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**:11 ‘He’** is emphasized! Jesus is none other than the ascended, exalted Lord Jesus Christ who fills the Body with Himself and has given us grace and gifts.

**Some apostles:** Ones sent forth. “I commissioned them to lay the foundation of the Church, proclaim My words, and be witnesses of Me.” Church planters?

**Some prophets:** Ones who speak forth God’s truth. “I gave some to use My Word to edify and encourage and comfort. They received My message for My people that was appropriate to their situation.”

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Those with these 4 gifts are to equip the saints, so the unity & the variety of the Body will show up in everyone serving, building up, maturing, & speaking God’s truth in love. One doesn’t have to be on ‘staff’ to have these 4 gifts.

**:12** This verse describes the purpose of Jesus giving the gifts and the 4 specific gifts. The ultimate work of the Body of Christ among Christians and in the world is to be done by the saints (holy ones, every Christian), all of them (us). This is God’s plan for His Church: equipping the saints so they (we) can serve and build up others. Equipped saints are to use their Lord Jesus-given

spiritual gifts in their Lord Jesus-given areas of service.

Equip means to complete what is lacking and perfect what is already there. It means putting something in the condition in which it ought to be. Train Christians in who God is, His work, the new covenant, who they are in Christ, how to walk, their spiritual gifts, to be involved in serving and building up. Also notice, all 4 gifts in **:11** are ‘speaking’ gifts (see **1 Pet. 4:11**). The Word is what is to be used to train Christians in what to know, how to live, and what we can do. As each Christian functions as Jesus intends, people will see Jesus at work! The world shouldn’t need to come to a church building to find/see Jesus! Wherever we go, be the Church and make disciples!

**Work of service** is practical service to anyone, a work characterized by service, like a table-waiter serving a meal. Being equipped, we begin to serve, using our gifts wherever Jesus gives us opportunity. **Building up.** Being equipped, we begin to reach out to brothers and sisters in Christ, the goal being to help each other grow toward spiritual maturity. When serving and building up, be sure you are using the spiritual gift-mix that our Lord Jesus gave you.

So first, there is personal spiritual growth, and then a sharing with others God’s Word, Christ’s love, and your gift-mix. The result of equipping is healthy Christians practicing the ‘one another’s’ of Scripture and using their spiritual gifts, every Christian being equipped, involved in serving and building up! We gather to worship, be equipped, nurture, fellowship, educate, train; then we go into the world to let our Jesus-filled lives overflow. Our unity & love for each other are proof that we are Jesus’ followers (Jn. 13:35, 17:21). We use God’s words to train Christians in what to know, how to live, and what we can do. If we’re just hiring staff to do the work of service and build up, the congregation remains as small as the abilities and gifts of the staff.

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**Unity of the faith:** one faith, in the one person, the Lord Jesus (see **4:5**). **The knowledge of the Son of God:** this is a discerning, recognizing, experiential knowledge of God’s Son!! **A mature man:** becoming a complete, full-grown, fully developed adult; having reached its end. **The measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ:** “The Church comes of age... and looks like Jesus!” Jesus is the standard of our spiritual maturity as a Church.

“The Church is here on earth, not to do better what other groups can do, but to do what no other group can possibly do. We’re here to manifest the life and love and power of the Lord Jesus Christ!” Oh my!! Yes, growing can be painful and risky, with more responsibility taken, reaching out beyond ourselves, but God’s plan is that we grow up into Him who is the Head, even the Christ (**:15**). Serving and building up as He did.

**:14-16** As a result, we are **no longer** to be children (infants), **tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine (teaching, instruction), by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but**

**speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the Head, even (the) 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.**

As a result of understanding and practicing God's plan revealed in **:1-13**: we will no longer be infants (those who don't talk yet), "childish, wind-blown, duped, and deceived."

**:14** We were not born again as 'mature adults'; we were reborn as spiritual babies. Paul encourages us to "Grow out of infancy. Stop being naïve infants, preyed upon by cunning and deceitful schemers." Yes, be child-like in your walk of faith, but don't be childish. Don't be spiritual infants entirely at the mercy of your emotions/circumstances/others. Don't be **tossed about and carried about**, swung about, easily tricked. Know the Biblical God, His works, the new covenant, who you are in Christ, and how to walk & serve as the Christian you are. Know how to study the Word on your own. Even if you haven't been growing and/or equipped, **begin today. Make sure you're being equipped to serve & build up**, to practice your role in the one Body of Christ.

**:15 Walking in a truthful, loving way** is part of the worthy walk. The Holy Spirit is Himself the Spirit of truth and His first fruit is love. Be concerned about each other, each other's growth, helping a fellow Christian mature, being equipped, truthing it in agapē love (the Holy Spirit is the only source of this love). Grow up into the Head, Jesus, so that life and growth and truth and love are found in Him alone! Jesus is the truth and so is His Word.

**:16** A human body experiences normal growth when properly supported and held together by what **every joint supplies**. The growth ultimately comes from Jesus, yet the Body grows as **each part** makes every effort to maintain the unity and is equipped, serving and building up with his/her Lord Jesus-given gifts. Every member doing his/her part, performing his/her ministry, with his/her gifts in the strength of the Spirit. Every believer is important, a vital part.

God placed you where you are in Jesus' Body (see **1 Cor. 12:7,11-13,18**). Jesus through the Spirit gave you the gifts you have. Grow up. Christ's kind of love determines that each member will seek the building up of all.

The growth and ministry of a local church is not the obligation of a few Christians but the responsibility and privilege of every Christian. Each of us and every local church is responsible to follow God's plan as laid out in **Ephesians 4:1-16**. Walk worthy! Make every effort to preserve the unity. Recognize the variety in the Body by the differing spiritual gifts. Make sure you're being equipped. Get involved in serving others and building up fellow members of the Body of Christ. Truth it in love. Together let's keep our focus on our Head, Jesus, because it's all about Him. And, remember the results listed in **:13 (read)**!

In our next time together, we'll look at "How to Serve as the Christian You Are!"

Practical Ways to **Apply** God's Word:

1. Start with **Jesus (Mt. 11:28-30)** and fix your focus on Him (**Heb. 12:1-3**).
2. As part of the Family of God, **pray for, love, be hospitable to, and serve** one another, using your Spirit-given gifts (**1 Pet. 4:7-11**). Also, **consider how to stimulate** one another to love and good deeds (**Heb. 10:24-25**). **Do good to all Gal. 6:10**. Also see **Eph. 4:1-16** and **Rom. 12:3-13** which describe the 'walk' of the Church.
3. As an individual Christian: **Rom. 12:9-21, 1 Cor. 13:1-8a, and Eph. 4:20-6:18** spell out how Jesus will live out His life and love uniquely through you as you trust Him, rest in Him. **1 Pet. 2:11-3:17** tells you how to respond even when you're being unfairly treated.
4. Be careful who you listen to and what you watch and read, what you're continually thinking about. Choose & be a good role model. Be sure there's a steady input from God's Word. Pray without ceasing. Realize there's a glorious, certain, guaranteed future for you and every other Christian.
5. **Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:13)**. Remember, this is a life and love only Jesus through the Holy Spirit can live in/through you! Yet He will as you by faith run the race set before you (**Heb. 12:1-2a**).  
Lessons you learned? Applications you made? Questions you have? What impact does this passage have on your daily walk with Jesus?

Walk worthy: Make every effort to preserve the unity of the Body. Recognize each Christian has been given a spiritual gift. Be equipped so you can serve and build up others. The end result is maturity, which belongs to the fullness of Christ!

**:11-16** another long sentence. **1:3-14,15-23; 2:1-7; 3:2-13,14-19; 4:1-6,11-16; 6:14-20**  
**:11-13** Spiritual gifts: 5 lists in **1 Cor. 12:8-10, :28-30, Rom. 12:6-8; Eph. 4:11, and 1 Pet. 4:11. Eph. 4:11** introduces the support gifts. **1 Cor. 12** and **Rom. 12** introduce the working gifts. (One important indication of your spiritual giftedness is to see if others recognize the gift in you and encourage you to use it.)

**:11** “I gave 4 gifts to individuals (gifts are the emphasis, not individuals!) SO the Body as a whole may grow and mature.” The writer Paul emphasizes that these 4 gifts shape the whole Body/Family/Church’s growth. These 4 gifts are no more important than other gifts; these are just for a specific purpose.

**Apostles:** “I gave some apostles.” Still equipping through their writings (the NT), these sent ones were the 12 men chosen by Jesus to follow Him and be eyewitnesses of the Resurrection, along with Matthias who was chosen later to replace Judas Iscariot. Had to be witnesses of the ministry & resurrection of Jesus. (Paul not 1 of the 12 (**1 Cor. 15:5-7**); he did signs, wonders, and miracles, and most of his writings were inspired by the Holy Spirit and accepted as Scripture by Peter (**2 Pet. 3:15-16**). **1 Tim. 1:11**). In reality, the apostles are still with us in their writings, and we are equipped with our Lord’s Word and His apostles’ words each time we open the pages of the NT. There is no other information which can come to us about Jesus than what the apostles and prophets have given.

**Prophets:** They too are foundation layers (**2:20-21**). (NT not written yet). **1 Cor. 14:3** prophets are to provide edification, exhortation, and comfort. Pro = forth, phemi = to speak. Not a new revelation but a fresh understanding of the old. Similar to OT prophets, their great work was to forth-tell the word of God. They tend to deal with the great sweeping principles of Scripture.

**Evangelists:** They are to bring the gospel to the unsaved and equip the saints. They led people to Christ, taught new believers the Word, established and encouraged the local body, and moved on to a new territory. Usually they have a passion for the world and a hunger to pioneer new ways to reach the lost (eg. the Jesus Movie by CRU). Noun occurs only 3X in the NT (here, **Acts 21:8** of Philip, and **2 Tim. 4:5** of Timothy). They do not exercise their special ministry in the local church so much but outside, in the world. Go where they are. They communicate the gospel in relevant terms to those who are not yet Christians. Their function resembles modern missionaries and church planters who bring the message to those who haven’t heard the name of Jesus.

**Pastors-Teachers:** In Greek, two words referring to one gift. Every pastor is to be a teacher and equipper. SO the saints too can do the work of ministry and build up the Body of Christ. To care for & teach local congregations. **1 Tim. 5:17**, those who work hard at preaching and teaching. Every pastor must be a teacher, for how else could the flock be fed? **1 Tim. 5:17** lit. Labor to exhaustion in word and teaching. Entrust what he has learned to faithful men who will be able to teach others (**1 Tim. 4:13,16, 2 Tim. 2:2**).

The evangelist deals with the beginning of the Christian life while the teaching-pastor is involved with the development and growth of that life.

These 4 gifts are to equip, so the unity and variety of the Body will show up in

servicing, building up, and maturity. These 4 gifts are to dispense the truth; the word of God is the basis of their ministry. The Church needs to recognize individuals with these gifts and make sure they are equipping the saints.

**:12** God’s plan for His Church: equipping to serve and build up. The 4 gifts are to equip the saints. And then the saints in turn are to do 2 things: serve and build up. Know where you fit in this process and if our chosen local church is fulfilling God’s worthy walk.

For (pros) the equipping of the saints. Equip: used in **Mt. 4:21** for mending or preparing nets; **Gal. 6:1** restoring for proper use; **2 Cor. 13:11, Heb. 13:21**. Restored to its original condition and is made complete. To a condition of fitness for the discharge of their functions. Ones who help and encourage all God’s people to discover, develop, and exercise their gifts. I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up... (**Acts 20:32**). **Col. 1:28** warning every man and teaching every man with all wisdom.

The next 5 prepositions (eis) are dependent on the 1<sup>st</sup> (pros). The ultimate work of the Church in the world is to be done by the saints. The gifts are given to be useful in these 2 realms, the world & the Church. It was never intended that unbelievers should need to come to a building to find Christ. The Church should be in the world! Using our gifts at work, in our homes, in our local church, in the world. Serving becomes a natural part of our lives. **Practical service.** This ministry should be as natural and normal a part of life as anything else you can do. And, being equipped, we begin to **build up** other brothers/sisters in Christ, the goal being to help each other grow toward spiritual maturity. Bear one another’s burdens, rebuke, exhort, and admonish one another, minister to one another with the Word and through song and prayer. ‘For the edifying of the Body of Christ’ is the purpose. **Col. 1:18-19** present every man complete, mature in Christ. The entire flock built up.

**:13** This unity is something to be attained. All attain; not just some but all of us together, used of travelers arriving at their destination. 3 goals, each introduced by the Greek preposition (eis). To reach, arrive, or attain a goal.

The maturity which is described in these verses is the measuring stick by which we can judge our progress as a local church. In **:15** he urges us to grow up in every way into Him who is THE Head, into THE Christ. How do you grow? Make sure the factors that make for growth are present. **:12** describes those factors.

Know Jesus as Lord, attend weekend services, join a small group, complete discipleship 1-3, be involved in serving and building up: until we all **:13**.

(1) To (eis) **the unity of the faith.** And of **the knowledge of the Son of God** (**Col. 2:2**). Also reference to the ‘one faith’ in **:5**. The faith once for all entrusted to the saints (**Jude 3**). The shared understanding in the Church of the great truths revealed in the Scriptures. Epignosis, full knowledge, precise and correct knowledge. Personal knowledge of Him which comes through experience. In **1:17** the emphasis was on knowing God the Father and here it is on knowing His Son.

(2) **To (eis) a mature man.** The different pieces come together, & we see Jesus Himself!

(3) **To (eis) the measure of the stature (age/height) which belongs to the fullness of Christ:** equipped, serving, building up, using our spiritual gifts in the Spirit’s strength (**3:16-17**), laying hold of and experiencing Christ’s love (**3:18-19a**) and being filled up to all the fullness of God (**3:19b**)! Stature may denote age (**Jn. 9:1,23**) or physical stature (**Lk. 19:3**). To present every man and woman complete in Christ.

To the maturity of the character of our Lord Jesus Himself! Maturity, measured by nothing less than the full stature of Christ (NEB). **Col. 1:28 read.** The Christian and the Church arrive at this when he/she/it is equipped and involved in works of service and building up. Fullness, completeness, entirety. As the gifts from Christ are used, then the Church will measure up to Christ's full stature. Immaturity as a Church is evident when Christians are not practicing **:1-12**.

CONCL This is what the Church is all about, and these verses tell us how to achieve that purpose. Our Lord's Body is one Body, with each member having gifts and a unique contribution to make to that one Body.

If you as a Christian have one of the gifts of **:11**, make sure you're using it to equip others. If you're a Christian, make sure you're being equipped; make sure you're attending a church or being disciplined by someone that equips you so you are being prepared to serve and build up others. These are the characteristics of a local church which is walking in a manner worthy of the calling with which it has been called (**4:1**). "Are you guys ready? Let's roll!" (Todd Beamer on United Flight 93).

**:14-16** Speaking the truth in love, believers are to grow up into Christ! God's plan is for each of the members of the one Body of Christ to contribute to that growth by making every effort to preserve the unity, by discovering and using his/her spiritual gift-mix, and by being equipped so each/all can serve others and build up the Body. These 3 verses are still part of the one sentence begun in **:11**.

**:14** **As a result (hina).** Lit. **so that no longer we may be infants.** God's plan is that we (as individuals and as a church) grow out of infancy. Look at infants: they are delightful but have their limitations: vulnerable, gullible, easily distracted, restless, easily swayed, confused, inexperienced, lacking in insight.

**Tossed** (present passive participle), like little boats in a stormy sea. Being thrown about, used in **Lk. 8:24** of the raging of the waters of Galilee.

A mark of childishness is to be undiscerning, naive. **Carried about** (present passive participle), swinging that makes a person dizzy; they can't discern whether the message is from God or men. Their opinions are based on the last preacher they heard or book they read or new idea making the rounds. Do not measure yourself by comparison with someone else. Act your age (**1 Cor. 13:11**). Being thrown into confusion. These 2 participles further describe one who is childish and lacks stability. Because they are not anchored in God's truth, they are subject to every sort of counterfeit truth. They never seem to know their own mind or come to settled convictions. Trapped in the immaturity of infancy. Both of these participles are passive, indicating that an outside force is causing the confusion. There is little unity of the faith & little knowledge of the Son of God (**:13**). In every church there are certain people who have to be guarded against. **2 Cor. 11:4,13,20**.

**Trickery:** skilled in manipulating the dice.

**Craftiness** means a trickery involving evil cunning. *Methodia*, a deliberate planning or system. *Plane*, error is lit. wandering. Error is organized with a deliberate policy to undermine the truth of God. Method or better strategy or scheme. **Scheming** (later used to describe the schemes of the devil **6:11**), deliberate planning. Like a game to them; immature Christians their prey.

The need to be equipped in God's knowledge, your new identity, and the Christian walk. As part of a local body of believers and an individual, don't be

content to remain at this stage. We commit to growing up and truthing it in love.

**The mature have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil (Heb. 5:14).** It is of utmost importance for believers to follow God's plan for the edification of the Body through the gifted people provided for this purpose.

**:15 Speaking** (present participle) lit. **truthing it in love.** Speaking and acting in the context of love. We as a church make progress only as we all do it together.

**Grow up into THE Christ:** He's the source, He's the goal, He's the measure. Don't promote anything or anyone other than Him! We are no longer entirely distinguishable from Him. The Head and the Body, vine and branches. His emphasis is on the Head into whom we are to grow up, and from whom the Body grows when each part is working properly. That growth is INTO Christ. The source of a believer's growth and also the aim and goal of his growth. Christ is both the source **:7** & the goal **:15**. The article before the title meaning THE Messiah.

2 great enemies: 1 is departure from truth. The other is chilling indifference.

Some don't tell hard truths when it's time to. Yet, the person who majors only in hard truths thrives on harsh correction with no empathy or commitment to help. Compassion for the person with whom He was speaking.

Hold forth the truth in order to bring spiritual benefit to others. To do, as well as speak, the truth. That which seeks the highest good in the one loved. **Love** keeps appearing in these verses (**1:15, 3:17,19, 4:2,15,16, 5:2**). *Agapē* love is only possible through being strengthened with power through the Spirit. This fundamental concern for truthing it in love is the secret of maturity in the Church. Remember, it's the walk of the Church at issue in **:2-16**. Continual growth into Christ. This is accomplished by means of the gifts given to each as well as the foundational gifts given to the Church.

**:16** This growth into the Head takes place within the context of the whole Body.

**Being fitted** (present passive participle) **and held together** (present passive participle). Fitted, used in **2:21** of the building which is growing into a holy sanctuary in the Lord, used for a fastening in construction; interconnected. **Col. 2:19**. Bring things or people together. Both fitted and held together are in present tense and passive, the Head is doing His work. Notice the emphasis on "every". Every believer is important, a vital part, working with the gift(s) the Lord Jesus gave him/her. Harmony, with, choosing: make up joined. Continual choices made in harmony. The proper working of each individual part recalls the importance of each believer's gift **:7**. **Supplies:** the man who met the cost of staging a Greek play with its chorus. **Proper working:** Power in exercise, operative power. God has you where you are; Jesus gave you the gifts you have; be equipped and involved in serving and building up. He put you with the Christians around you because they are the kind you need and you are the kind they need. **Causes** (present). The whole Body...causes the growth of the Body. Each member does not only seek its own growth but that of the Body as a whole. The whole Body functions together as the individual parts contribute!! What about him? In effect, Jesus responded, "Mind your own business! He's My concern!" **Jn. 21:21-22**.

For next week: Read **Ephesians 4:17-24**. In **4:17-19**, what is the 'walk' of the non-Christian? In **4:20-24**, what astounding truths do you learn? Notice who the 'new self/man' is. Reading **Colossians 3:9b-10** is helpful.

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:15 **Walking in a truthful, loving way** is part of the worthy walk. The Holy Spirit is Himself the Spirit of truth and His first fruit is love. Be concerned about each other, each other's growth, helping a fellow Christian mature, being equipped, truthing it in agapē love (the Holy Spirit is the only source of this love). Grow up into the Head, Jesus, so that life and growth and truth and love are found in Him alone! Jesus is the truth and so is His Word.

:16 A human body experiences normal growth when properly supported and held together by what **every joint supplies**. The growth ultimately comes from Jesus, yet the Body grows as **each part** makes every effort to maintain the unity and is equipped, serving and building up with his/her Lord Jesus-given gifts. Every member doing his/her part, performing his/her ministry, with his/her gifts in the strength of the Spirit. Every believer is important, a vital part.

God placed you where you are in Jesus' Body. Jesus through the Spirit gave you the gifts you have. Grow up. Christ's kind of love determines that each member will seek the building up of all.

The growth and ministry of a local church is not the obligation of a few Christians but the responsibility and privilege of every Christian. Each of us and every local church is responsible to follow God's plan as laid out in **Ephesians 4:1-16**. Walk worthy! Make every effort to preserve the unity. Recognize the variety in the Body by the differing spiritual gifts. Make sure you're being equipped. Get involved in serving others and building up fellow members of the Body of Christ. Truth it in love. Together let's keep our focus on our Head, Jesus, because it's all about Him. And, remember the results listed in :13 (read)!

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Practical Ways to **Apply** God's Word:

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Lessons you learned? Applications you made? Questions you have? What impact does this passage have on your daily walk with Jesus?

The Church is like a jigsaw puzzle, with each member being an individual piece. By themselves, the individual pieces may look a bit strange at times(!), but joined together in Christ, we produce a beautiful picture of Jesus! Each individual piece is vital to the complete picture. Each of us is to be equipped to play our role in the Body of Christ. So Paul begs, “Church: walk worthy, together balancing the scale between God’s enlightening truth and your daily lives.” Learning to walk worthy is the process of becoming in your thinking, choices, speech, and behavior who God has already made you by nature.

The context of **Eph. 4:11-16** is the unity of the one Body of Christ and Christ the Head giving gifts to each Christian. Each Christian has been equipped by God with spiritual gifts to play our role in the Body of Christ (every saint: you, me). Jesus descended to this earth, did His work, then ascended on high, and gave gifts. 4 of these 20 gifts are for the equipping of the saints. We are to be equipped so the saints (all of them, each of us) can serve and build up others, and the end result of God’s plan is Jesus’ life being seen, through us!

**:11-13 And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, for (pros) the equipping of the saints for (eis) the work of service, to (eis) the building up of the Body of Christ; until we all attain to (eis) the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to (eis) a mature man, to (eis) the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.**

**:11 ‘He’** is emphasized! Jesus is none other than the ascended, exalted Lord Jesus Christ who fills the Body with Himself and has given us grace and gifts.

**Some apostles:** Ones sent forth. “I commissioned them to lay the foundation of the Church, proclaim My words, and be witnesses of Me.” Church planters?

**Some prophets:** Ones who speak forth God’s truth. “I gave some to use My Word to edify and encourage and comfort. They received My message for My people that was appropriate to their situation.”

**Some evangelists:** Ones who proclaim God’s good-news about Jesus. “I gave some the spiritual ability to communicate the good news of Me and My work to a world lost in sin (**2:1-3**). Evangelists, boldly invite listeners into a personal relationship with Me, Jesus the Savior and Lord. You’ll mainly use your gift outside of the church gathering, but be sure to equip other believers also.”

**Some pastors and teachers:** Ones who both pastor (shepherd) and instruct. “I gave some the spiritual ability to shepherd the flock of God, feed the flock My words, and equip the flock to find and use their spiritual gifts.”

Those with these 4 gifts are to equip the saints, so the unity & the variety of the Body will show up in everyone serving, building up, maturing, & speaking God’s truth in love. One doesn’t have to be on ‘staff’ to have these 4 gifts.

**:12** This verse describes the purpose of Jesus giving the gifts and the 4 specific gifts. The ultimate work of the Body of Christ among Christians and in the world is to be done by the saints (holy ones, every Christian), all of them (us). This is God’s plan for His Church: equipping the saints so they (we) can serve and build up others. Equipped saints are to use their Lord Jesus-given

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spiritual gifts in their Lord Jesus-given areas of service.

Equip means to complete what is lacking and perfect what is already there. It means putting something in the condition in which it ought to be. Train Christians in who God is, His work, the new covenant, who they are in Christ, how to walk, their spiritual gifts, to be involved in serving and building up. Also notice, all 4 gifts in :11 are ‘speaking’ gifts (see **1 Pet. 4:11**). The Word is what is to be used to train Christians in what to know, how to live, and what we can do. As each Christian functions as Jesus intends, people will see Jesus at work! The world shouldn’t need to come to a church building to find/see Jesus! Wherever we go, be the Church and make disciples!

**Work of service** is practical service to anyone, a work characterized by service, like a table-waiter serving a meal. Being equipped, we begin to serve, using our gifts wherever Jesus gives us opportunity. **Building up.** Being equipped, we begin to reach out to brothers and sisters in Christ, the goal being to help each other grow toward spiritual maturity. When serving and building up, be sure you are using the spiritual gift-mix that our Lord Jesus gave you.

So first, there is personal spiritual growth, and then a sharing with others God’s Word, Christ’s love, and your gift-mix. The result of equipping is healthy Christians practicing the ‘one another’s’ of Scripture and using their spiritual gifts, every Christian being equipped, involved in serving and building up! We gather to worship, be equipped, nurture, fellowship, educate, train; then we go into the world to let our Jesus-filled lives overflow. Our unity & love for each other are proof that we are Jesus’ followers (Jn. 13:35, 17:21). We use God’s words to train Christians in what to know, how to live, and what we can do. If we’re just hiring staff to do the work of service and build up, the congregation remains as small as the abilities and gifts of the staff.

:13 A Biblically equipped, faithfully serving, and spiritually growing church achieves maturity! The qualities of :13 are reached when :11-12 are being practiced. All of us together, each practicing his/her God-given role.

**Unity of the faith:** one faith, in the one person, the Lord Jesus (see 4:5). **The knowledge of the Son of God:** this is a discerning, recognizing, experiential knowledge of God’s Son!! **A mature man:** becoming a complete, full-grown, fully developed adult; having reached its end. **The measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ:** “The Church comes of age...and looks like Jesus!” Jesus is the standard of our spiritual maturity as a Church.

“The Church is here on earth, not to do better what other groups can do, but to do what no other group can possibly do. We’re here to manifest the life and love and power of the Lord Jesus Christ!” Oh my!! Yes, growing can be painful and risky, with more responsibility taken, reaching out beyond ourselves, but God’s plan is that we grow up into Him who is the Head, even the Christ (:15). Serving and building up as He did.

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**Apostles:** **“I** gave some apostles.” Still equipping through their writings (the NT), these sent ones were the 12 men chosen by Jesus to follow Him and be eyewitnesses of the Resurrection, along with Matthias who was chosen later to replace Judas Iscariot. Had to be witnesses of the ministry & resurrection of Jesus. (Paul not 1 of the 12 (**1 Cor. 15:5-7**); he did signs, wonders, and miracles, and most of his writings were inspired by the Holy Spirit and accepted as Scripture by Peter (**2 Pet. 3:15-16**). **1 Tim. 1:11**). In reality, the apostles are still with us in their writings, and we are equipped with our Lord’s Word and His apostles’ words each time we open the pages of the NT. There is no other information which can come to us about Jesus than what the apostles and prophets have given.

**Prophets:** They too are foundation layers (**2:20-21**). (NT not written yet). **1 Cor. 14:3** prophets are to provide edification, exhortation, and comfort. Pro = forth, phemi = to speak. Not a new revelation but a fresh understanding of the old. Similar to OT prophets, their great work was to forth-tell the word of God. They tend to deal with the great sweeping principles of Scripture.

**Evangelists:** They are to bring the gospel to the unsaved and equip the saints. They led people to Christ, taught new believers the Word, established and encouraged the local body, and moved on to a new territory. Usually they have a passion for the world and a hunger to pioneer new ways to reach the lost (eg. the Jesus Movie by CRU). Noun occurs only 3X in the NT (here, **Acts 21:8** of Philip, and **2 Tim. 4:5** of Timothy). They do not exercise their special ministry in the local church so much but outside, in the world. Go where they are. They communicate the gospel in relevant terms to those who are not yet Christians. Their function resembles modern missionaries and church planters who bring the message to those who haven’t heard the name of Jesus.

**Pastors-Teachers:** In Greek, two words referring to one gift. Every pastor is to be a teacher and equipper. SO the saints too can do the work of ministry and build up the Body of Christ. To care for & teach local congregations. **1 Tim. 5:17**, those who work hard at preaching and teaching. Every pastor must be a teacher, for how else could the flock be fed? **1 Tim. 5:17** lit. Labor to exhaustion in word and teaching. Entrust what he has learned to faithful men who will be able to teach others (**1 Tim. 4:13,16, 2 Tim. 2:2**).

The evangelist deals with the beginning of the Christian life while the teaching-pastor is involved with the development and growth of that life.

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**Apostles:** **“I** gave some apostles.” Still equipping through their writings (the NT), these sent ones were the 12 men chosen by Jesus to follow Him and be eyewitnesses of the Resurrection, along with Matthias who was chosen later to replace Judas Iscariot. Had to be witnesses of the ministry & resurrection of Jesus. (Paul not 1 of the 12 (**1 Cor. 15:5-7**); he did signs, wonders, and miracles, and most of his writings were inspired by the Holy Spirit and accepted as Scripture by Peter (**2 Pet. 3:15-16**). **1 Tim. 1:11**). In reality, the apostles are still with us in their writings, and we are equipped with our Lord’s Word and His apostles’ words each time we open the pages of the NT. There is no other information which can come to us about Jesus than what the apostles and prophets have given.

**Prophets:** They too are foundation layers (**2:20-21**). (NT not written yet). **1 Cor. 14:3** prophets are to provide edification, exhortation, and comfort. Pro = forth, phemi = to speak. Not a new revelation but a fresh understanding of the old. Similar to OT prophets, their great work was to forth-tell the word of God. They tend to deal with the great sweeping principles of Scripture.

**Evangelists:** They are to bring the gospel to the unsaved and equip the saints. They led people to Christ, taught new believers the Word, established and encouraged the local body, and moved on to a new territory. Usually they have a passion for the world and a hunger to pioneer new ways to reach the lost (eg. the Jesus Movie by CRU). Noun occurs only 3X in the NT (here, **Acts 21:8** of Philip, and **2 Tim. 4:5** of Timothy). They do not exercise their special ministry in the local church so much but outside, in the world. Go where they are. They communicate the gospel in relevant terms to those who are not yet Christians. Their function resembles modern missionaries and church planters who bring the message to those who haven’t heard the name of Jesus.

**Pastors-Teachers:** In Greek, two words referring to one gift. Every pastor is to be a teacher and equipper. SO the saints too can do the work of ministry and build up the Body of Christ. To care for & teach local congregations. **1 Tim. 5:17**, those who work hard at preaching and teaching. Every pastor must be a teacher, for how else could the flock be fed? **1 Tim. 5:17** lit. Labor to exhaustion in word and teaching. Entrust what he has learned to faithful men who will be able to teach others (**1 Tim. 4:13,16, 2 Tim. 2:2**).

The evangelist deals with the beginning of the Christian life while the teaching-pastor is involved with the development and growth of that life.

These 4 gifts are to equip, so the unity and variety of the Body will show up in

servicing, building up, and maturity. These 4 gifts are to dispense the truth; the word of God is the basis of their ministry. The Church needs to recognize individuals with these gifts and make sure they are equipping the saints.

:12 God's plan for His Church: equipping to serve and build up. The 4 gifts are to equip the saints. And then the saints in turn are to do 2 things: serve and build up. Know where you fit in this process and if our chosen local church is fulfilling God's worthy walk.

For (pros) the equipping of the saints. Equip: used in **Mt. 4:21** for mending or preparing nets; **Gal. 6:1** restoring for proper use; **2 Cor. 13:11, Heb. 13:21**. Restored to its original condition and is made complete. To a condition of fitness for the discharge of their functions. Ones who help and encourage all God's people to discover, develop, and exercise their gifts. I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up... (**Acts 20:32**). **Col. 1:28** warning every man and teaching every man with all wisdom.

The next 5 prepositions (eis) are dependent on the 1<sup>st</sup> (pros). The ultimate work of the Church in the world is to be done by the saints. The gifts are given to be useful in these 2 realms, the world & the Church. It was never intended that unbelievers should need to come to a building to find Christ. The Church should be in the world! Using our gifts at work, in our homes, in our local church, in the world. Serving becomes a natural part of our lives. **Practical service.** This ministry should be as natural and normal a part of life as anything else you can do. And, being equipped, we begin to **build up** other brothers/sisters in Christ, the goal being to help each other grow toward spiritual maturity. Bear one another's burdens, rebuke, exhort, and admonish one another, minister to one another with the Word and through song and prayer. 'For the edifying of the Body of Christ' is the purpose. **Col. 1:18-19** present every man complete, mature in Christ. The entire flock built up.

:13 This unity is something to be attained. All attain; not just some but all of us together, used of travelers arriving at their destination. 3 goals, each introduced by the Greek preposition (eis). To reach, arrive, or attain a goal.

The maturity which is described in these verses is the measuring stick by which we can judge our progress as a local church. In :15 he urges us to grow up in every way into Him who is THE Head, into THE Christ. How do you grow? Make sure the factors that make for growth are present. :12 describes those factors.

Know Jesus as Lord, attend weekend services, join a small group, complete discipleship 1-3, be involved in serving and building up: until we all :13.

(1) To (eis) **the unity of the faith.** And of **the knowledge of the Son of God (Col. 2:2).** Also reference to the 'one faith' in :5. The faith once for all entrusted to the saints (**Jude 3**). The shared understanding in the Church of the great truths revealed in the Scriptures. Epignosis, full knowledge, precise and correct knowledge. Personal knowledge of Him which comes through experience. In **1:17** the emphasis was on knowing God the Father and here it is on knowing His Son.

(2) **To (eis) a mature man.** The different pieces come together, & we see Jesus Himself!

(3) **To (eis) the measure of the stature (age/height) which belongs to the fullness of Christ:** equipped, serving, building up, using our spiritual gifts in the Spirit's strength (**3:16-17**), laying hold of and experiencing Christ's love (**3:18-19a**) and being filled up to all the fullness of God (**3:19b**)! Stature may denote age (**Jn. 9:1,23**) or physical stature (**Lk. 19:3**). To present every man and woman complete in Christ.

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To the maturity of the character of our Lord Jesus Himself! Maturity, measured by nothing less than the full stature of Christ (NEB). **Col. 1:28 read.** The Christian and the Church arrive at this when he/she/it is equipped and involved in works of service and building up. Fullness, completeness, entirety. As the gifts from Christ are used, then the Church will measure up to Christ's full stature. Immaturity as a Church is evident when Christians are not practicing **:1-12**.

CONCL This is what the Church is all about, and these verses tell us how to achieve that purpose. Our Lord's Body is one Body, with each member having gifts and a unique contribution to make to that one Body.

If you as a Christian have one of the gifts of **:11**, make sure you're using it to equip others. If you're a Christian, make sure you're being equipped; make sure you're attending a church or being disciplined by someone that equips you so you are being prepared to serve and build up others. These are the characteristics of a local church which is walking in a manner worthy of the calling with which it has been called (**4:1**). "Are you guys ready? Let's roll!" (Todd Beamer on United Flight 93).

**:14-16** Speaking the truth in love, believers are to grow up into Christ! God's plan is for each of the members of the one Body of Christ to contribute to that growth by making every effort to preserve the unity, by discovering and using his/her spiritual gift-mix, and by being equipped so each/all can serve others and build up the Body. These 3 verses are still part of the one sentence begun in **:11**.

**:14 As a result (hina).** Lit. **so that no longer we may be infants.** God's plan is that we (as individuals and as a church) grow out of infancy. Look at infants: they are delightful but have their limitations: vulnerable, gullible, easily distracted, restless, easily swayed, confused, inexperienced, lacking in insight.

**Tossed** (present passive participle), like little boats in a stormy sea. Being thrown about, used in **Lk. 8:24** of the raging of the waters of Galilee.

A mark of childishness is to be undiscerning, naive. **Carried about** (present passive participle), swinging that makes a person dizzy; they can't discern whether the message is from God or men. Their opinions are based on the last preacher they heard or book they read or new idea making the rounds. Do not measure yourself by comparison with someone else. Act your age (**1 Cor. 13:11**). Being thrown into confusion. These 2 participles further describe one who is childish and lacks stability. Because they are not anchored in God's truth, they are subject to every sort of counterfeit truth. They never seem to know their own mind or come to settled convictions. Trapped in the immaturity of infancy. Both of these participles are passive, indicating that an outside force is causing the confusion. There is little unity of the faith & little knowledge of the Son of God (**:13**). In every church there are certain people who have to be guarded against. **2 Cor. 11:4,13,20**.

**Trickery:** skilled in manipulating the dice.

**Craftiness** means a trickery involving evil cunning. *Methodia*, a deliberate planning or system. *Plane*, error is lit. wandering. Error is organized with a deliberate policy to undermine the truth of God. Method or better strategy or scheme. **Scheming** (later used to describe the schemes of the devil **6:11**), deliberate planning. Like a game to them; immature Christians their prey.

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**:15 Speaking** (present participle) lit. **truing it in love.** Speaking and acting in the context of love. We as a church make progress only as we all do it together.

**Grow up into THE Christ:** He's the source, He's the goal, He's the measure. Don't promote anything or anyone other than Him! We are no longer entirely distinguishable from Him. The Head and the Body, vine and branches. His emphasis is on the Head into whom we are to grow up, and from whom the Body grows when each part is working properly. That growth is INTO Christ. The source of a believer's growth and also the aim and goal of his growth. Christ is both the source **:7** & the goal **:15**. The article before the title meaning THE Messiah.

2 great enemies: 1 is departure from truth. The other is chilling indifference. Some don't tell hard truths when it's time to. Yet, the person who majors only in hard truths thrives on harsh correction with no empathy or commitment to help. Compassion for the person with whom He was speaking.

Hold forth the truth in order to bring spiritual benefit to others. To do, as well as speak, the truth. That which seeks the highest good in the one loved. **Love** keeps appearing in these verses (**1:15, 3:17,19, 4:2,15,16, 5:2**). Agapē love is only possible through being strengthened with power through the Spirit. This fundamental concern for truing it in love is the secret of maturity in the Church. Remember, it's the walk of the Church at issue in **:2-16**. Continual growth into Christ. This is accomplished by means of the gifts given to each as well as the foundational gifts given to the Church.

**:16** This growth into the Head takes place within the context of the whole Body.

**Being fitted** (present passive participle) **and held together** (present passive participle). Fitted, used in **2:21** of the building which is growing into a holy sanctuary in the Lord, used for a fastening in construction; interconnected. **Col. 2:19**. Bring things or people together. Both fitted and held together are in present tense and passive, the Head is doing His work. Notice the emphasis on "every". Every believer is important, a vital part, working with the gift(s) the Lord Jesus gave him/her. Harmony, with, choosing: make up joined. Continual choices made in harmony. The proper working of each individual part recalls the importance of each believer's gift **:7**. **Supplies:** the man who met the cost of staging a Greek play with its chorus. **Proper working:** Power in exercise, operative power. God has you where you are; Jesus gave you the gifts you have; be equipped and involved in serving and building up. He put you with the Christians around you because they are the kind you need and you are the kind they need. **Causes** (present). The whole Body...causes the growth of the Body. Each member does not only seek its own growth but that of the Body as a whole. The whole Body functions together as the individual parts contribute!! What about him? In effect, Jesus responded, "Mind your own business! He's My concern!" **Jn. 21:21-22**.

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