

## Children; Ephesians 4:11-14

### I. Equipping the Saints

- A. Ephesians 4:11 (ESV); And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,
- B. Every person in the Body of Christ has a function — there is no such thing as passive Christianity
- C. Apostles - the original 12 (13 including Paul) who preached on the day of Pentecost (and undoubtedly other places too) — They also wrote some of our New Testament
  1. Matthew and John wrote Gospels
  2. Peter wrote his letters — 1st and 2nd Peter
- D. Prophets - We read about them, and they also wrote part of our New Testament
  1. Apollos — Act 19 (along with Aquila and Priscilla)
  2. Luke and Mark wrote Gospels (Luke also wrote Acts)
  3. The writer of the book of Hebrews
  4. Ephesians 2:19–20 (ESV); <sup>19</sup> So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,
- E. Evangelists
  1. Philip — Act 8
  2. Acts 21:8 (ESV); On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.
  3. Paul went on 3 (4) missionary journeys throughout the known world
- F. Shepherds
  1. There are three terms used in the New Testament for the same function — Shepherd (Pastor), Overseer, Elder
  2. Shepherd — one who serves as a guardian or leader
  3. Overseer (Acts 20:28) — Safeguarding, making sure things are done in the right way
  4. Elder — An official (also means an older person)
  5. Acts 20:17 (ESV); Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him.
  6. Acts 20:28 (ESV); Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.
  7. 1 Peter 5:1–3 (ESV); <sup>1</sup> So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: <sup>2</sup> shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; <sup>3</sup> not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.
- G. Teachers
  1. One who instructs
  2. Hebrews 5:11–12 (ESV); <sup>11</sup> About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. <sup>12</sup> For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food,
  3. James (3:1) admonishes those who would be teachers saying that they will incur a stricter judgement — in other words, make sure you are teaching the truth and not error
  4. The greater context in James is how we speak (use our tongues)
  5. So those who cannot control their speech (tongues) should not become teachers until they can control their speech)

## H. Saints — Us

1. Being dedicated or consecrated to the service of God, holy, sacred
2. 1 Corinthians 1:1–2 (ESV); <sup>1</sup> Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, <sup>2</sup> To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:
3. When we were baptized into Christ, we became dedicated to the service of God
4. Holy — set aside for a divine purpose
5. Some people have declared that word to be used only for special people who meet a certain criteria
6. God tells us that everyone whom He has added to His church are saints!

## I. All of these people are ministry workers

## II. The Work of Ministry

- A. Ephesians 4:12–13 (ESV); <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
- B. Ministry is service
  1. The word “minister” means servant
  2. Ministry is the act of serving others
  3. Our work is serving others
- C. To build up the Body of Christ — spiritual strengthening
  1. Reading and studying God’s word
  2. Discussing difficult passages with each other
    - a) Proverbs 27:17 (ESV); Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.
    - b) We build each other up — we strengthen each other by discussing the word of God together
  3. Reading other peoples ideas and understandings about a passage of Scripture
    - a) This doesn’t mean you have to agree with them
    - b) Often, reading someone else’s understanding will spark an idea or understanding of my own
    - c) The writer of Hebrews tells us to move on from basic principles to more difficult passages
    - d) Ephesians 2:8–10 (ESV); <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
    - e) This passage has apparent contradictions — but careful study will help us understand that there is a cohesive thought here
- D. The work of ministry and the building up of the body of Christ keep us grounded in the truth of God’s word

## III. Tossed To and Fro

- A. Ephesians 4:14 (ESV); so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.
- B. We already read Hebrews 5:11–12 which compares the basic principles of God’s word to milk
  1. The writer was admonishing them saying they should already be teachers by now, but they are still hung up on basic principles
  2. Hebrews 5:13–14 (ESV); <sup>13</sup> for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. <sup>14</sup> But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

3. If we remain on milk then we are children in God's word and susceptible to being 'tossed to and fro'
  4. We must mature in God's word to remain steadfast in our faith
  - C. We are admonished many times in the word of God to remain steadfast
    1. 1 Corinthians 15:58 (ESV); Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.
    2. Hebrews 3:6 — and we are His house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence
    3. Hebrews 4:14 — hold fast our confession
    4. Hebrews 6:18 — hold fast to our hope
  - D. The majority of the letters written in our New testament are written to combat some false teaching — all of them encourage us to "hold fast" to the truth of God's word
  - E. 2 Timothy 2:15 (ESV); Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.
  - F. Why? Because it is God breathed
  - G. 2 Timothy 3:16 (ESV); All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,
- IV. Children
- A. Who are we?
  - B. Children who are susceptible to false teaching?
  - C. Mature Christians who have obtained the fullness of Christ?