

Ephesians 4:7,11 (NKJV)

*Grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.
And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets,
some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.*

If you desire the office of a pastor, it is a good thing. Yet, can someone desire to be a pastor and not be any good at it? Is there a reason why so many pastors struggle, burn out, and quit their churches? The answer is in the gift.

God's Gift to His Church**Ephesians 4: 7, 11-12**

7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. 11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

God himself gave some to be pastors. That is something that most people will not argue with for sure. But what does it really mean? Well, God gave pastors, apostles, prophets, teachers, and evangelists TO the church. They are his gift to the church. Why? To equip his church to do the things he has called them to do. The thing we miss often here is that God is the one doing the giving. It doesn't say that he made the office of the pastor and hoped someone would step up to fill it. No, he gave them to his church. He chose them.

God's Choice for His Church**1 Corinthians 12:4-7**

4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:

Paul tells us that there is one Spirit, and He gives different gifts to all; there are different activities to be done within the church, but the same God to work in his people to get it them all done. The Spirit works in all Christians for the profit of all Christians.

1 Corinthians 12:11

11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

Notice the last part of that verse. "...as He wills." God chooses different gifts for different people. It's his will that you have the giftings that you have. It's not by mistake, nor is it by your choice. God has chosen you, if you have the gift of pastoring, to be a pastor. You didn't choose it, you just accepted the gift he gave you and chose to live it out. And You understand this because of the "desire" that is in your heart. This desire came from God IF you delight yourself in the Lord, for God gives us the desires of our heart (Psalm 37:4).

Why the Struggle?

So many times you hear pastors say, "Oh being in the ministry is so tough." "Being a pastor is such a burden and struggle." Or even you hear church members saying, "Pray for your pastor because they struggle a lot."

Why? Why do pastors and church members think that they struggle so much? Guess what? It isn't scriptural for pastors to struggle in their ministry. Hear this pastors. You don't need to and shouldn't be struggling in your ministry. In fact, it's unbiblical. Being a pastor should not be a burden.

Do not confuse this with normal Christian struggles. We all face temptations and trials. James tells us that trials, when they have had their perfect will, will produce patience and perfection in us all. But pastoral ministry is not the struggle James is talking about.

So again why, if they shouldn't, do so many pastors struggle? And others seem to have an easy time in their ministry. Let's look at the word to find the answers. Let's go back to Ephesians 4.

Ephesians 4:7

7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Let's do some research on this verse, looking at the Greek. What is the original word meaning of the word grace here?

The original Greek had a different understanding for this passage than just the idea we have today. Most of us would say grace is a gift or favor that we don't deserve. But there is so much more here than just the giving of a gift. Here the idea is being given the capacity and ability due to the grace of God.

What does it mean in this context?

God, through his grace, has given each of us the capacity and ability to fulfill the spiritual gift that Christ has given to us through the Holy Spirit.

Grace here isn't talking about grace for the forgiveness of sins. It is speaking of the ability to live out the gift that God has given you, given all of us. Christ gave you a special gift. He knew you would need special abilities, capabilities to live it out and do it properly. So, he gave you grace to be able to do that, He has given you already, the ability to effectively be a pastor. You don't require anything else. You don't need anything from anyone else. God through his Holy Spirit has supplied you with all you need. You have the ability for the responsibility. It's just that simple. Don't believe me?

1 Peter 4:11

11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability (gift) which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Did you see that? Did you catch it? Let me point it out just in case you missed it.

“with the ability which God supplies.”

You don't need to struggle because you already have the ability given to you by God.

So again I ask, why do so many pastors struggle? Let me suggest two possible reasons. First, we will look at a few scriptures for why this could be.

Neglecting a Gift

2 Timothy 1: 6

6 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

Might I suggest that many pastors struggle in their ministry because they are not stirring up the gift of God which is in them. The Greek here for stir up literally means to stir up the fire. We need to stir it up! It requires some effort on your part to make the fire grow. It isn't up to God. He has already given you everything you need to be able to live out the gifting. The rest is up to you.

Romans 11:29

29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

1 Timothy 4:14

14 Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.

God's gift to you cannot be taken away, but you definitely can neglect it. You can allow it to grow cold, you can let it become weak and irrelevant. But God will never take it away. So many stories have been told of pastors moving into ministry so much later in life because they were in fact trying to run from the gift that God had given them. God's gifts will always be with you, it's just up to you to use them to their full capacity.

Be Sure of Your Gift

Another reason that we won't dive too deep into here is that some pastors may struggle in ministry because they are not using their gifting, they are trying to use the wrong gift. I have seen pastors and churches struggle because their "pastor" has the gift of an evangelist. They were actually called to be an evangelist. God had not equipped them for that work, that grace had not been given to them, so they struggle.

We must be sure that if we are going to be in pastoral ministry that God has indeed given us the gift of pastoring. It isn't enough to just want to be a pastor. We can want it for selfish reasons. Seek God, seek the counsel of other pastors, and make sure that this is indeed your gift. Seek God for confirmation of what you have felt, what you desire. He often will confirm through prophecy or through words of knowledge that you are in fact gifted to be a pastor. (cf. 1 Tim.4:14)

The Anointing Powers Your Gift

Being a pastor is so much more than just following a list, more than just preaching at church, and teaching people. It is all focused around one thing, equipping the church. The gift that God has given to each pastor is for the purpose of equipping the body of Christ. And to do that, the pastor must walk in the anointing of God. The anointing is the power, the gift is the tool, and you are the user or the one who applies it. God has not only given you tools but with the anointing, He has empowered you, He has given you power tools so that you can fulfill your calling with ease.

What exactly is the anointing?

In the Old Testament, anointing was used to signify that something or someone was being chosen for a purpose. God has selected it to be consecrated and sanctified for his greater purpose. It was in fact God's power at work in the Old Testament, preparing His people to receive his presence. We see God's call to anoint Aaron and his sons as priests. He anointed the Kings and prophets also for his work.

Today, as in the New Testament, the anointing is the power of God at work in the lives of Christians. It is the power of God to live out the calling that each of us has, and to use the gift of the Spirit that is given to each of us.

1 John 2:27

27 But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you [a]will abide in Him.

1 Corinthians 2:4

4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of [a]human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

God's power is at work within you through the Holy Spirit to complete his gift of the Spirit.

What is the anointing for?

For each pastor, the anointing is given to help him live out the gift that God has given to him. It is not a one time thing, something that happens when he becomes ordained or licensed. It is not a once and done kind of thing. It is a continual filling with the Holy Spirit so that he can live out his gifting.

So how can the anointing help a pastor? The power of God is given to him to help him complete his two main tasks of being a shepherd, to equip the church and to edify the church.

Equipping

1 Corinthians 12:7-27

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another

prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.

15 If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? 18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 19 And if they were all one member, where would the body be?

20 But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” 22 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. 23 And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, 24 but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, 25 that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

Paul lists 9 gifts of the Spirit here that He gives to the church, the body of Christ. We will briefly list them here and give a quick description of what they look like when in use. We must always remember, these gifts are not given for the sole benefit of the individual, but for the profit of the whole body of Christ.

The 9 Gifts of the Spirit:

1. **Word of wisdom** – this is the wise word given to a person through the Holy Spirit. It is not just wisdom from a long life lived, but Spirit led wisdom of what a person should say in a certain situation.
2. **Word of knowledge** – very similar to the first, this gift is when the Spirit gives knowledge to a person that they previously did not have. It is not about God

giving you the answers for a test you forgot to study for, nor is it the ability to know someone's secrets. It is God allowing you to know something that you need to speak to another for the purpose of edifying the body and drawing others closer to Christ,

3. **Faith** – this is the gift given by the Spirit to believe God for his promises. It is a God given ability to look past the current situation and see the promise of God and concrete and established. Many people will say they have hopes for the future, but the person gifted with faith will believe and not doubt, they will see their prayers answered. We are all given a measure of faith as Christians, but we could say that a person with the gift of faith has “great faith” like the centurion with the sick daughter.
4. **Gifts of healings** – we have seen many people throughout history who have walked in this gifting. Unfortunately, we have also seen people walk in error in this gifting. This gifting is not for the financial benefit of the person, but for the profit of the church. The gift of healing is given so that the church will become better. It is the ability, as the Holy Spirit wills, to be the vessel through which God brings healing to his people.
5. **Working of miracles** - the bible doesn't give clear examples of what these miracles are, but they are for the profit and benefit of the church. They are given for the purposes of God. Any situation where God intervenes and makes the impossible, possible, it is a miracle.
6. **Prophecy** – this is the gift that Paul says he wishes all believers would have. This gift is the word of God given directly to his people for their direction and benefit. It is specific, can, and should be judged. We must always remember that prophecy will never be something that is against His word, the Bible. True prophecy always comes to pass. If it doesn't come to pass then it's false.
7. **Discerning of spirits** – this is the gift to be able to easily know the difference between spirits. In any given situation, especially within the church, the person, through the Holy Spirit, can know if a person is acting in the flesh, or under the power of God. The person with this gift can also easily know if someone is demon possessed or under the influence of the spirit.
8. **Different kinds of tongues** – a very popular gift, especially among certain denominations, this is the ability to speak in other unknown tongues. Paul tells us that people with this gift can speak in the language to edify themselves, and also give a word from God through tongues, which is to edify the church. This

person must also be ready whenever they give a message in tongues to also give the interpretation, for it is not edifying unless it is interpreted.

9. **Interpretation of tongues** – this is the gift of interpreting or given in the local language the meaning of tongues message.

The gifts of the Spirit are given to build up the body of Christ, We are all unique and individual, yet we all fit together to make up one body. Each gift is given with a specific purpose. Each gift is given to help build up the church. The gifts are what equip the church to be who God has called them to be and do what He requires of them. The church is lacking of all the gifts are not operating in the local body. Let me say it again, the church is not complete is each member is not living and operating in their Spirit given gift.

How are the people equipped? How are the gifts given?

This is a question that I'm afraid not many people are asking today. There seems to be an idea that if God wanted these gifts to be at work within the church, He would just give them. Yet not many churches have all the gifts operating in their local congregation. This is likely for two reasons. First, the pastors may not be teaching properly about how to receive the gifts of the spirit. Pastors need to teach diligently what the bible says about these gifts. Second, pastors are not imparting these gifts through the moving of the Spirit. Part of the work of the pastor is to hear from God, and impart or be the vessel through which God gives his gifts to his people. A pastor cannot impart any of these gifts to his people if he himself is not walking in his gifting.

1 Corinthians 14:1

Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

1 Timothy 4:14

14 Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.

Romans 1:11

11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established—

Are you equipping?

Are you, as a pastor, or soon to be pastor, ready to equip the saints? Are you willing and able, through the power of God, to equip the church with spiritual gifts? If you are, then you are likely walking in the spirit and seeing his power at work in your daily life. Use this power of God at work in you to equip the saints. Impart the gifts that your church so desperately needs.

If you are not, now is the day. Begin to see God. Cry out to God to anoint you afresh. It won't necessarily happen over night. You need to be in a close relationship with God. Fast, pray, seek God and he will empower you to equip his saints.

Are you yourself operating in any of the gifts of the spirit?

Do you prophecy? Speaking tongues? Scripture says that we should earnestly desire the gifts of the spirit. If your desire is to equip and edify the church, God will see your heart. Paul says to be zealous for the gifts for the purpose of edification for the church. We should not be zealous for the gifts themselves. We need to be careful that we do not abuse the gifts. They are not for our own benefit but for the benefit of the church.

1 Corinthians 14:12

12 Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the [e]dification of the church that you seek to excel.

As pastors, you need to be careful that you are imparting and ministering to those who are ready and have the correct motives for desiring the gift. Be discerning and do not be quick to lay hands on people for any reason. Laying hands on people for ministry is an elementary principle of Christian faith (cf. Hebrews 6). We see it several times in the New Testament, especially in regards to healing. It is a powerful way to display the glory of God and for God to work through you. Do not be hasty or quick to lay hands on people but use your discernment.

1 Timothy 5: 22

Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.

After you have receive your gift, do not neglect that gift. Live in it, use it daily as the spirit leads. Use your gift so that you have strengthened it and have exercised your senses as Paul said.

Hebrews 5: 12-14

12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Edifying

The idea of edify is literally to build up. It can be done in so many ways. All of the gifts of the spirit also work to edify the body of Christ. One word used in the Greek translations into English is the idea of building as a carpenter or builder, figuratively of course. Think of a carpenter with tools in his toolbox. If he doesn't use those tools, he can't build. The same is with us. If we don't use the tools God has given us, the gifts of the spirit, then how we can build the church?

Every pastor agrees that we should edify the church, but how we edify greatly differs from the traditions of man and the institutions they promote. Only through the Holy Spirit and the means of which the Holy Spirit works, such as the 9 gifts, can we truly edify the church.

As a way to help us better understand what the role of the pastor is in edifying, let us think about the church as a building. This is a way that Paul himself spoke of the church. Christ is the cornerstone. He is the foundation on which all of the church is built. Then come the apostles and prophets as the rest of the foundation. Next comes the rest of the building, which is the church, all believers.

Ephesians 2:19-22

19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

I want you to take note of verse 22 in particular. The church is being built together to be the dwelling place of God. This is what Paul says again in Corinthians. The church is God's building. He even says that he is a builder having laid a foundation, as an apostle, for others to build on later. He even warns that they be careful in how they build on it.

1 Corinthians 3:9-10

9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.

So if the apostles and prophets are the foundation together with Christ as the cornerstone, and another will build on it, to build up the body of Christ, the pastors alone with teachers and

evangelist are the ones who will help build up the church. The pastors and teachers are the ones who shepherd and teach the church how to build one another up (Romans 14:19; 1 Thess. 5:11).

You may not be a gifted teacher, but as pastors, you need to be able to teach and display how to properly build God's building. This is not just some quick wooden structure that you help throw together in one day. This is God's house. Think about the temple in the Old Testament, or even the tabernacle. There were so many specifications for how they were to be built. Why? Because it was the dwelling place of God.

Pastors, that is what you are doing. You are preparing the people of God to be the dwelling place of God. No, you do not make anyone righteous. You cannot forgive anyone of their sins. You are not a spiritual father as we only have one spiritual father, which is our God. But you can, and in fact, are required to teach them how to build themselves and one another into the best house of God that they can be. It is no small or inferior calling. Take great joy in the calling that God has placed on you to pastor.

Rest in your calling and let God move mightily through you. Do not neglect your gift, minister to impart gifts in others as the Lord leads, work hard to teach, both in words and example, and do this all for the edification of the church.