

*ONE FAMILY: THE SACRED BLEND*

**God's Grace is Plural!**

*“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.  
⁴There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you  
were called,” (Ephesians 4:3-4).*

**OUR VISION**

**BLENDing the Family of God Together— “The Sacred Blend”**

Bringing hearts together to celebrate, encounter, and adore our God. (Worship)

Lending our lives to the faith community. (Partnership)

Engaging in practices for spiritual growth. (Discipleship)

Never giving less than our best to God's kingdom. (Stewardship)

Devoting ourselves to sharing God's good news with others. (Friendship)

The Psalmist prayed, “Give me discernment” (Psalm 119:125). Many of us would love to possess the gift of discernment. But whether God gives you that specific gift or not, He does want to give gifts to His people to make us effective in the work He has called us to do.

God's gifts will never disappoint you! Not like Christmas or B-day gifts – “That's nice.”

**In our Scripture passage today, we find four major gifts—apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher. We sometimes call these the equipping gifts, because Paul clearly says such persons are to prepare or equip God's people for works of service. (5 gifts?)**

The Greeks had two different words for laypersons. One word meant a person who was not knowledgeable in a specific field, one who was uneducated or inarticulate. We use this term when talking with the family physician. “Now, doctor, please say that in ‘layman's terms’ because I did not understand you.”

But that is not the word used in this passage or even in the New Testament. When Paul declares that God gives gifts to equip God's people for service, the term He uses means “the very people of God.”

God intends for laypersons to be His people who minister to their communities in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now what God has called us to do—be His Church/Ministers in this world—He also equips us to do by giving us spiritual gifts, special abilities from the hand of God. In addition to the equipping gifts in Ephesians, we find several other gifts in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. For instance, God gives some people the gift of leadership so they can direct the work of God. He gives others the gift of administration so they organize the work of the church. Still others receive the gift of

teaching and they have the extraordinary ability to communicate spiritual truth. Some possess gifts of mercy and service and they may do many things to meet the needs of people both inside and outside the church.

Every believer has at least one spiritual gift. Peter said, *“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others...”* (1 Peter 4:10). At the same time, no believer has all the spiritual gifts.

Judy – helps Sue C. – service/prophecy Mary, Mike C. Peter J. – evangelism  
Me – Leadership, Pastor/Teacher, encouragement.

Some have the gift of always having the right answer ....

**Smart Answer 1:** Cop - young man speeding – “I’ve been waiting for you all day...”

**Smart Answer 2:** Truck driver – sign – stuck under bridge – “Stuck eh? ...”

- Spiritual Gifts Inventory on our Patchnaz.net website. Please visit the site and complete.

*All of which leads us to emphasize this point:*

**WE REALLY DO NEED EACH OTHER:**

Ephesians 4:7

*“But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.”*

### **1. God expects us to use our gifts. (1 Peter 4:10)**

*“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.”*

Since each of us has at least one gift, but no one has all the gifts, we really need each other. God did not intend for anyone to be the champion of spiritual gifts to the exclusion of all others. Unfortunately, sometimes we develop a false hierarchy of gifts. In other words, we may think that certain gifts are superior to others. We may think those who have certain gifts are more spiritual than others. Yet God intends for each of us to use the gifts He has given us, because in this way we can help each other. And we really do need each other. (Softball team positions – story – each player needed for a winning team) – Catcher? All can’t be Short Stops or Pitchers. It takes every player in each position to make a real team.

I read an ancient legend about a king who walked into his garden one day to find nearly everything withered and dying. He stopped and looked at the oak tree near the gate and found it was discouraged with life because it was not tall and beautiful as the pine. The pine tree was disillusioned because it could not grow sweet, delicious fruit like the pear tree. Yet the pear tree was dissatisfied because it did not have the fragrant aroma of the spruce tree. The king found that dismal mood spreading throughout the garden until he came to the pansy. Its face was bright with cheerfulness.

“Well, I am glad to find one happy countenance in the garden,” he said.

“Your majesty,” said the pansy, “I concluded that if you wanted a pear or oak tree here, you would have planted one. Instead you wanted a pansy, so I have decided to be the best and brightest flower I can be.”

That’s exactly the attitude each of us should take—to become the best and brightest person we can be for the sake of our King and for the sake of those around us. We don’t all need to be oaks, or pines, or pear trees. And we certainly are not all going to be pansies. But we do need each other, the full variety of God’s creativity within His Body, the Church.

## 2. What one lacks, another can provide . (2 Corinthians 8:1-5)

*“And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. <sup>2</sup>Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. <sup>3</sup>For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, <sup>4</sup>they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. <sup>5</sup>And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God’s will.”*

He acknowledged what a lot of us realize about ourselves—we’re not good at everything, but we’re great at other things. In the Body of Christ, we don’t all have to be great at everything because we have each other. What one lacks, another can provide. We need each other.

## WE MUST ACTIVELY BECOME CONNECTED WITH EACH OTHER:

Ephesians 4:11

*“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.”*

## 1. We must work together. (Acts 4:32 – last week’s text) – Gary - Men’s Breakfast...

*“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.”*

Our Scripture passage implies we need to work together. God has not given us the gifts of the Spirit simply so each of us can become a star in our own little circle of influence. We will all be better if we work together.

On July 24, 2002, nine miners in western Pennsylvania became trapped 240 feet below the surface when they broke through into an abandoned adjacent mine that had collected millions of gallons of water. Rescue efforts began immediately but it was seventy-seven hours before all the miners got out safely. The thing that kept them alive was their decision to stay together and help each other.

The water kept rising and the men became tired. Sometimes one person would feel weak and others would support him. They tied themselves together so that no one would float away or slip under the water. It was a team effort. They decided whether they lived or died, they would do it together.

An emergency like that almost forces people to make the decision to work together. In the church, we must make the decision—whether we have a sense of urgency or not—to work together, to depend on each other, to find comfort and courage and strength from each other.

## 2. Together, we can impact our world. (Ephesians 3:14-20)

*For this reason I kneel before the Father, <sup>15</sup>from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. <sup>16</sup>I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup>so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, <sup>18</sup>may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, <sup>19</sup>and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

*<sup>20</sup>Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.*

In the Body of Christ, for the sake of God and for His Church, we not only get along but we work together. In so many ways, our survival depends on it, and if we are ever to make an impact on the world around us, it is absolutely essential.

The “world” is watching us – all the time! Don’t give Christianity a black eye!

**I should add here that not all gifts seem compatible with each other, but all are needed. (eg. Prophecy vs. mercy / evangelism vs. pastor/teacher / giving vs. mercy) ... Offensive or discouraged. That church doesn’t care about what’s important to God ... Don’t blame the “church,” look at what gifts are in operation and what is missing – You may be the answer to the dilemma.**

## USE WHAT YOU HAVE TO HELP OTHERS:

Ephesians 4:12-13

*“...to prepare/equip God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup>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.”*

If God gives us gifts—and He does—then He must intend for us to use them in ways that help others.

## 1. Using your gift will make a difference. (Ephesians 4:15)

*“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.”* Confrontational? Yes – sometimes it is!

Katherine Elliott tells about visiting her grandmother when she was ten years old. Grandmother had received a bottle of perfume as a gift and it fascinated Katherine. It was made of green pottery, with a long slender neck and a square bottom. It reminded her of ancient ware and she begged her grandmother to open it and smell it.

“No, let's save it for later,” Grandmother insisted.

When Katherine was 33 years old, her grandmother gave her the perfume and challenged her to see how long she could keep it without opening it. One day she picked up the bottle and was shocked to see it was empty. She turned it over and discovered why—it had never been glazed on the bottom. It had slowly evaporated through the porous clay.

How sad grandmother, Katherine, nor anyone else ever enjoyed the fragrance of that perfume. How disappointing if the person who gave the gift knew it had been wasted. Katherine made the point that sometimes that is the way we treat the gifts God has given us. We possess them, but never use them, so neither we nor anyone else receives the benefit God intended when He gave the gift.

While it is a great privilege to be a child of God and part of the church of God, we are saved not to be seen, not for display, not to be admired, not just to fill a position, but to serve.

Gert Behanna was an unusual person. She ran through five husbands, was an alcoholic, attempted suicide, and then came to know Christ in her fifties. She began traveling around the country speaking to groups almost every day of the year, and was responsible for thousands of people coming to know the Lord.

Bruce Larson talked to her one day and asked her what she had been doing. She said, “Well, I travel around a lot and I used to get so disgusted about the dirty restrooms in gas stations. To go into most of them, you've got to wear galoshes. Each time I used one, I complained to the Lord about how this servant of his was being treated. Do you ever complain to God?

“Then one day Jesus seemed to be saying to me, ‘Gert, in as much as you've done it unto me . . .’ I said, ‘Lord, you mean you use these restrooms too?’ When I realized He would be the next person who'd be coming into the gas station restroom after me, I knew I'd better do something about it. Now when I go into a messy restroom, I pick up all the towels and stuff them in the wastebasket. I take the towel and wipe off the mirror and the sink and the toilet seat. I leave the place looking as clean as possible and I say, ‘Well, Lord there it is; I hope you enjoy it.’”

**This may be someone's gift and ministry, but not everyone's. They shouldn't condemn others for not doing this and others should not smirk at those called to this ministry either.**

## 2. Having the right attitude determines the attitude of a local church. (Ephesians 4:16-23)

*From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. <sup>17</sup>So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. <sup>18</sup>They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. <sup>19</sup>Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. (and think that is OK)*

*<sup>20</sup>You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. <sup>21</sup>Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. <sup>22</sup>You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; <sup>23</sup>to be made new in the attitude of your minds;*

It's an attitude of service that says, "I will use what I have to serve Him and others."

A pastor sent someone with ability in a particular direction handle a situation more effectively than he ever could have done. You have a spiritual gift that God can use to minister effectively to someone else. It may be better suited than the Pastor or others. Use what you have.

### Conclusion

*It is possible to be a follower of Jesus without being a disciple; to be a camp follower without being a soldier of the king; to be a hanger-on in some great work without pulling one's weight. Once someone was talking to a great scholar about a younger man... He said, "So and so tells me that he was one of your students." The teacher answered devastatingly, "He may have attended my lectures, but he was not one of my students." There is a world of difference between attending lectures and being a student. It is one of the supreme handicaps of the Church that in the Church there are so many distant followers of Jesus and so few real disciples. (C. Swindoll)*

In the Church, let's find those in need and get in there with them.

After all, the grace of God is plural. Jesus died for the whole world. And He never meant for us to experience or enjoy His grace in isolation.

Maybe you will need to take a spiritual gifts inventory to find out how God has equipped you or wired you to serve Him. (maybe you already know your gifted areas).

But do whatever you need to do in order to be effective in serving Him.

### We are trying to focus the ministry and attitude of this church around the following:

B – Coming together to adore, bless, and hear from God – (worship)

L – Being a loving, caring community – there for each other – (fellowship)

E – To challenge you in your faith through the Word of God and help you grow (discipleship)

N – Be able to tell others about this wonderful relationship we have with God – (evangelism)

D – Help you find a way to serve the Lord by serving others in our vicinity – (ministry)