

Small Group Guide: All Working Together

****Ephesians 4:7–16 | The Prison Epistles Week 9****

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word, and to help each person identify how they can better use their spiritual gifts to build up the body of Christ.

Ice Breaker

Share one skill or talent you have that others might not know about. How have you used it (or could you use it) to help others?

Sermon Summary

Paul calls the church to work together as a single entity, with each believer using their God-given spiritual gifts to build up the body of Christ. We've been called to set aside individual freedoms for the greater purpose of serving Christ and His church. Every believer has received grace-gifts from the risen Christ—spoils of His victory over death—to be used in service to others. The goal is corporate maturity: a church that reflects the fullness of Christ, stable in truth, and motivated by love.

Key Scripture

****Ephesians 4:7, 11–16**** (Read together as a group)

Discussion Questions

****Part 1: Understanding Spiritual Gifts****

1. ****The Tension of Freedom vs. Submission****

- The sermon mentioned the tension between individual freedom and submitting to Christ's authority. Why is this tension so difficult for modern believers? How do you personally experience this struggle?

2. ****Grace-Gifts from a Conquering King****

- Paul describes spiritual gifts as "spoils of victory" from Christ's triumph. How does viewing your gifts this way change how you see them? What does it mean that your gifts were "purchased by the blood of Christ"?

3. ****Identifying Your Gift****

- Looking at the gift lists in 1 Corinthians 12:27-28 and Romans 12:6-8, which gifts do you see operating in your life? If you're unsure, what gifts do others in the group see in you?

4. ****Gifts Are for Service****

- The sermon emphasized that "genuine ministry starts on Sunday morning but doesn't end there." How are you currently using your spiritual gifts to serve others during the week? What barriers keep you from serving more consistently?

Part 2: Growing Toward Maturity

5. **Spiritual Babies vs. Spiritual Adults**

- Paul warns against being "spiritual babies" who are unstable and easily deceived. What are some signs of spiritual immaturity in today's church culture? Where do you see areas of immaturity in your own spiritual life?

6. **Truth AND Love**

- The quote from David Guzik says: "Truth without love can damage people. Love without truth can deceive people. Truth in love disciplines people." Can you think of examples where you've seen truth without love, or love without truth? How can we practice both together?

7. **The Goal: Looking Like Jesus**

- Verse 13 says we're growing "until we are mature, just as Christ is, and we will be completely like him." What does Christlike maturity look like in practical, everyday terms?

Part 3: Working Together as a Body

8. **The Construction Analogy**

- The sermon compared the church to building a house, with different trades doing different work under a general contractor. How does this picture help you understand your role in the church? What "trade" do you think you're called to?

9. **Unity in Diversity**

- How can a church maintain unity while having people with very different gifts, perspectives, and personalities? What threatens unity most in your experience?

10. **Christ as the Head**

- Verse 16 says "Christ holds it together and makes all of its parts work perfectly." What does it look like practically for Christ to be the Head of our church? How do we submit to His leadership together?

Key Takeaways

✓ **Every believer has been given spiritual gifts** purchased by Christ's victory over death.

✓ **Gifts are not for personal glory** but for serving others and building up the body of Christ.

✓ **The goal is corporate maturity**—a church that is stable, unified, and reflects Christ's fullness.

✓ **Truth and love together** create the environment for healthy spiritual growth.

✓ **Ministry is not just for staff**—every member has a vital role to play in building the church.

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to put into practice this week:

****Option 1: Discover Your Gift****

- If you're unsure of your spiritual gift, visit the church website and take the spiritual gifts assessment. Share your results with a trusted friend or mentor.

****Option 2: Use Your Gift****

- Identify one specific way you can use your spiritual gift to serve someone this week—either within the church or in your community.

****Option 3: Invest in Someone****

- Practice "intentional mentoring" by reaching out to someone less spiritually mature than you. Meet for coffee, read Scripture together, or simply be available to answer questions.

****Option 4: Pursue Maturity****

- Identify one area of spiritual immaturity in your life. What's one concrete step you can take this week to "grow up" in that area?

****Option 5: Speak Truth in Love****

- Is there a difficult conversation you've been avoiding? Pray about whether God is calling you to speak truth in love to someone this week.

Group Prayer Time

****Pray together for:****

- Wisdom to identify and use your spiritual gifts

- Courage to serve faithfully, even when unseen
- Growth toward spiritual maturity as individuals and as a church
- Unity in the body of Christ at your local church
- Opportunities to mentor or be mentored
- A heart that values others above self

Before Next Week

- Read Ephesians 4:17-32 in preparation for next week's study
- Follow through on your practical application commitment
- Share with one person outside your group something you learned from this discussion

Additional Resources

- Take the Spiritual Gifts Assessment on the church website
- Explore serving opportunities at Rivers Edge
- Consider joining a ministry team that aligns with your gifting

"Christ holds it together and makes all of its parts work perfectly, as it grows and becomes strong because of love." - Ephesians 4:16