

## 9. CONFIDENT LIVING IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

What are you passionate about?



In the previous chapter he prayed for his Christian friends in Ephesus that they might know and experience the love and power of God, and that they will be filled with all the fulness of God. This chapter considers what that would look like when Christians are 'walking in a manner worthy of their calling'.

**Go to break out groups and read Ephesians 4:7–16 (NLT)** <sup>7</sup> However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. <sup>8</sup> That is why the Scriptures say, "When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people." <sup>9</sup> Notice that it says "he ascended." This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. <sup>10</sup> And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself. <sup>11</sup> Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. <sup>12</sup> Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. <sup>13</sup> This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. <sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. <sup>15</sup> Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. <sup>16</sup> He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

What strikes you and what challenges you?

1. What questions do you have that arise out of this passage? Discuss as a group.
2. What does Paul mean when he says <sup>7</sup> But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift?
3. **Return to the group** and share your findings.

4. How can the existence of different spiritual gifts help bring about unity and growth in the body of Christ?
  
5. What does it mean to be gifted by God? Consider 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 4:15-16; 1 Peter 4:7-11; Romans 12
  
6. What is the difference between spiritual gifts and the fruit of the Spirit? (Gal 5:22-26)
  
7. Read 1 Peter 4:10. What does this tell us about these grace gifts? Break the verse down.
  
8. Think about your SHAPE  
The “S” in SHAPE stands for your *spiritual gifts*.  
The “H” in SHAPE stands for your *heart*, what you’re passionate about.  
The “A” in SHAPE stands for your *abilities*.  
The “P” stands for your *personality*. Are you an introvert or an extrovert? Are you a people person or a project person? Are you good with details or do you see the big picture?  
The “E” stands for your *experiences* in life.
  
9. Think of a time when you found great joy in serving in your church or community. What made that experience joyful?

Think about this. If spiritual gifts are God’s primary means of administering grace to His people, what does that say about believers who are not exercising their gifts for the good of the Body? (Kent Hughes, Leadership)

My work is my ministry... (how is it building up the body of Christ?)

I’m involved in the community... (how is it building up the body of Christ?)

I’m too busy to be involved in the church...

## Prayer

## Journaling

Take a few moments to record your personal insights from this lesson.