

OUTWARD - FACING EQUIPPING GIFTS

APOSTLES, PROPHETS, EVANGELISTS

Establish and Expand | Ephesians 4:11-13

11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 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.

GIFT FUNCTIONS

Apostleship

The gift of apostleship is the divine strength or ability to pioneer new churches and ministries through planting, overseeing, and training

Evangelism

The gift of evangelism is the divine strength or ability to help non-Christians take the necessary steps to becoming a born-again Christian

Prophetic

The gift of prophecy is the divine strength or ability to boldly speak and bring clarity to scriptural and doctrinal truth, in some cases foretelling God's plan.

Note: There's an important difference between function and office in the five fold ministry. Some people are called to carry these gifts in an official way with added responsibility and accountability, but you don't need a title to operate in a function. You can share the good news of Jesus without being an evangelist, explain scripture without holding the office of teacher, or care for people without being a pastor. God equips every believer to participate in the work of ministry, and the goal is **faithfulness**, not position, so the Church is built up and the gospel moves forward.

LET'S SEE THESE FUNCTIONS IN ACTION IN SCRIPTURE

The Function of Apostleship: Read Acts 15:22-35

The Function of the Prophetic: Read Acts 11:19-30

The Function of Evangelism: Read Acts 8:26-40

LET'S OBSERVE THE TEXT...

Observe Ephesians 4:11-13

- **Verse 11** - *So Christ himself gave...*
 - These are leadership functions are determined by God, not by man.
- **Verse 12** - *to equip his _____ for works of _____, so that the body of Christ may be _____*
- **Verse 13** - **Why? What's the goal?** *until we _____ reach _____ in the **faith** and in the **knowledge** of the Son of God and become _____, attaining to the whole measure of the _____ of Christ.*
 - The purpose of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers is to equip each believer to serve so that together we can be unified in faith and the knowledge of Jesus in maturity and in manifesting the fullness of Christ's image.



CONCORDANCE

- ☐ **Apostle** (apostolos)
Strong's G652
Found in Ephesians 4:11
- ☐ **Prophet** (prophétés)
Strong's G4396
Found in Ephesians 4:11
- ☐ **Evangelist** (euaggelistés)
Strong's G2099
Found in Ephesians 4:11

Observe Apostleship in Acts 15:22-35

- In previous verses, Paul and Barnabas got into dispute with some who were claiming the gentiles needed circumcision to be made righteous. They then went to the elders and apostles in Jerusalem to seek advise on the situation. The elders and apostles sent two prophets, Silas and Judas (called Barsabbas) to accompany them back to set the record straight.
- Silas and Judas (aka Barsabbas) did not go on their own accord...they were sent.
- Apostles build, and establish. It was of vital importance that they set the record straight so that local church may be built up on a good foundation...that is Christ.
- Notice the apostles & elders, the teachers (Paul and Barnabas), as well as two prophets (Silas and Judas/Barsabbas) were involved. The Body of Christ's leadership communicates, deliberates, prays and processes, and functions together. No one on their own accord. They were subject to Christ (the Head of the Church), led by the Holy Spirit, and subject to one another. How the Body should function.

Observe the Prophetic in Acts 11:19-30

- Barnabus was sent to Antioch from the elders and apostles in Jerusalem to bear witness to the good news that the church's (people...believers, not an organization or institution) faith was being built on a strong foundation. The church grew in numbers with many salvations. Once Barnabus was there, another growth spurt happened.
- From there he retrieved Paul from Tarsus and together they returned to Antioch. Then the elders and apostles from Jerusalem (the headquarters) sent prophets to the same location...one of which was Agabus.
 - The 5-fold ministry working together. Apostles, teachers, and prophets in the same story. A team effort, under the direction and leading of the Holy Spirit.
 - Agabus prophesied warning to the people about an upcoming famine. They prepared relief and shared with their fellow Christians who lived in the impacted region. They acted on their faith, not just well wishes. Agabus likely saved lives by operating in his gift.

Observe Evangelism in Acts 8:26-40

- Philip heard from an angel of the Lord to go to a certain location. Then the Holy Spirit told him to go near the chariot. Notice how he heard, then he obeyed? And once he obeyed, the next direction was given to him.
 - Interesting fact...in Greek, the name *Philip* means "fond of horses". Is it possible the Lord used what interested him to find commonality in his approach? Don't underestimate how God can use something in common between you and another for the sake of sharing the good news!
- Philip heard this Ethiopian eunuch reading scriptures in Isaiah. A window of opportunity presented itself and he took it. A divine appointment.
- Be bold when God gives you an opportunity to share the good news!
 - From there he went on to continue his evangelistic ministry into the heart of a Roman port city where Jews and Gentiles frequently traveled through. Matthew 28 (Great Commission) in action.



LET'S READ THE AFTER-SUMMARY TOGETHER

This study centers on how Christ designed the Church to grow outward and forward through equipping gifts that establish and expand His work (Ephesians 4:11–13). Apostles, prophets, and evangelists are given by Christ, not appointed by people, and their purpose is clear. They equip believers for works of service so the body of Christ is built up, unified in faith, and matured into the fullness of Christ. These gifts are not about status or visibility, but about strengthening the Church to reflect Jesus more clearly to the world.

A key takeaway from this study is the distinction between function and office. Scripture shows that while some believers carry these gifts in an official capacity with added responsibility and accountability, the function itself is not limited to titles (Ephesians 4:12). God equips every believer to participate in ministry, whether through sharing the gospel, explaining Scripture, or helping establish healthy community. Faithfulness, not position, is what moves the Church forward and keeps the focus on Christ.

In Acts 15:22–35, we see the function of apostleship in action. Faced with doctrinal confusion, the apostles and elders worked together to protect the foundation of the Church. They did not act independently, but prayed, deliberated, and sent trusted leaders to bring clarity and unity to the churches. Apostleship here looks like building, establishing, and guarding the truth so believers can grow on a solid foundation, which is Christ.

Acts 11:19–30 shows the prophetic function working alongside apostolic and teaching leadership. Barnabas was sent to Antioch to confirm what God was already doing, and prophets like Agabus were sent to bring Spirit-led warning and direction. The prophecy did not create fear or attention around the prophet. It led to practical action, generosity, and care for others. The Church responded in faith, preparing relief for those who would be affected. This is prophecy strengthening the body and advancing love through obedience.

In Acts 8:26–40, the function of evangelism is personal, Spirit-led, and bold. Philip listened, obeyed, and stepped into a divine appointment prepared by God. He explained Scripture, shared the good news, and watched a life be transformed. This moment reflects the Great Commission being lived out in real time, as the gospel moved beyond borders and reached someone searching for truth (Matthew 28:19–20). Together, these passages show how outward-facing equipping gifts work in harmony so the Church can grow, serve, and carry the message of reconciliation to the world.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Apostleship - Applying Acts 15:22-35

Application Question

What do you notice about how the apostles and elders worked together to bring clarity and unity to the churches?

Deeper Question

Where might God be inviting you to help strengthen, establish, or protect something He is building, even if it feels behind the scenes or shared with others?

Prophetic - Applying Acts 11:19-30

Application Question

How did the prophetic word given through Agabus lead the church toward action rather than fear or confusion?

Deeper Question

How open are you to God using you to speak timely truth or bring clarity that leads others toward loving, practical obedience?

Evangelism - Applying Acts 8:26-40

Application Question

What stands out to you about how Philip listened to the Spirit and responded step by step?

Deeper Question

What fears, assumptions, or distractions might keep you from responding when God opens a door for you to share your faith?

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, we thank You for giving gifts to Your church and for equipping us to serve according to Your purpose. We ask that You help us walk in humility, obedience, and dependence on Your Spirit, using what You have entrusted to us for the building up of the body and the advancement of the gospel. Teach us to listen, to respond faithfully, and to work together in unity as You establish, strengthen, and send us out as witnesses of Your reconciliation. May our lives reflect the fullness of Christ, and may everything we do bring glory to Your name. In Jesus name we pray, amen.



WHAT'S AHEAD...

Next Session

Inward Strengthening Gifts that Build the Body:
Pastors and Teachers

Homework

Read 1 Peter 4:10-11