

and some as evangelists, (4:11c)

“*Evangelists*” are gifted men who express the plan of salvation with clarity and conviction to the lost. These men function in large group settings as well as one-on-one (as was the case with Philip the evangelist—Acts 8:26-40; 21:8). “*Evangelists*” are not solely responsible for encouraging the lost to accept Christ, for Peter exhorts all church saints to “*make a defense to everyone*” who asks why they believe (1Peter 3:15). Yes, all New Testament believers are called to evangelize, but not all New Testament believers are “*evangelists*.”

The church has failed to honor this office as it should, for many “so called” evangelists have forgotten (or never learned) that God’s “*kindness*” (not His wrath) “*leads*” the unredeemed “*to repentance*” (Romans 2:4). Don’t misunderstand. Hell is a real place, a place of torment for those who die without Christ. But a steady diet of God’s wrath is not the remedy for convicting the lost of their need for a Savior. His “*kindness*,” and only His “*kindness*,” will motivate the depraved to repent and believe (Romans 2:4):

Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? (Romans 2:4)

and some as pastors and teachers, (4:11d)

The Greek word for “*Pastors*” is *poimenas*, normally translated “*shepherd*” (Matthew 9:36; 25:32; 26:31; John 10:11, etc.). According to 1Peter 5:1-2, pastors (shepherds) are also “*elders*” (*presbuteros*) as well as overseers (*episkopos*) or bishops. This truth is confirmed in Acts 20:17, where Paul sent for “*the elders*” (*presbuteros*) who lived at Ephesus and in verse 28 said to them:

“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (episkopos), to shepherd (poimaino) the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. (Acts 20:28)

During the early days of Christendom, such men served one church and were limited to one locale.

As a new believer, I viewed the phrase, “*pastors and teachers*” (Ephesians 4:11), as referencing two separate groups of individuals. I considered “*pastors*” to be one group and “*teachers*” the other. But the Greek combines them into “*pastor-teacher*.” Thus, a pastor-teacher is both pastor and teacher:

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. (1Timothy 5:17)

Consider as well that the qualifications of an “*overseer*” (bishop) are listed in 1Timothy 3:1-7. Each “*overseer*,” as a teacher (1Timothy 3:2), is to “*take care of the church of God*” (1Timothy 3:5). Also note that “*elders*” (*presbuteros*) and “*overseers*” (*episkopos*) are viewed as one in Titus 1:5-7—with the responsibility of feeding God’s Word to the church (Titus 1:9). No church will be properly nurtured unless it is taught the full counsel of the Scriptures by the pastor-teacher.

1Peter 5:1-3 reveals that the pastor-teacher is a servant rather than a dictator:

Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. (1Peter 5:1-3)

Every pastor-teacher must realize that the flock belongs to God—never himself. Nothing, absolutely nothing, must be tolerated that would prevent Jesus Christ from serving as the ultimate Authority in the church. This truth is confirmed in Acts 15:28, where the elders’ decree was validated by the Holy Spirit:

“For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: (Acts 15:28)

Ephesians 4:12—for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

The Lord gave the gifted men of verse 11 to the church for the “*equipping (katartismos) of the saints for the work of service.*” The phrase, “*for the equipping of the saints,*” is interpreted “*for the perfecting of the saints*” in the King James Version. The KJV rendering is somewhat misleading since a saint (his person—his soul and spirit) is made “*perfect*” at the point of salvation/justification (Hebrews 10:14). The gifted men of verse 11 were given to the church, not to make the saint more perfect in his person, but to encourage the saint to pursue holiness in his behavior.

Interestingly, the Greek *katartismos* is from the root word *katartizo*, which is rendered “*mending*” in Matthew 4:21. The disciples were “*mending*” (equipping) “*their nets*” for service—for the purpose of catching fish. This same Greek word is employed in Hebrews 13:21, which addresses the believer’s need to be equipped for service:

Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21)

Also consider Paul’s statement in 2Corinthians 13:9, “*this we also pray for, that you be made complete*”—the root for “*complete*” (2Corinthians 13:9), “*equipping*” (Ephesians 4:12), and “*mending*” (Matthew 4:21) being the same Greek word.

Equipped “*saints*” are to involve themselves in “*the work of service*” (Ephesians 4:12)—not the gifted men who equip them. This truth is critical, yet a foreign concept to many of God’s people. Hoards of believers perceive the evangelist and pastor-teacher as responsible for performing “*the work of service*” (Ephesians 4:12). They view the evangelist as obligated to evangelize the lost, and the pastor-teacher as responsible for meeting the new convert’s need—along with a majority of the needs within the church. In fact, the pastor-teacher’s job description (in their minds) is similar to: (1) visit the sick (all the sick) of the church (2) answer the phone each time it rings (3) be actively involved with every committee within the church (4) be present at all church functions—all socials included (5) be available every time someone has the slightest need (6) and on top of all of the above, preach two to three times each week. This job description is equivalent to James and John (Matthew 4:21) attempting to catch fish, not with their nets, but with their bare hands. Had this scenario occurred, James and John would have been perceived as less than sane! No wonder a high percentage of pastors live on the brink of exhaustion, burnout, and mental breakdown.

I will never forget a conversation I heard one Sunday morning at church. Those participating were discussing the pastor’s responsibilities. One man said, “His most important priority should be to visit the sick.” I didn’t say a word, but waited to hear additional responses. As I listened, I was almost overwhelmed by the number of people who agreed with the first man’s statement. No wonder a crisis exists within the

church in America! No wonder she is anemic and forlorn and without proper leadership. A pastor-teacher's main responsibility is to feed the flock of God (1Timothy 4:6, 11, and 13; 2Timothy 4:2), not hold everyone's hand when the slightest need arises. The members of the church, equipped with the truth of God's Word, are to visit the sick and minister to the needs of the flock. The pastor-teacher is to equip himself with truth and preach (teach) it with conviction—a taxing endeavor indeed (1Timothy 5:17). This order of responsibility doesn't mean that the pastor-teacher never visits the sick or invests time in the lives of the people. It does mean, however, that his main responsibility is to feed God's Word to God's people for the purpose of building them up (Acts 20:32).

The pastor-teacher can't take a congregation to a spiritual depth that he doesn't experience himself. Thus, before God can widen the pastor's ministry, He must first deepen the pastor's message. A pastor's message (in fact, any person's message) is deepened only through a constant intake of truth coupled with prayer:

“But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.” (Acts 6:4)

As Oswald Sanders pens it:

| the highest positions are for those who have qualified in secret.¹

We must be people who protect the pastor-teacher from the encumbrances that prevent him from prayerfully studying and teaching God's Word. Only then will the church function according to design.

Two things happen when the pastor-teacher is allowed to equip God's people. First, the members of the church are pleased to share Christ with the lost. Second, each member builds up Christ's body through his “*special*” spiritual “*gift*” (1Peter 4:10). Paul had these facts in mind when he stated, “*to the building up of the body of Christ*” (Ephesians 4:12).

Ephesians 4:13—until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

until we all attain to the unity of the faith, (4:13a)

As the gifted men of verse 11 function according to design, believers learn to exercise their individual gifts, resulting in “*the building up of the body of Christ*” (Ephesians 4:12). As a church grows spiritually, each believer within that church body can “*attain to the unity of the faith*” (Ephesians 4:13a). “*The faith*” points to the body of truth, or doctrine, outlined in the Word of God. Therefore the phrase, “*unity of the faith*,” refers to the “*unity*” experienced by Christ's bride as she learns (and walks in) the truth of the Scriptures. We can only speculate how the body of Christ would be perceived by the world should such unity exist. My guess is that a majority of lost mankind would stampede the doors of the churches to discover what was inside.

and of the knowledge of the Son of God, (4:13b)

“*Knowledge*” is from the Greek *epignosis*, pointing to “a full, accurate, precise, and correct knowledge.” Paul isn't referencing salvation here, but the knowledge he addresses in Philippians 3:10—a deep, intimate knowledge of the Person of Jesus:

that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; (Philippians 3:10)

As we learned earlier, Jesus, the Father, and the Spirit have lived in unity from eternity past. This unity exists because the principle of the cross has been applied to all facets of their relationships. Every individual decision has benefited the other two parties. As we know Jesus more intimately and begin to respond as He responds, we too make decisions that benefit others rather than ourselves. Such behavior results in unity, true unity, the unity of the faith which maintains the unity of the Spirit discussed in Ephesians 4:3.

We should never expect to know the Son on an intimate level (Philippians 3:10) until we know the body of doctrine that makes up *“the faith”* (Ephesians 4:13a). In other words, God’s Word, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, reveals His Person. To approach God’s Word for the purpose of intimately knowing the Son, and in turn the Godhead, is the greatest privilege made available to believers.

to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. (4:13c)

This passage describes the behavior exemplified by a *“mature man”* of God: He walks in *“the fullness of Christ”* (Ephesians 4:13c). Discovering the meaning of the phrase, *“the fullness of Christ,”* is a joyful journey.

In our study of Ephesians 3:19b, we found that Jesus is *“the fullness of Deity”* (Colossians 1:19; 2:9). We learned as well that He (Jesus) takes up residence in a New Testament believer at the point of salvation/justification (Galatians 2:20; John 1:16). However, only when the New Testament believer allows Him to dwell (feel at home) in his heart (Ephesians 3:17) and knows His love (Ephesians 3:19a) is he *“filled up to all the fullness of God”* (Ephesians 3:19b)—Jesus being *“God”* (Hebrews 1:8). Consequently, a New Testament believer walks in *“the fullness of Christ”* (Ephesians 4:13) when he is emptied of his selfish motives and lives by the life of Another—by Christ’s very life. (A person walking in *“fullness”* knows well the principle of the cross.) We can lose perspective and cease walking in *“the fullness of Christ,”* but even in the midst of such times *“the fullness”* can be restored through repentance and confession.

Ephesians 4:14—As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

“As a result” (Ephesians 4:14) of the instruction from the gifted men of Ephesians 4:11-13, the saints *“are no longer to be children”* (Ephesians 4:14). *“Children”* is from the Greek *nepios*, meaning “not speaking, infants.” The saints who *“mature”* (Ephesians 4:13) are no longer infants (Ephesians 4:14) incapable of verbalizing and applying the truth. Neither are they *“tossed here and there by waves”* (they are not wishy-washy in their beliefs and are not easily agitated), nor are they *“carried about by every wind of doctrine”* (their minds do not go into a mental whirlwind when confronted with error). They know God’s Word well enough to instantaneously detect false doctrine. Neither are they deceived *“by the trickery of men”* (Ephesians 4:14). *“Trickery”* (*kubia*) can also be translated “cube”—pointing to throwing (or playing with) dice. As professional gamblers often load the dice for personal gain, *“trickery”* points to any sort of dishonesty. Hence, just as an infant is easily led astray, our enemy effortlessly tricks immature believers. The enemy must employ a more sophisticated strategy when attacking the mature in Christ.

“Craftiness” (Ephesians 4:14), from the Greek *panourgia*, can be defined as “doing everything, hence, unscrupulous conduct” (also study Luke 20:23, 2Corinthians 11:3, and 2Corinthians 12:16). *“Scheming”* (Ephesians 4:14), from the Greek *methodia*, is rendered *“schemes”* in Ephesians 6:11 and means “to lie in wait, a deliberate planning or system.” Thus, the King James Version translates this last phrase of Ephesians 4:14 as: *“whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”* Rest assured that Satan delights in an immature believer mistaking error for truth. The Scriptures are filled with warnings against being led astray—the following verses only a partial listing: Acts 20:30-31; Romans 16:17-18; 2Corinthians 11:3-4, 14; Galatians 1:6-7; Colossians 2:8; 1Timothy 1:3; 2Timothy 3:6-9; Hebrews 13:9; 2Peter 2:1-3; 3:17; 1John 2:26.

¹ Sanders, J. Oswald. (2007). *The Search For Leaders*. (Excerpted from *Spiritual Leadership*. Moody Publishing, Chicago). Cru Press, Campus Crusade For Christ, Inc. <http://crupressgreen.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/sandersthesearchforleaders.pdf>. Used by permission.