your Consideration:

- Is your current pastor-teacher equipping you for the work of the service/ministry that God has for you?
- Are you growing/maturing as a believer? Do you find yourself more discerning (testing to match scripture) regarding the things that you read and hear?
- Are you sharing the gospel in truth and love?

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS: WEDNESDAYS (SESSION OR HEARING DAYS) AT 7:30AM, STATEHOUSE ROOM 44

STATE STAFF AND LOBBYIST: WEDNESDAYS AT 12:10PM, STATEHOUSE ROOM 44