



# INSIGHT

to biblical TEXTS

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## Slide #1

Moving from the section of Ephesians addressing the *coming together* of all believers *into the church* (Eph 1–3) to the section calling for the *working together* by all believers *within the church* (Eph 4–6), we find God’s provision that enables the “working together in ministry” to become a reality.

## Insight to Ephesians 4:11-16

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1

## Slide #2

Turning to this practical section, Paul states that each individual believer is given a gift for ministry within the church, as shown in Slide #2. He wrote, “Now, to each of us was given grace according to the measure [*metron*, allotment] of Christ’s gift” (Eph 4:7), reminding us of Paul’s previous message in 1 Corinthians 12:7: “But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

Notice in verse 11, Paul progresses from individual gifts in verse 7 to corporate gifts—apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers. God gives gifts to every individual believer, but He also gives certain gifted people to the church for specific ministry.

### EPHESIANS 4:7-11 GRAMMATICAL LAYOUT

7	<p>Now, to each one was given grace of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ.</p>	<i>Provision</i>
8	(Quote from Ps 68:18 & Judg 5:12)	
9-10	(Parenthetical Aside)	
11	<p>And He gave some to be apostles, and some to be prophets, and some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers</p>	<i>People</i>

2

Slide #3

Distinctions in the corporate gifts are the result of the specific ministry of each gift. Jesus said, “I will build my Church (God’s building; God’s people)” (Matt 16:18). As seen in Ephesians 2:19-22 and 1 Corinthians 3:4-15, the apostles and prophets are the foundational gifts establishing the church. Along with the cornerstone, Christ, the apostles and prophets are the footing upon which the superstructure of the church is built. Those responsible for the structural growth of God’s building are the evangelists/heralds and pastor-teachers. Using heralds to proclaim the message of eternal life in Christ, God continually adds new believers to the church. On the other hand, pastor-teachers shepherd and teach those who are added. The foundational gifts were necessary for laying the church’s foundation, while the structural gifts currently build upon that foundation.



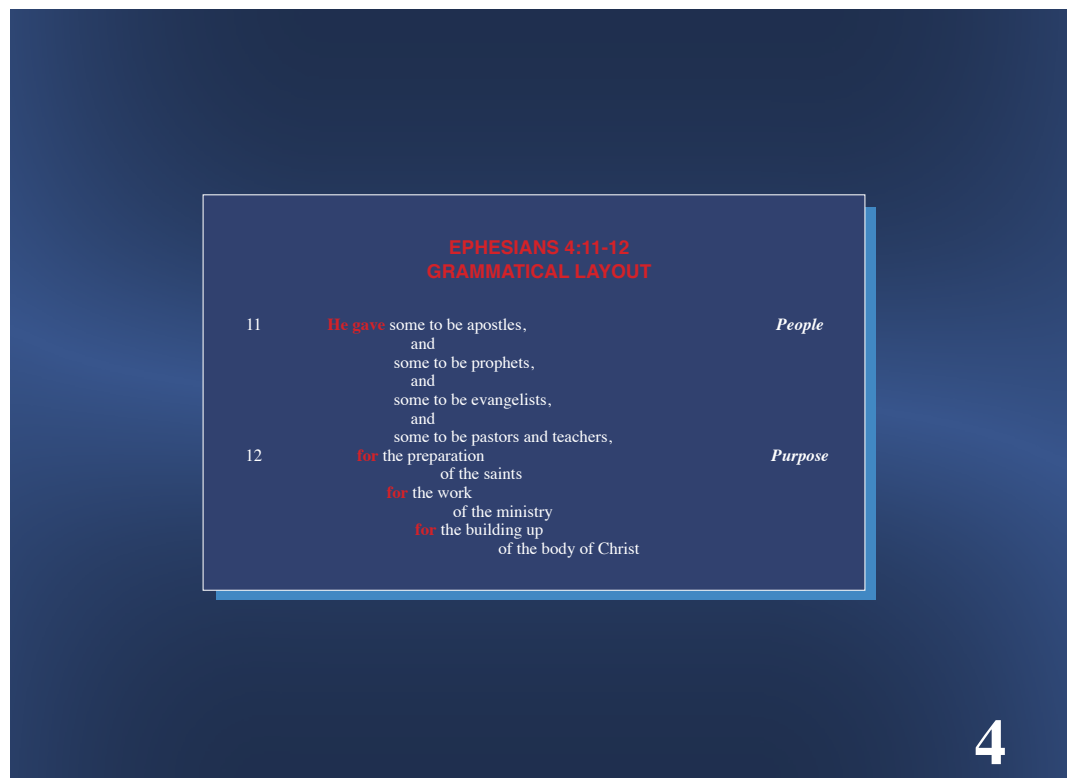
[Note: for expanded information on the corporate gifts see Articles, *Distinctions in Corporate Gifts Part 1*, concerning their *Identification*, and *Distinctions in Corporate Gifts Part 2*, addressing their particular *Ministry*.]

The building program involves the believers who make up the superstructure and pastor-teachers are the builders. In order for the structure be correctly built, the Scriptures must be accurately taught.

Slide #4

The progression of this text moves from the *people* that God gives as corporate gifts to the reason for those gifts in the church. The apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers in verse 11 were given for the particular *purpose* stated in verse 12: “for (*pros*—for the purpose of) the preparation *of* the saints.” The typically used term *equipping* is captured in the concept of *preparation*: in making ready a ship with provisions for a voyage or in mending a torn net for fishing. This preparatory ministry is “for (*eis*—for the purpose of) the work of the ministry” *by* the saints, which leads to the concluding purpose—“for (*eis*—for the purpose of) the building up of the body of Christ.”

[Note: the translation used for Ephesians 4:11-16 is that of Harold Hoehner found in his commentary on Ephesians.<sup>1]</sup>



Slide #5

Notice that the word *for* is used three times in verse 12, indicating a sequential chain of causes-and-effects, with each purpose following the prior one. In the context, the preparatory ministry of the corporate gifts is required in order that the remaining purposes may take place. However, it should be noted that even though there is a cause-and-effect sequence, this is a dynamic process. The requirements of one event need not be totally fulfilled prior to the inception of the next.



Slide #6

The summary overview of the grammatical layout of Ephesians 4:11-16 shows the entire flow of this text. The *people* are the four gifts to the church (v 11), who fulfill their *purpose* in the “preparation of the saints” so that sequentially the body can do the “work of the ministry” in order to “build up the body” spiritually (v 12). As a result, the body is continually in the *process* of attaining unity, conformity, and completeness in Christ (v 13). The ultimate *product* is for believers to mature in Christ (vv 14-15). In so doing, the body causes its own spiritual growth—the *procedure* (v 16).

We will now consider in some detail the latter portion of this text—verses 13-16.

**EPHESIANS 4:11-16  
GRAMMATICAL LAYOUT SUMMARY**

vs 11	<b>People</b>	<b>He gave</b> Apostles Prophets Evangelists Pastor-Teachers
vs 12	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>For</b> preparation of Saints <b>For</b> work of the ministry <b>For</b> building up of body
vs 13	<b>Process</b>	<b>Until</b> attain to unity to conformity to completeness
vs 14	<b>Product</b>	<b>That</b> no longer children but grow up (mature)
vs 15		
vs 16	<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Body</b> , properly functioning, <b>causes</b> its own spiritual <b>growth</b>

**6**

Slide #7

The text flows from the *people* in verse 11 to the *purpose* in verse 12. Verse 13 then points out the desired result of the continual *process* of preparing the body for ministry that in turn leads to spiritual growth—the body’s maturity in Christ. Paul expressed attaining maturity in three ways, “each built on the previous.”<sup>2</sup> First is attaining the unity of the faith found in Christ and the knowledge of Christ. Second is the maturity of the body, which leads to the third—experiencing completeness in Christ as the body grows in the fullness of Christ.

EPHESIANS 4:11-12 & 13  
GRAMMATICAL LAYOUT

11	<p><b>He gave</b> some to be apostles, and some to be prophets, and some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,</p>	<i>People</i>
12	<p><b>for</b> the preparation of the saints <b>for</b> the work of the ministry <b>for</b> the building up of the body of Christ</p>	<i>Purpose</i>
13	<p><b>until</b> we all attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, <b>to</b> a mature person, <b>to</b> the measure of Christ’s full stature,</p>	<i>Process</i>

7

Slide #8

Paul next addresses the *product* in verses 14-15. The reason Paul just described how the body should function (vv 11-13) was *in order that* individual Christians would no longer be children *but rather* grown up in Christ. The context is a progression from spiritual immaturity or childishness to spiritual maturity, being an adult in Christ. The spiritually immature lack knowledge of Christ (see v 13) and are susceptible to the deceptions of those both outside the church as well as from within. This is the very reason Paul instructed the elders (pastor-teachers, v 11) in Ephesus to protect the church from false teachings (Acts 20:28-31).

Rather than remaining children, Paul’s appeals to believers to grow up in Christ, to grow in maturity in every area of their lives. The way in which growth in the body takes place is properly expressed in the translation: “truthing in love” or “practicing the truth with love (NET).” Notice “truthing” or “practicing the truth” is evident only in an environment of love—where all “seek the highest good in the one [or ones] loved.”<sup>3</sup> Only then the body shows the true mark of discipleship: “All...will know that you are [Christ’s] disciples” since you show that “you have love for one another” (John 13:35).

EPHESIANS 4:11-12 & 14-15  
GRAMMATICAL LAYOUT

11	<p><b>He gave</b> some to be apostles, and some to be prophets, and some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,</p>	<i>People</i>
12	<p><b>for</b> the preparation of the saints <b>for</b> the work of the ministry <b>for</b> the building up of the body of Christ</p>	<i>Purpose</i>
14	<p><b>in order that</b> we might no longer be <b>children</b>, being tossed back and forth by the waves and <i>being</i> carried away by every wind of doctrine (teachings) by the cunningness of people by deceitfulness towards the scheme of error,</p>	<i>Product</i>
15	<p><b>but rather</b> being truthful with love [truthing in love], we might <b>grow up</b> to him Christ, who is the head with reference to all things</p>	

8

[**Note:** the word *truthing* is a participle from the verb *aletheuo* and is only used twice in the New Testament (here and in Gal 4:16). In Galatians 4:16, “speaking the truth” is the preferred translation due to that particular context. The same translation, “speaking the truth,” is also used by NIV, NASB, and NKJV in Ephesians 4:15, being influenced by the close proximity of Ephesians 4:25 where “speak the truth” occurs. However, the grammatical construction in Ephesians 4:15 differs from that in verse 25. In verse 15, there is a single participle, while verse 25 includes a verb + object construction: *truthing* (v 15) versus *speak + truth* (v 25). With the primary consideration being the context, in Ephesians 4:11-16 the functioning of the body of Christ is the emphasis and therefore “truthing” or “practicing the truth” is preferred.]

### Slide #9

The grammatical layout of Ephesians 4:16 shows how the body can experience spiritual growth—the *procedure*. The *body*, whose source of existence and giftedness is from Christ, is the subject of the verse. The main verb *causes* describes a continuous process (present tense) base on the body’s own internal working (middle voice). Consequently, spiritual growth is the result of the internal functioning of the body when gathered together. As a result, the verse can be paraphrased, *the body, properly functioning, causes it own spiritual growth.*

The proper functioning of the body is explained by *being fitted and held together through every supporting connection according to the working in measure from each individual part.* The participle phrases *being fitted* and *being held together* pictures the proper placing and adhesion together of the individual building blocks of a

structure, emphasizing a developing unity of the body. The means by which unity is accomplished is explained in the next phrase, *through (dia) every supporting connection*, referring to intimate connections between believers. The passage is not referring to *superficial connections*. Rather, these “supporting connections” are the same referred to in Hebrews 10:24-25—the one-to-another, *intimate connections* where believers stir up love and good works in each other. Further, the next phrase, *according to (kata) the working in measure* [see *metron*, v 7] *from each individual part*, states the manner in which the “connections” function in order to benefit the body. The work of interconnected believers through *mutual, reciprocal ministries*, using their spiritual gifts, is in view. Then the result of the body functioning in this way—it “causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.” Notice the last phrase, *in love*, which is the motivational catalyst that ultimately results in the spiritual growth of the body.

EPHESIANS 4:11-12 & 16  
GRAMMATICAL LAYOUT

11	He gave some to be apostles, and some to be prophets, and some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,	<i>People</i>
12	for the preparation of the saints for the work of the ministry for the building up of the body of Christ	<i>Purpose</i>
16	from whom (Christ) the whole <b>body causes the growth</b> of the body to building itself up in love being fitted together and being held together through every supporting connection according to the working in measure from each individual part	<i>Procedure</i>

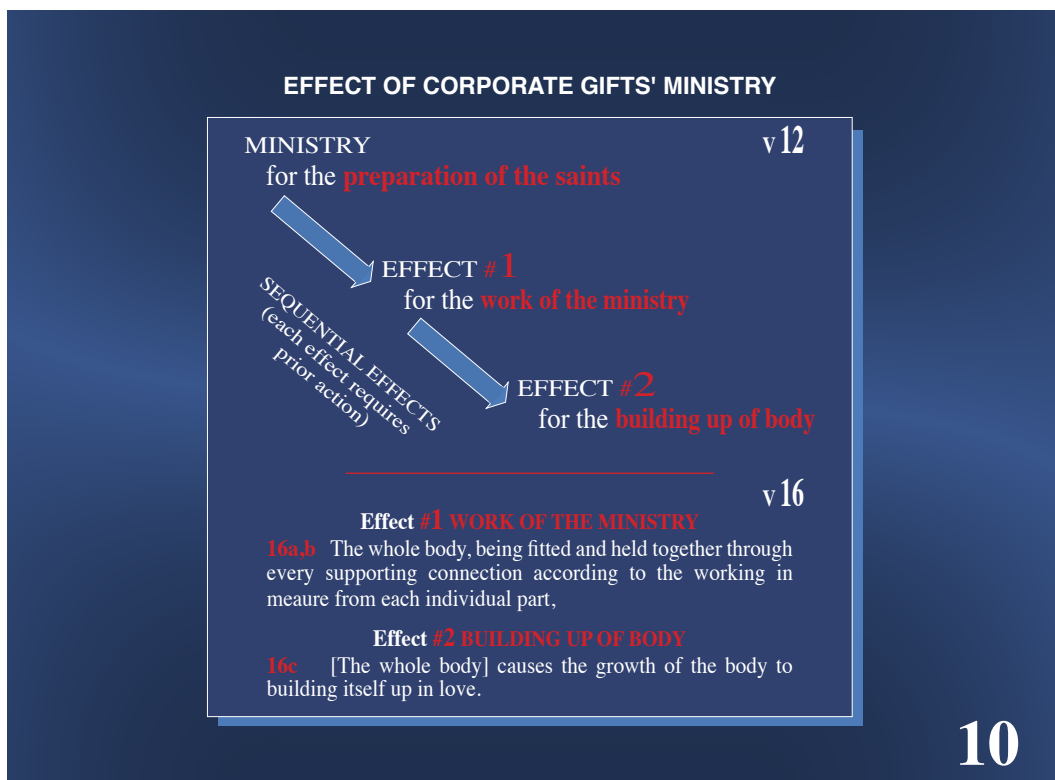
Continue to Next Page

Slide #10

Notice the desired effects of the preparatory work of corporate gifts. *First*, “the work of service” by the body of Christ is explained in Ephesians 4:16a,b: “The whole body, being fitted and held together through every supporting connection according to the working in measure of each individual part.” This “work of the ministry” happens only when believers, using their specific gifts function together in intimate connections and mutual ministries. If the body experiences “the work of service,” the *second effect* is experienced: “The whole body causes the growth of the body for the building itself up in love” (v 16c). A paraphrase of verse 16 captures the essence of verse 12: *The body, properly functioning* (“the work of the ministry”), *causes it own spiritual growth* (“building itself up in love”).

With the laying down of the church’s foundation by the apostles and prophets, the superstructure is built upon them by the pastor/shepherd-teachers who lead and teach, continually assisting the body of Christ to function and grow spiritually.

[Note: for expanded information on the role of shepherd-teachers or elders see Articles, *Office of Elder Part 1*, concerning their *Identification*; *Office of Elder Part 2*, addressing their *Plurality & Equality*; and *Office of Elder Part 3*, developing their *Responsibilities*]

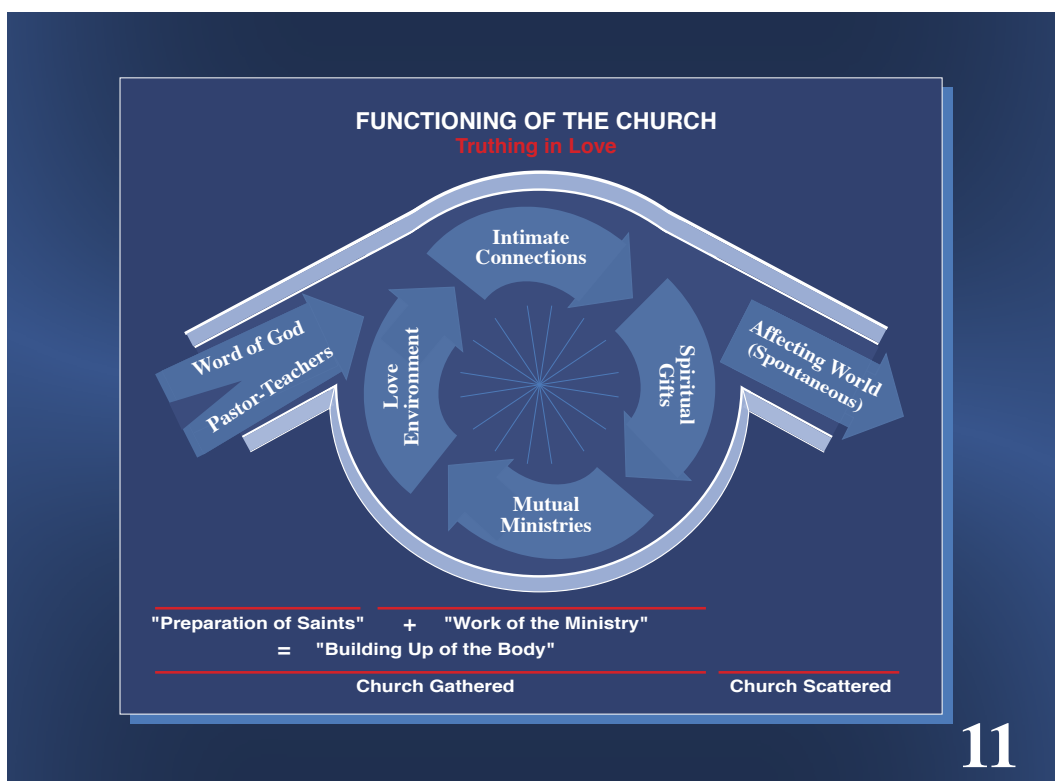


Slide #11

This diagram captures the New Testament idea of the local church, when gathered and then scattered. Through the diligent work of pastor-teachers (Eph 4:11-12), utilizing the word of God (2 Tim 3:16-17), the body of Christ is prepared for “the work of the ministry” in the manner of Ephesians 4:16 so that the body experiences spiritual growth.

The preparation ministry extends far beyond giving sermons of encouragement when the church assembles. It requires the establishment of an environment of love in which intimate connections and mutual ministries, using spiritual gifts, can be experienced. Only then will the body be able to properly function as a living organism—doing “the work of the ministry.”

When this happens, the natural, spontaneous overflow affects the world for Christ. As the body of Christ follows God’s design, the love



displayed among believers for one another is attractive to those outside (e.g., Acts 2:47). More importantly, believers experiencing the one-another love in the body are motivated to share Christ with those in their spheres of influence—where they live, work or go to school (e.g., Col 4:5-6).



**Endnotes:**

1. Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 540-79.
2. *Ibid.*, 551.
3. *Ibid.*, 565.