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g. EPHESIANS 4:16 From whom the _____ fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of _____, maketh _____ of the body unto the _____ of itself in love.

i. The local church is a body of many parts (members) brought together in unity, firmly and harmoniously brought together as cells in a unit. Each unit is needed. Each unit is needed healthy. (A chain is only as strong as its weakest link.)

ii. Each cell is nourished by God to complement the others. Each supplies the others. Each cell has an input and must have an output in power to contribute to a healthy assembly (cp. Colossians 2:19).

h. EPHESIANS 4:17 THIS I SAY THEREFORE, AND TESTIFY IN THE LORD, THAT YE HENCEFORTH _____

i. The believer has a new vocation. (His job is only that which sustains him in his vocation, that by which he gains the physical resources he needs to serve the Lord.)

ii. Walk, therefore, with purpose. Walk with commitment. Walk with power. The local church is vitally important. The believer cannot do without it. The believer, each believer, in the local church is important. I must not be the believer who breaks the chain. I must give myself at all expense to the local church—to do so is to give myself to the Lord. (Read Romans 12.)

G. The People of the Local Assembly

1. Ephesians 4:7,8,11 But unto _____ of us is given _____ according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave _____ unto men... and he gave some, _____; and some, prophets; and some, _____; and some, pastors and teachers.

a. There is such a thing as spiritual gifts. Paul writing to the Corinthians believers said in 1 Corinthians 12:1 “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you _____.”

- b. A spiritual gift differs from a natural gift or talent which pertains to all people, saved and unsaved alike, and which may be obtained by study or self effort. Talents are part of the natural man and are thus crucified with Christ (See Galatians 2:20, 6:14-15; Phil 3:3-9). See our paper, *The Difference Between Natural Talents and Spiritual Gifts*.
- c. READ 1 Corinthians 12:1-11. Spiritual gifts are of and by the Spirit of God.
 - i. There are differences in gifts, there are differences in administrations (services rendered) there are differences in operations (effects produced), BUT THERE IS ONE SPIRIT, ONE LORD, ONE GOD.
 - ii. The Spirit of God is sovereign in His bestowment of spiritual gifts.
 - iii. Spiritual gifts are God's enablement for a specific work or ministry or service.
 - iv. Spiritual gifts pertain to believers only because only the believer has the Spirit of God.
 - v. Spiritual gifts are given by grace. They are unearned, unmerited, not acquired by any human undertaking, nor do they require any human ability.
 - vi. Spiritual gifts are for the mutual growth, edification, unity of the local church (See 1 Peter 4:10-11).
 - vii. Gifts are given to display Life, not to display the person. The gifts themselves are not so important, but the Life of the Lord Jesus. God is demonstrating His Life, not His gifts.
 - viii. God moves us past gifts in each listing of gifts to the expression of Life. The most important GIFT of all is the gift of eternal life (Rom. 6:23) which every believer possesses. Christ is our LIFE and we possess Him (1 John 5:12; Col. 3:3-4). Our main purpose as believers is to manifest His life (2 Cor. 4:10-11).

2. Sign Gifts (Temporary)

- a. A sign is meant to direct a person elsewhere. The message of the sign is "Don't get tied up on me. Go where I am pointing you." The sign is forgotten once you have arrived.
- b. Sign gifts were given as credentials to mark God's man and God's message.
 - i. There were sign gifts in the days of Moses to establish him before the nation and before Pharaoh, Exo 4:1-9,29-31, 7:3,8-13.)

- ii. There were sign gifts during the days of Elijah and Elisha in a day of Israel's defection from God. 1 Kings 17—2 Kings 8.
 - iii. There were sign gifts given the Lord Jesus as credentials of His being the true Messiah, Isaiah 35:4-6; Matthew 11:3-6; Acts 2:22; John 20:30-31; Luke 23:8 (Note that He would not play games with Herod. His miracles were not for fun. See also Matt 13:58)
 - iv. The apostles were given signs in a day when they were thought to be "_____ and _____ men" (Acts 4:13), and when the canon of Scriptures was yet incomplete, Acts 4:16, 14:3; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:4).
 - v. What God does, Satan imitates with the motivation of deception, Matthew 24:24; Mark 13:22; Deut 13:1-4; 1 Corinthians 11:19; 2 Cor 11:13-15; 2 Thess 2:9; Revelation 13:13-14, 16:14.
- c. The most spectacular wonder or experience cannot be compared with the Word of God, a more sure word of prophecy (2 Pet 1:15-21).
 - d. The issue is not whether God can do miracles. Yes, He can, but "God never performs miracles, but that He does so on His terms only, and in accordance with His revealed program of history... God has a plan in His dealings with men, and that plan does not happen to include a constant repetition of the same kinds of miracles in every time and place. If this were his plan, then miracles would lose their unique sign value because they would be taken for granted." ("Does God Want Christians To Perform Miracles Today" by John C. Whitcomb, Jr.).
 - e. The church at Corinth was immature, acting like babes. There are things that are true and that are done in stages of immaturity that are not meant to be true or done in adult years. God moves the church on to maturity, to grow up, to cross the river of transition (Book of Acts) and to get on to solid meat. It is not for the believer to get tied up in the spectacular with our eyes turning every way like the infant beholding charms. God does not have signs for us today. He has given us His Word. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" John 20:29. It is not "God give me a sign," BUT, "God make me a sign pointing to You." (See Hebrews 5:12—6:2).
3. Support Gifts (Temporary)
- a. Support gifts are **foundational**. The Lord Jesus promised to continue to reveal Truth to the disciples after He was gone.

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- i. John 16:12-13 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will _____ you into _____: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.
 - ii. John 17:20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me _____.
- b. Ephesians 2:20 And are built upon the _____ of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the _____
_____. 1 Corinthians 3:10b,11 ...I have laid the _____
... For other _____ can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
 - c. Ephesians 4:11 ...AND HE GAVE SOME A _____ (delegates, messengers, ones sent forth with authority and credentials, envoys; spiritual leaders responsible for the founding and grounding of the Church), AND SOME P _____ (ones who spoke forth the Word of God in a day when the canon of Scriptures was not yet complete; those who were moved by the Spirit of God to give forth the Word of God); AND SOME, EVANGELISTS (missionaries, church planters)...
 - d. Once the foundation of a building is laid there is no more need to build the foundation, but to build on the foundation. These gifts were temporary in nature for the establishment of the Church until such a time as the New Testament, including the Pauline Epistles expressing God's heart and mind for the churches, was complete. There is no longer a need for apostles and prophets and other related gifts including the gift of discernment (discerning whether a man were speaking the Word of God or not).

4. Service Gifts

- a. These are gifts given for the **function** of the body and for the establishment of new testimonies or local churches.
 - i. These evangelists in New Testament times were missionary church planters (don't think of the "revivalist" or "soul winning" evangelists of today).
 - ii. There are also Pastor-teachers (one gift)—shepherds or under-shepherds, under the Chief Shepherd; those who tend the flock, guiding them as well as feeding and warning them, superintending (See 1 Thessalonians 2:1-11).

- b. There are other gifts mentioned also. God mentions only a few so that we might know that gifts exist. God is not limited. He does not list all gifts, and those He does list might be variable from one person to another.
 - c. All believers have at least one spiritual gift.
 - i. Ephesians 4:7-8 But unto _____ of us is given _____ according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and _____ unto men.
 - ii. 1 Corinthians 12:11-13 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to _____ severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we _____ baptized into one body...
5. How shall I know my spiritual gift?
- a. Knowing demands a right relationship to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
 - i. John 6:28-29. What shall one do that he might work the works of God? _____
 - ii. John 7:14-17,37-39. Who is the Source of the outflow of God in the believer's life? _____
 - iii. John 15:1-7 Apart from a saved, supplied, satisfied Life, what can a person do? (See v.5) N _____
 - iv. Hebrews 4:1-11. He that would enter into God's rest "must _____ from his own _____."
 - v. The believer's calling is to fellowship (1 Corinthians 1:9). Out of that relationship God works in us both to will and to do (work) His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). Our part is to believe, to trust, to rely, to let God work in us, to let God work out of us. We must hunger and thirst so that we have His supply. We must sanctify the Lord God in our hearts (allowing Him to be Lord of the outward circumstances as well as the inner heart), 1 Pet 3:15.
 - b. Knowing demands a right relationship to the Word of God.
 - i. The Word of God produces the work of God. God never operates contrary to His Word (John 15:7).