

Equipping the Saints for the Work of Ministry

For years, family small talk and fun talk shows have been built around asking cute kids the question, “*What do you want to be when you grow up?*” The responses were almost always interesting and comical. But it is most interesting when cute kids transform into curious adults who are still asking the same question. The amazing truth is that the answer was inside of them all along. Not only do we have the answer, but we were equipped with everything we needed to “BECOME ” and “Do”.

Whether we work in the church, the kitchen, the courtroom or in the gym, we are still God’s, and our Lord has given us an assignment. Before Christ’s Ascension, He commissioned us to go into all of the nations and make disciples. Christ said He would send the Spirit to be our Helper, Comforter, and our Guide (*John 14:16*). The Holy Spirit is our help in this mission. He has gifted every one of us with gifts, talents, and abilities, powerful workings of His Spirit, and effective tools for the calling, the service to do the work of the ministry. All of this is for the purpose of equipping, maturing, and building up the body of Christ.

So we don’t have to wonder.

Paul shares with us in **1 Corinthians 12:4-11** and **Ephesians 4:1-16**.

4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.

5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

6 There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

8 To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,

9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,

10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits (Discernment), to another, speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.

11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

Ephesian 4:1-16

1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called;

5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

8 This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.”

9 (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions?)

10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens in order to fill the whole universe.)

11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,

12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.

15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love as each part does its work.

The Bible also teaches that we are not to neglect these precious gifts that God has strategically endowed for each of our lives.

Apostle Paul's letter to Timothy, who he mentored, to provide an excellent example that we can use as we pray the words "stir up the gift of God".

"Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands."(2 Timothy 1:6)

Apostle Paul penned this in his letter to Timothy while in prison awaiting execution. Paul wrote this letter with a sense of urgency. What did Paul mean by "stir up"? He is encouraging Timothy to do, to use the gift. He encourages Timothy and those of us who are preparing to pray to not be timid or fearful but to minister in power and in love and to maintain a sound mind as we "stir up the gifts".

I pray that each of us do likewise, encouraging one another to not let anything, fear, timidity, illness, or things of the past, prevent them from stirring their gifts. May we also pray that we pay close attention to using our own gifts and not hide, bury, or allow them to become dull. Regardless of where we find ourselves on the age spectrum, let us acknowledge and take seriously our precious endowments by using them in discipling. For the array of diverse and complementary gifts are given by the Spirit so that we may function here on earth and be His **ambassadors** to the world, showing forth His grace and glorifying Him.

Let's pray that parents have both the inclination and the resources to provide training and experiences for their children and can use and sharpen their gifts. Experiences such as music lessons, science fairs, and debate clubs provide that stirring, shaping, and sharpening of the God-given equipment.

Prayer is a Weapon of Spiritual Warfare.

Prayer and intercession are critical to our being equipped. Continuous prayer is critical to our offense and our defense as we fight the spiritual battles that threaten us.

Ephesians 6:10-20 reminds us that ultimately our struggles are not against humans but against powerful spiritual beings and forces.

From day to day, may we live cognizant of the reality that life as a Christian is not a playground; it's a battlefield. We are instructed by Paul to be appropriately prepared and equipped for our struggle. Modeling a Roman warrior, we put on the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, loins girded with truth, feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel, carrying the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit (the Word of God).

May we be committed to obeying God's call and supporting our Pastors in using our spiritual gifts, putting on the armor of God and **PRAY**, so that we are fully equipped for the work of the ministry.

Suggested Prayer Points

These are just suggestions. As you spend time with God and inquire about Him and how to address your prayers this month, feel free to direct your points as the Holy Spirit leads and to use scriptures of your choosing.

Prayer Point: Pray that we never forget that we are equipped with everything we need to do God's will. It is already in us!

Scriptures:

Hebrews 13:20-21

Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer Point: We are equipped to Win! God has a wonderful plan for our lives, and that plan includes using our gifts and talents to have victory over the enemy of our souls. Because Christ defeated our Adversary, **we pray that we will live knowing that we have the victory**, even if we've lost a round in the fight of life, we gained the lesson! For we know that in the end, we win!

Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 15:57

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 2:15

He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

1 Peter 5:8

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Prayer Point: When then the enemy tells you that you are not good enough. Talk back to the enemy, Loud and clear. Jesus did in Matthew 4:4, 7 and 10.

We must know that we are more than a conqueror in Jesus Christ. We must know the word. May we be able to go to war with the enemy using the word of God.

The devil cannot fight the word!

Regardless of what life brings our way...we belong to God! Let us pray that we remember and recite on a daily basis that...

God loves me, He created me and... chose me!

Yes, there would be times where I would go through water and fire, but He will be there **WITH** me, **STRENGTHENING** me.

Scriptures:

John 3:16-17

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Romans 8:37–39

All those who entrust themselves to Christ will never perish. Satan cannot separate them from the love of God in Christ .

2 Corin 5:21

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Isaiah 43:1-28

But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

Prayer Point: Learn to let God's plans prevail.

Scriptures:

James 4:13-15

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"— yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that"

Prayer Point: Let us challenge those of us who are equipped with Discernment - TRUST GOD for the Gift. Do NOT fear the Gift...Trust him ...that he is revealing to your spirit the condition of the human spirit, whether it be good or bad. We pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as to how or if you should divulge the revelation and how to handle.

Scriptures:

1 John 4:1, *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world."*

1 Corinthians 2:10-12

But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

Prayer Point: May we pray that those who possess the gift of "A Word of Wisdom" ...will be obedient enough to reveal God's thoughts and concerns, people, places, or things to come and not their own.

Scriptures:

Proverbs 1:7

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Prayer Point: If you are blessed with the Gift of Faith, walk boldly in the unlimited faith...emptied of all doubt.

Scriptures:

2 Corinarian 5:7 *For we walk by faith, not by sight*

Psalm 34:19 *Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth*

him out of them all

Prayer Point: Let us pray for those of us who are equipped with the gift of Working of Miracles...go forth and be used to intervene in the ordinary..... and do the extraordinary.

Scriptures: Philippians 4:11–13

11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Prayer Point: We praise God for The Gift of Healing...recognizing this God-given anointing to supernaturally heal, cure and set free.

Scriptures: James 5:15 *15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.*

Prayer Point: May we be about the business of discipling so that we can help others to see their gifts, or encourage proper sharpening through studying, use of the gift, and prayer.

Scriptures: 2 Timothy 1:6

“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.”

Prayer Point: God prepares saints to work together. Let us pray that we also allow our gifts and talents to work in holy covenant with one another. May we pray that we allow our spiritual gifts to work in harmony with our natural God-given talents as God intended.

Scriptures:

Ephesians 4:3-6

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Psalms 133:1

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!

Prayer Point: May we praise God for the bountiful gifts that He has provided to the body of Christ, and let us pray that we mature in how to walk in those gifts.

Scriptures:

Ephesians 4:11-16

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

Prayer Point: Pray that we don't let a lack of knowledge hinder us from moving in our spiritual gift(s).

Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 12:1-4

1 Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. 2 You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. 3 Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

Prayer Point: Father, deliver us from a lukewarm disposition about the kingdom and your call. Holy Spirit, open our eyes all the more, that we may begin to see the urgency of your call to win souls and see discipleship a priority. May become responsive to the need.

Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 14:1 Pursue love, but strive eagerly for the spiritual gifts, above all that you may prophesy.

Prayer Point: May we walk and minister in the love of God with the sincere motive of to love and to be a blessing.

Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 13:1-8

- 1 *If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.*
- 2 *And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*
- 3 *If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned,¹ but have not love, I gain nothing.*
- 4 *Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant*
- 5 *or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;²*
- 6 *it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.*
- 7 *Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*
- 8 *Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.*

Prayer Point: Pray that we have the confidence needed to share the gospel. We need to feel confident in sharing the gospel with others, at the same time knowing that not every child will respond to what we say – the Holy Spirit convicts, not us. Our responsibility is to share the gospel message.

Scriptures:

Romans 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

Prayer Point: Being equipped to do the work of the Kingdom calls for strict obedience.

Scriptures:

2 Chronicles 27:6 - *“So Jotham became mighty because he ordered his ways before the LORD his God.”*

Prayer Point: Being equipped to do work for the Kingdom calls for discipline,

Scriptures:

2 Timothy 1:7 - *7 For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love, and self-discipline.*

Prayer Point: Being equipped to do work for the Kingdom calls for us to yield to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Scriptures:

Chronicles 2:30:8 - *Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers [were, but] yield yourselves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified forever: and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.*

Prayer Point: Being equipped means living in a state of readiness and vigilance, being prepared at all times.

Scriptures:

Proverbs 24:27 - *“Prepare your work outside; get everything ready for yourself in the field, and after that build your house.”*

Matthew 25:1-13 - *“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.”*

Proverbs 14:15 - *“The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps.”*

Prayer Point: May we, in some capacity, spend the rest of our lives serving the Lord, through intercession, or equipping saints, and making disciples. Moses, Joshua, Nehemiah, Paul, James, and others all were still doing what God called them to do when God called them home.

Scriptures: 2 Timothy 4:7. *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful.”*

Prayer Point:

Scriptures: