

Each of Us Is a Gift of Grace

To each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. . . . It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:7, 11-13, NIV)

Read the following passage about God's judgment on His disobedient people, and imagine yourself living through this situation:

See now, the Lord, the Lord Almighty, is about to take from Jerusalem and Judah both supply and support . . . the hero and warrior, the judge and prophet, the soothsayer and elder, the captain of fifty and man of rank, the counselor, skilled craftsman and clever enchanter. I will make boys their officials; mere children will govern them. People will oppress each other--man against man, neighbor against neighbor. The young will rise up against the old, the base against the honorable. (Isaiah 3:1-5, NIV)

Imagine any society with all its skilled people taken away: no leaders, no teachers, no doctors or dentists, no repair people or builders, no police officers or soldiers, no writers or performers, no cooks or crafts people or specialists of any kind.

Imagine a church with all its skills and talents gone.

That makes us realize how dependent we are on such gifts from God. It helps us see His grace reaching out through society, providing for our every need while drawing us together as a people. God is our complete support. We are totally dependent on Him for everything.

What do you have that you did not receive? (1 Corinthians 4:7, NIV)

But He has also made us dependent on each other. The gifts that you have been given – material goods, abilities, or even inclinations – are not gifts **to** you but are God's gifts to His people **through** you.

In Ephesians chapters 1 and 2, we hear about God's great grace poured out through Jesus. In chapter 3 Paul talks about himself as a vessel of God's grace. But here in Ephesians 4 he says that God pours out His goodness and love through each of us. He is pouring out His provision through you. He has entrusted a portion of His grace to you.

You are part of a beautiful pattern, like the waterways of the earth or the blood vessels of the body, bringing God's life to every corner of our world, meeting every human need. And He is using human hands. He is using **your** hands!

Praise to our all-wise God for His goodness! Praise Him for teaching us the blessings of unity!

*Each of us is the steward of a gift
designed to glorify God,
to show those around us
how good and loving He is.
Together,
what a beautiful picture of God we could paint!*

Hymn: Through Me

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