

Jesus' Gifts

group study

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Jesus' Gifts

group study

this book belongs to

date

make the most out of this study

The Jesus' Gifts group study is meant to be studied with a group! You will learn from Scripture, discuss the lessons, and grow together. The following recommendations will help your study group experience the intended outcomes:

- **Each lesson builds upon the previous lesson, so work together and find a way to cover all six lessons in as close to six weeks as possible.**
- **Invite everyone to bring their Bibles and pens.**
- **If possible, sit at a table to be able to read, write, snack, and be closer to one another.**

*The digital booklet and supplemental materials are all available **FREE** through the **BFAM App** or at **BFAMmovements.com***

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Jesus' Gifts is one of a three-part series, including **(1) Jesus' Church, (2) Jesus' Gifts, and (3) Jesus' Commission.** These can be completed in any order, but are recommended in the order listed.

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**are
gift**

Welcome to the Jesus' Gifts group study!

Let's open in prayer and ask God to help us hear what He is saying to each of us. [Open in prayer.]

Did you know that you are a gift? That's right! You are a gift intentionally given by God to His Church. And it's not just you; every believer in the body of Christ is a gift! So, what kind of gift are you? And what does it mean to "be" a gift? That's what we're going to find out in this study!

Jesus gave gifts

Let's read Ephesians 4:7-12:

“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it says, ‘When He ascended on high, He led captive the captives, And He gave gifts to people.’ 9 (Now this expression, ‘He ascended,’ what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.) 11 And He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ” (NASB).

This passage teaches us that when Jesus ascended back to heaven, He gave ministry gifts to His Church. He gave apostles, prophets, evangelists,

pastors, and teachers. These “gifts” are people. Before we talk about the benefits of these gifts, let’s find out who these people are.

The five gifts of Jesus have often been considered a small minority of the body of Christ; however, a closer look at the text of Scripture reveals something very different. One of the rules of properly interpreting Scripture is to first understand who wrote the passage being studied and to whom it was written. Ephesians 1:1 tells us that in this letter, Paul was addressing every believer in every one of the house churches in the city of Ephesus. And the apostle Peter tells us in 2 Peter 1:20–21:

*Did you
know that
you are a
gift?*

“No prophecy of Scripture comes from the prophet’s own interpretation, 21 because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (CSB).

This teaches us that the Holy Spirit influenced Paul to write his letter to the Ephesians in such a way that it would also speak to the entire body of Christ.

Now let’s read the beginning of Ephesians 4:7 again. It says:

“To each one of us grace was given” (NASB).

Based on what we’ve learned, the words “each one of us” do not only speak of the believers in first-century Ephesus, nor are they limited to a small minority of leaders today. This verse is telling us that something called “grace” has been given to every believer—in every location and for all generations—and that includes you!

the five gifts of Jesus

Now let's read Ephesians 4:7–8 and 11–12 together. This time we'll skip verses 9 and 10, which are important for other studies, but as many Bible versions acknowledge, they are parenthetical comments of Paul's primary message.

“To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. 8 Therefore it says, ‘When He ascended on high, He led captive the captives, and He gave gifts to people’ . . . 11 And He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ” (NASB).

Do you see that? The reason Jesus gives each of us supernatural “grace” or enablement is so that we have the ability to equip and build up other believers. Once He empowers each of us with grace, then He gives us to His Church as a gift—a supernaturally graced gift. For example, Jesus will give one person grace or supernatural enablement to teach, and then He will give that person to His Church as a teacher. As that teacher walks in their grace to teach, God will provide them with teaching roles or opportunities. These roles may or may not be official positions with titles, but they will serve God’s purposes and make a difference. And remember, these are gifts that Jesus gives, not descriptions of paid positions. It says, “He gave,” not “He appointed.” If payment is required to play our role, then we’re no longer a gift.

This passage also tells us that Jesus doesn’t give all of us the same kind of grace. To some of us, He gives the grace to be an apostle; to others, the grace to be a prophet; to others, the grace to be an evangelist; to others, the grace to be a pastor (shepherd); and to others, the grace to be a teacher. He distributes different graces to equip different people for

different assignments. And we can be sure that Jesus gives each and every person the exact grace they need to fulfill the assignments He has planned for them. No one receives too much grace, and no one receives too little.

*No one can
fulfill their
ministry
assignments
alone.*

Someone may ask, why doesn't God give every believer all five graces? The apostle Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 12:14–27 that Jesus wants His body to function like a human body. Each member of the body is designed to play its part so that the whole body functions well. The ear does not need to see or smell or speak. That's why the body has eyes and a nose and a mouth. On the other hand, the eyes, nose, and mouth cannot hear. That's why the body has ears. Jesus wants each of us to play our part in collaboration with others. No one can fulfill their ministry assignments alone. God

designed and graced each of us in such a way that we would help each other and need each other to accomplish those assignments.

Though we'll study the five gifts in more detail in the coming lessons, let's briefly define each of them now. These gifts are often called the "five-fold ministry gifts" and are also known by the acronym APEST which stands for Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds (Pastors), and Teachers. We'll discuss them in terms of graces as opposed to titles to minimize the awkwardness that titles can cause (e.g., "I'm Prophet Joe," or "I'm Suzie the evangelist").

1. apostolic grace

People with the apostolic grace are often sent to new places to carry out new assignments. They are supernaturally enabled to build churches and ministries from the ground up and lay solid foundations

of doctrine and leadership. They are graced to teach the Word, cast vision, train others in ministry, set boundaries, and define outcomes. They have God-given strength to persevere through the resistance, persecution, and pain that comes with starting new ministries in new places. They are visionaries who are typically dissatisfied with the status quo. They are inclined to move the mission forward using strategy, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

2. prophetic grace

People with the prophetic grace have a God-given ability to discern and communicate spiritual realities for certain situations. They are called to pray more than usual to seek God's direction. They often perceive unseen spiritual conditions and sense God's leading. They focus on truth and desire that everyone responds to it. They carry a sense of urgency to attend to the things of God. They often hear or discern words (messages) from God that encourage other believers. They are supernaturally graced to apply the Word of God to a moment in time. Sometimes they hear, see, or sense things still in the future.

3. evangelistic grace

People with the evangelistic grace have a supernatural ability to reach new people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. They have unusual confidence when it comes to sharing the gospel, and they believe people will listen. This grace provides them with supernatural reliability and motivation to reach across cultural, economic, class, language, geographical, and generational barriers that impede others. They see opportunities to connect with people that generally go unnoticed. They are also graced to teach, train, equip, and mobilize believers to step out of their comfort zones to engage unbelievers. They inspire other believers to reach out more than they normally would.

4. shepherding/pastoral grace

A person with the shepherding grace has the ability and desire to love, care for, and nurture people. They tend to be sensitive and aware of the needs and feelings of people. They have a God-given desire for people to become healthy and strong and to grow in the Lord. They go out of their way to foster love, meaningful relationships, and unity in the church. They are stabilizers, unifiers, peacemakers, reconcilers, and problem-solvers. Some people with this grace also have a gift to lead, which gives them the ability to develop and refine a church's ministry structure and to appoint and oversee leaders. Many shepherds have also been given the teaching grace, making them shepherd-teachers.

5. teaching grace

The teaching grace provides the God-given capacity to understand spiritual and practical truths, the motivation to find and study those truths in Scripture, and the capability to express truths with such clarity that everyone else understands them as well. Teachers make complex things simple and regularly take time to help other people learn. They are often great counselors because they see how the principles of God's Word apply to real-life situations and they are gifted to communicate those applications. Sometimes the teaching grace provides practical solutions such as organization, systems, and processes to one's personal life, work, and ministry.

Now, imagine what it would be like if all five of these APEST gifts were functioning. If we all used the graces we've received, Jesus' Church as a whole would become stronger and more effective.

the way forward

As important as the five APEST gifts are, the New Testament says surprisingly little about how the gifts should work together. After Jesus taught the 12 apostles for two and a half years, He delegated His leadership to them but provided them with no Standard Operating Procedures Manual, no organizational charts, no job descriptions, and no budget. He told them first to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit and then to make disciples of all nations. That's about it! It's not that Jesus didn't teach them how to do ministry, but there were still many questions that appear to be intentionally unanswered.

For example:

- Who will be the primary leader of the new church?
- What roles will everyone else play?
- How do their gifts and graces work together?
- Who decides who teaches, and when and where?
- Who makes final decisions when we don't agree?

I'm sure you see the point. Jesus intentionally answered certain questions and did not answer others. Okay, then how did the apostles determine what to do? Jesus had already shown His disciples how to pray, how to love and serve each other, how to work together as a team to minister to people, and how to follow the Holy Spirit. So, once He sent the Holy Spirit to empower and guide them, they had all they needed.

The grace that is given to each of the five gifts can be compared to strengths that individual family members may have. Some members of a family may be good at business, some may be good with home maintenance, some may be good at cooking, and some may be good at managing bills and a budget. There is no manual to explain who in the

family is going to play certain roles, or to what extent. A loving family will communicate with one another and figure it out. And some roles may change and adjust from season to season as circumstances change.

Jesus' Church is no different. Jesus wants us to pray, collaborate, and communicate with one another so that every grace and gift is effectively engaged in building His Church and fulfilling the Great Commission.

spiritual factors

The grace God gives each person is sufficient to fulfill their ministry assignments and calling. However, the Bible reveals other factors that will either increase or decrease the scope and/or effectiveness of their ministry. Let's talk about seven of these factors. The first three are not in our control, but the last four factors are completely dependent on our individual choices. Let's review each of them:

• gift combinations

Some of you may recognize characteristics in yourself of more than one of the APEST gifts, but there will likely be one or two that are clearly more prominent than the others. The apostle Paul said he was called to be an apostle and a teacher (2 Timothy 1:11). Shepherd-teacher is a common gift combination of those who pastor churches. If God has called you to function in more than one APEST role, you not only have the grace you need to fulfill those roles, but you'll also have compounded results if you fulfill them well. However, attempting to function with a grace that God has not given you will lead to frustration and disappointment. Remember that you are perfectly designed and equipped to fulfill the ministry roles and assignments God has given you.

• design

In Romans 12:6–8, the Bible lists seven other gifts that are sometimes called “motivational gifts.” You might say the Romans 12 gifts show us how different believers are wired or designed by God. Unlike the five gifts from Jesus in Ephesians 4 which speak of things that we are (e.g., apostles, prophets, evangelists, etc.), the seven gifts in Romans 12 speak of things that we do, namely, 1) prophesy, 2) serve, 3) teach, 4) exhort, 5) give, 6) lead, and 7) show mercy.

Every believer has been given the right mixture of these seven gifts to play their particular APEST role(s) according to God’s plan. These motivational gifts significantly enhance and customize the APEST gifts, making even the same gift look dramatically different in different people. For example, God may give some teachers the grace to lead because they are called by God to lead a house church or ministry for a season. On the other hand, God may give other teachers the grace to exhort because they are called

to be counselors. As with any of the APEST gifts, when the grace to lead is added in, the gift expands exponentially in size and scope. This does not, however, make the grace to lead a better grace than the others.

Notice that two of the seven gifts in Romans 12 correlate with two of the APEST gifts: the gift to prophesy with prophets and the gift to teach with teachers. Prophets are indeed graced to prophesy and teachers to are graced to teach, but listing these two gifts among the seven Romans 12 gifts tells us these two gifts may also be added to other APEST gifts. For example, God gives some shepherds the gift to prophesy but not

*You are
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given you.*

the grace and calling to be a prophet, or God gives some evangelists the gift to teach but not the grace and calling to be a teacher. God will give any grace to any believer to provide the abilities they need to fulfill their assignments. A prophet's grace carries a stronger grace to prophesy than the motivational gift to prophesy. Likewise, a teacher's grace is a stronger grace to teach than the motivational gift to teach.

• **seasons**

Understanding that God works in seasons helps us avoid unnecessary confusion, fear, and disappointment. God often gives us the grace to play a ministry role long before the time we're called to play it. For example, David was anointed by Samuel to be king many years before he was crowned. Jesus lived His life in complete obedience to God for 30 years before it was time for Him to begin His ministry. What does this teach us? That we should be faithful to the assignment God has already given us and not attempt to promote ourselves to a new ministry role, even if we believe we have the grace for it. Being humble and obedient is our responsibility. Promoting us is God's responsibility! First Peter 5:6 says, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you at the proper time" (NASB).

• **spiritual maturity**

There are many aspects of spiritual maturity, but for this conversation let's talk about three that significantly affect a person's progress and fruitfulness: love, obedience, and humility. First, as a person allows God to purify their motives so that they genuinely minister to people out of love for them rather than to be esteemed, rewarded, or fulfilled, they will experience more opportunities, more trust, and better results. Second, as a person obeys God and His Word instead of disobeying, they will not only receive more respect from other believers, but God will also bless their lives and ministries. And third, as one increases in genuine

humility (not a pretense to appear humble) instead of pride, God will stop resisting their prideful intentions and give them more grace to advance their ministry and cover their mistakes and weaknesses.

• **filled with the Spirit**

Another important factor is being filled with the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:18 tells us to be continually filled with the Spirit. Being filled is not a one-time event but a repeated one. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to teach us, to guide us, and to remind us of the things Jesus has said to us in His Word. The Holy Spirit is the power that makes our gifts and graces work. This is why Jesus commanded His apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they were filled with the Spirit. Like gasoline to a gas-powered car, we must continually be filled with the Holy Spirit to fulfill our calling. If we're not, our ministries will sputter.

• **prayer**

God has plans for everyone, and He acts on His plans when we pray. The Bible does not teach that God's will comes to pass automatically. Jesus said, "Ask, and it will be given to you" (Matthew 7:7), and James 4:2 says, "You do not have, because you do not ask." James 5:16 says, "The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results" (NLT). This has nothing to do with gifting or competency. It's simply that God answers us when we pray.

• **faith**

Another significant factor is faith. God has freely given each of us everything we need to fulfill our ministries, but how much do we believe that? Jesus said in Mark 16:17 that "signs will accompany those who believe." People who believe God have the confidence to step out and do what He tells them to do. Jesus also said in Matthew 21:22, "Whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive it all" (NASB),

so God answers prayers of faith. The more we hear and meditate on what God's Word says, the more we believe Him (Romans 10:17).

Do you see what Jesus is doing in this study? He's showing us how to obtain a whole new level of effectiveness—both individually and as a group or church.

God's gifts and calling

Regardless of which grace God has given you or what mistakes you've made in the past, God's calling on your life is still in play. Romans 11:29 says, "The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." This means that right now—today—you have God's grace, and He still wants you to fulfill your calling. God is telling you now through Ephesians 2:10 that you are His workmanship, and you were created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand, that you should walk in them. And Romans 8:31 says, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"

The purpose of Jesus' gifts is to build Jesus' Church to carry out Jesus' Commission. Let's say that together, "The purpose of Jesus' gifts is to build Jesus' Church to carry out Jesus' Commission." And this is what we learn in three foundational studies from BFAM Movements called 1) **Jesus' Gifts**, 2) **Jesus' Church**, and 3) **Jesus' Commission**.

which grace have you been given?

Gift assessment tests can be helpful in determining our gifts and graces, but they're not 100-percent reliable. Gift assessment tests, therefore, should not direct you one way or another but can be helpful in confirming some graces that the Lord has given you. There were no gift assessment

tests in New Testament times, yet the believers were able to determine their gifts through prayer, the help of the Holy Spirit, a sense of their own grace, and trusted leaders and peers. If you'd like to take an APEST gift assessment test, here are two options:

- **Design Discovery (free):**

<https://designdiscovery.com/fivefold-spiritual-gifts-test/>

- **5Q Central (\$10):**

<https://5qcentral.com/tests/>

Before we close, let's discuss a few important questions.

discussion questions

1. In what ways would Jesus' Church be stronger if apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers all played their roles?
2. Why have so many believers not been using their God-given graces? How can we help them resolve that?
3. Does it require humility to receive ministry from another person, especially one who is growing in their grace? Why?
4. How can each of us grow in our maturity and stay filled with the Holy Spirit?
5. If you had to guess at this point, how would you rank your graces from strongest to weakest using a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the strongest? Rank, share, and discuss.

___ Apostolic Grace

___ Prophetic Grace

___ Evangelistic Grace

___ Shepherding (Pastoring) Grace

___ Teaching Grace

weekly checklist

- Read this lesson again this week and make notes for yourself.
- Read God's Word each day and write what God is saying to you (we recommend the Solid Life Reading Plan, which you can find on the BFAM App).
- Pray earnestly each day for God to use you, and pray for His direction.
- Invite other believers to gather to go through Jesus' Gifts, Jesus' Church, and Jesus' Commission.
- Be ready to minister to others when we meet next week.
- Find supplemental messages for this lesson on the BFAM App and at BFAMmovements.com.



lesson two

apos

titles

Welcome back to the Jesus' Gifts group study!

Let's open in prayer and ask God to teach us again about Jesus' Gifts.
[Open in prayer.]

Let's begin by reading our foundational passage, Ephesians 4:7–8 and 11–12:

“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. 8 Therefore it says, ‘When He ascended on high, He led captive the captives, and He gave gifts to people.’ . . . 11 And He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ” (NASB).

Verse 7 says each believer has been given supernatural “grace.” This grace provides us with God-given giftedness and ability to function in one of the five APEST roles. Every believer in the body of Christ has been given supernatural grace to become an apostle, a prophet, an evangelist, a pastor, or a teacher, and possibly a combination of more than one of these gifts.

Now let's look at another passage that is also foundational to our study of Jesus' Gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12:28, the apostle Paul listed three of the five APEST gifts. He said:

“And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues” (NKJV).

Let's notice several important things about this verse:

First, God appointed these gifts “in the church.” This corroborates what Ephesians 4:11–12 says about equipping the saints. This is not meant to imply that the five gifts of Jesus are not involved with the Great Commission—because they are. It simply means that they have been appointed to Jesus' Church, both for their own benefit and to use their graces to strengthen other believers.

Second, Paul lists three of the five gifts—apostles, prophets, and teachers—but then, instead of completing the list with evangelists and shepherds, he lists other kinds of gifts: miracles, gifts of healing, helps, administrations, and varieties of tongues. Though Paul is making another point in this passage—that no one plays every role and has every gift—he also provides insights to us by associating certain gifts of the Spirit (listed in 1 Corinthians 12:7–11) and ministry functions with certain APEST gifts. After apostles, prophets, and teachers, Paul lists miracles and healing, which, as we'll see in Lesson Four, are gifts of the Spirit associated with evangelists (Acts 8:5–7). Next, he lists helps, administrations, and varieties of tongues, which, as we'll see in Lesson Five, are gifts associated with the shepherd or pastor (1 Timothy 3:8–13; 3:1–7; 5:17). Therefore we can see that Paul did not forget about evangelists and shepherds in this passage.

Third, when Paul associates certain gifts of the Spirit with certain APEST gifts, we learn that APEST gifts often function with specific gifts of the Spirit again and again, for example: evangelists with miracles and

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healings. This doesn't mean that they can't operate with other gifts of the Spirit, but rather it means that certain gifts are better suited to assist with their particular APEST grace and calling.

And fourth, God appointed Jesus' gifts in the Church in a certain order. Paul used the words "first," "second," and "third" to clarify that God appointed apostles first, prophets second, and teachers third.

what is an apostle?

Let's ask the question, why would God appoint apostles to the Church first, before prophets, teachers, evangelists, and shepherds? We could also ask, why did Jesus appoint the 12 apostles first? The answer is that apostles are supernaturally graced by God to start and establish new ministries. Take, for example, how the early church in Jerusalem was established so remarkably through the ministry of the 12 apostles. Let's read Acts 2:41–46:

***“Those who received [Peter’s] word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*”**

Notice how extraordinary the launch of the early church was. Not only did three thousand people repent, get baptized in water, and join the first-ever church, but they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, the prayers, sacrificially meeting each other's needs, gathering daily to hear the Word of God, meeting in homes for the Lord's Supper, and winning people to Jesus on a daily basis. How in the world did all of this happen? By the power of the Holy Spirit and the apostolic grace on 12 men! The extraordinary launch of the early church is covered in more detail in the Jesus' Church group study.

Let's read what the apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:9–15:

“For we [apostles] are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s field, God’s building. 10 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. 11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— 13 each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.”

The word **“apostle”** means **“one sent on a mission.”** Similarly, the word **“mission”** comes from a Latin word meaning **“to send.”** This is why apostles are often called missionaries. They are sent by God to establish new ministries in new places or to reestablish ministries in places where they're struggling. Thankfully, apostles and missionaries have continued

to be sent by God since the days of the book of Acts, and God will continue to send them until Jesus returns. An apostle's work is not easy, but it is easier for them than it is for others because of the grace given to them.

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apostles and spiritual gifts

Though the Holy Spirit can empower any believer with any gift of the Spirit, there are certain spiritual gifts that more commonly operate in each of the APEST gifts. Along with grace to teach the Word of God, mobilize people, and organize ministry, God gives apostles additional grace to perform signs and wonders. This doesn't mean that only apostles can walk in signs and wonders. Jesus said in Mark 16:17, "Miraculous signs will accompany [all] those who believe" (NLT). However, the apostolic grace provides an increase of signs and wonders to help apostles capture people's attention, break through resistance to the gospel, and complete difficult assignments. Let's read a few verses that reveal this connection:

Acts 2:43 says, "And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles."

Acts 5:12 says, "Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles."

The apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 12:12, "The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works."

And Acts 19:11 says, "God did extraordinary miracles through Paul" (NIV).

Many people who have the apostolic grace do not realize God wants to empower them with signs and wonders to help them accomplish their assignments. If you have been given the apostolic grace and an apostolic assignment from God, call out to God for signs and wonders to help start and establish new ministries, and then stay filled with the Holy Spirit.

the scope of an apostle

Every apostolic person has specific apostolic assignments. No apostle is called to be everyone's apostle. Some apostolic assignments are small, some are large, and some are in between. If you have this grace, it's important to know the scope of your assignment in each season and not attempt to impose your grace elsewhere. Paul's apostolic assignment was very large, but he knew his boundaries. Consider what he wrote in the following two verses:

“For the same God who worked through Peter as the apostle to the Jews also worked through me as the apostle to the Gentiles” (Galatians 2:8, NLT).

“I have been chosen as a preacher and apostle to teach the Gentiles” (1 Timothy 2:7, NLT).

Paul understood that he was sent to the Gentiles, and every person with the apostolic grace needs to know their boundaries.

grace to suffer

Many people esteem the ministry of an apostle as if it's a level of approval that can be attained by obedience and hard work, but nothing could be

further from the truth. Every grace from God comes by God's choice, not because of good works. God has intentionally assigned grace to each of us to accomplish His purposes.

To fulfill any calling from God requires a certain amount of suffering. Jesus said in Mark 8:34, "If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me" (NASB), and Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:12, "All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." However, it seems apparent in Scripture that apostles are often called to endure a disproportionate share of persecution. No apostle in the New Testament suffered more than Paul. He shared an overview of his sufferings to that point in 2 Corinthians 11:23–33. That was not news to the church at Corinth because he had previously written the following to them in 1 Corinthians 4:9–13:

"I think God has displayed us, the apostles, in last place, like men condemned to die: We have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to people. 10 We are fools for Christ, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! 11 Up to the present hour we are both hungry and thirsty; we are poorly clothed, roughly treated, homeless; 12 we labor, working with our own hands. When we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; 13 when we are slandered, we respond graciously. Even now, we are like the scum of the earth, like everyone's garbage" (CSB).

Someone may ask, how could Paul continue to endure such severe persecution, tribulations, and afflictions? By now the answer should be obvious. He had received the apostolic grace from God.

apostolic grace

Let's summarize what we've learned so far about the apostolic grace and gift. The word "apostle" refers to a person who is sent on a mission. People with the apostolic grace are often sent to new places to carry out new assignments. They are supernaturally enabled to build churches and ministries from the ground up and lay solid foundations of doctrine and leadership. For this purpose, they often have a good measure of the other APEST graces. They are graced to teach the Word of God, cast vision, train others in ministry, set boundaries, and define outcomes. They have God-given strength to persevere through the resistance, persecution, and pain that comes with starting new ministries in new places.

On the other hand, their grace includes God performing signs and wonders to capture people's attention and break through resistance to the gospel. This grace is vital for the multiplication of disciples and churches. People with the apostolic grace retain an acute awareness of the purpose of the mission and help others understand it and stay on track. They are visionaries who are typically dissatisfied with the status quo. They are inclined to move the mission forward using strategy, innovation, and entrepreneurship. They have an unusual understanding of the many dynamics and components of a ministry and regularly inspire other believers to do their part.

other graces and factors

No apostle has only apostolic grace. Every person with the apostolic grace—including the examples we see in the Bible—also has graces of other APEST gifts, some more and some less. These additional graces enhance and strengthen their apostolic grace in varying ways depending on which of the other graces they have. And not only that, but every person with the apostolic grace has also been given some of the Romans 12 motivational gifts which enable them to prophesy, serve, teach, exhort, give, lead, or

show mercy. God has given each of us the perfect combination of graces and gifts to complete our assignments and fulfill our calling.

Remember that the progress and fruitfulness of an apostle's life and ministry will be either accelerated or hindered by their spiritual life. To see supernatural results they must:

- serve with pure motives of love.
- be obedient to God and His Word.
- be humble and not prideful.
- collaborate with others instead of competing with them.
- pray earnestly and in faith.

*No
apostle
has only
apostolic
grace.*

But there is one more thing, and it's important. Jesus told the 12 apostles to be filled (baptized) with the Holy Spirit before launching into ministry (Acts 1:4–5, 8). Like gasoline to a gas-powered car, it is the power of the Holy Spirit that makes the APEST gifts work as they should. If you have not yet received the fulness of the Holy Spirit, ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13), and then continue to stay filled with the Spirit (this is explained more thoroughly in Jesus' Church Lesson Two).

Jesus: The Apostle

Jesus embodied all five of the APEST gifts, including that of an apostle. Here are a few reasons we know this to be true:

First, Jesus was "sent on a mission." He said in John 3:17, "God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him."

Second, Jesus performed the signs of an apostle. John 2:23 says,

“Many believed in His name when they saw the signs that [Jesus] was doing.”

Third, Jesus suffered greatly to fulfill His apostolic assignment. Matthew 16:21 says, “Jesus began to tell His disciples plainly that it was necessary for Him to go to Jerusalem, and that He would suffer many terrible things . . . and be killed.”

And last, Hebrews 3:1 clearly states, “Consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession.”

why we need apostles today

There is a desperate need for people with the apostolic grace today. In most nations of the world, people are being born faster than people are being born again. We need people with apostolic grace to inspire us to see the big picture, help us go into new territories, and reach new people groups. We need them to help launch disciple-making movements (DMMs).

If you have received the apostolic grace, God is calling you to help advance His kingdom in many ways, including:

1. To find and make disciples and train others to do the same (see the Jesus' Commission group study).
2. To form new discipling communities and train others to do the same.
3. To turn discipling communities into new house churches and train others to do the same.
4. To plant, organize, and establish other new ministries that multiply disciples and churches.

5. To lay solid foundations for ministry on Jesus Christ and the Word of God.
6. To train and appoint shepherds (pastors) over new churches and ministries.
7. To call, train, and mobilize believers for the work of ministry.
8. To go to new territories and nations to reach new people groups and start DMMs and inspire others to do the same.
9. To expand your current campus-style church or ministry to become a DMM.
10. To help other pastors transition their campus-style churches or ministries to DMMs.

Many pastors in campus-style churches are recognizing that they have an apostolic grace and are called to multiply. Helping these leaders is a significant part of the vision of BFAM Movements, which provides support and free resources through the BFAM App and at BFAMmovements.com.

God's gifts and calling

Keep in mind, regardless of which grace God has given you or what mistakes you've made in the past, God's calling on your life is still in play. Romans 11:29 says, "The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." This means that right now—today—you have God's grace, and He still wants you to fulfill your calling. God is saying to you now what He said in Jeremiah 29:11, "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'" (NIV). And Romans 8:31 says, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"

The purpose of Jesus' gifts is to build Jesus' Church to carry out Jesus' Commission. And this is what we learn in three foundational studies from BFAM Movements called 1) **Jesus' Gifts**, 2) **Jesus' Church**, and 3) **Jesus' Commission**.

read and discuss

Since Jesus' Church was just getting started when it was written, the book of Acts is filled with apostolic ministry. Before we close, let's read a passage from Acts and discuss the apostolic ministries of Paul and Barnabas. Pay close attention to the characteristics of the apostolic grace. Let's read from Acts 14:

***“Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. 2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. 3 So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. 4 But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles. 5 When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, 6 they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country, 7 and there they continued to preach the gospel. 8 Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked. 9 He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, 10 said in a loud voice, ‘Stand upright on your feet.’ And he sprang up and began walking. . . . 19 But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out*”**

of the city, supposing that he was dead. 20 But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. 21 When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. 23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed. 24 Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. 25 And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia, 26 and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled. 27 And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. 28 And they remained no little time with the disciples.

discussion questions

1. What characteristics and assignments of the apostolic grace can you identify in this passage?
2. What verses show us that Paul and Barnabas 1) made disciples? 2) appointed elders (shepherds) to new churches?
3. What things did Paul and Barnabas have to endure to carry out their ministries?
4. How can we help those with the apostolic grace to step out in their calling?
5. Can we identify characteristics of the apostolic grace in ourselves or anyone in our group?

Pray for those who feel they have the apostolic grace

(see Weekly Checklist on next page)

weekly checklist

- Read this lesson again this week and make notes for yourself.
- Read God's Word each day and write what God is saying to you (we recommend the Solid Life Reading Plan, which you can find on the BFAM App).
- Pray earnestly each day for God to use you, and pray for His direction.
- Invite other believers to gather to go through Jesus' Gifts, Jesus' Church, and Jesus' Commission.
- Be ready to minister to others when we meet next week.
- Find supplemental messages for this lesson on the BFAM App and at [BFAMmovements.com](https://www.bfammovements.com).



lesson three

prop

hets

Welcome back to the Jesus' Gifts group study!

Let's open in prayer and ask God to teach us again about Jesus' Gifts.
[Open in prayer.]

Let's begin by reading our foundational passage, Ephesians 4:7–8 and 11–12:

“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. 8 Therefore it says, ‘When He ascended on high, He led captive the captives, and He gave gifts to people.’ . . . 11 And He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ” (NASB).

Verse 7 says each believer has been given supernatural “grace.” This grace provides us with God-given giftedness and ability to function in one of the five APEST roles. Every believer in the body of Christ has been given supernatural grace to become an apostle, a prophet, an evangelist, a pastor, or a teacher, and possibly a combination of more than one of these gifts.

second prophets

Now let's look again at 1 Corinthians 12:28, another foundational passage in this study, where the apostle Paul listed three of the five gifts by name and listed the other two by characteristics of their function. Here's what he said:

“And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues” (NKJV).

Notice that the order of the first two gifts in both the Ephesians 4:11 list and the 1 Corinthians 12:28 list is identical. Apostles are listed first and prophets are second. And 1 Corinthians even uses the words “first” and “second,” confirming that the order is intentional. So let’s ask, why would God appoint apostles to Jesus’ Church first and appoint prophets second? Let’s read something Paul said in Ephesians 2:19–20:

*Each
believer has
been given
supernatural
grace.*

“You are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone.”

This tells us that Jesus gave apostles and prophets first to lay a firm foundation for His Church. The apostles and prophets Paul is writing about certainly include those in the first century who were used by God to write Scripture. Through the inspired writings of these apostles and prophets, God provided the New Testament as the foundational teaching for the entire Church. This explains how God used them to lay the foundation for Jesus’ Church and why these particular apostles and prophets are unquestionably in a category all their own. However, there is no scriptural reason to assume that once the New Testament was completed God discontinued His use of this dynamic duo (apostles and prophets).

Though circumstances and assignments have changed, there is no reason to believe that the functions of apostles and prophets have changed, except that now they can use the written New Testament to lay firm foundations for churches and ministries.

old testament prophets

Though the general functions of all five of Jesus' gifts are present in Old Testament Scripture, only the roles of prophets, shepherds, and teachers are mentioned by the same titles. And no Old Testament role is more esteemed than that of a prophet. Amos 3:7 says, "Certainly the Lord GOD does nothing unless He reveals His secret plan to His servants the prophets" (NASB). The earliest Old Testament prophets were called "seers" (1 Samuel 9:9) because God allowed prophets to see the spiritual realities of current and future events. People in Old Testament times were neither born again nor filled with the Holy Spirit, and they had limited access to the Scriptures. So when they really needed to receive direction from God, they would sometimes take a gift and travel to wherever a prophet was staying and ask him or her to inquire of the Lord for them (1 Samuel 9:3–9).

Sometimes God didn't wait for people to come to a prophet, especially when He had an important message for them. In these cases, God would send a prophet to them. There are many examples of this in the Old Testament, especially in the 17 prophetic books from Isaiah to Malachi. This general process of receiving direction and answers from God through prophets continued until the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. Once the Holy Spirit was poured out, there was no need for everyone to seek the counsel of a prophet because every believer had access to the same Spirit of God.

new testament prophets

New Testament prophets—which would include all prophets from Acts 2 until today—have similarities to Old Testament prophets, but there are also significant and important differences. One similarity is the call to spend unusual amounts of time praying and seeking God for direction.

The differences in Old Testament and New Testament prophets' roles stem primarily from three New Testament realities that did not exist in former times. First, we now have the Scriptures, including the New Testament, available to teach and guide us. Second, every true believer in Christ is born again and therefore has the Holy Spirit living in them. And third, now that the Holy Spirit has been poured out, every believer can prophesy, especially those with the prophetic grace.

This is why the New Testament does not teach believers to seek out prophets for direction, but rather it teaches us to seek direction from God Himself (James 1:5). And further, New Testament prophets should not foster dependencies on themselves or their grace, but rather they should use their grace to confirm and add to what God is already speaking through His Word and by His Spirit.

Another distinction of New Testament prophets is how many there are. Old Testament prophets were rare, but God has given the prophetic grace to many people in the New Testament. Let's look at two short passages that will help demonstrate this. Though he's not speaking only of prophets, let's begin with something Peter said in Acts 2:16–18:

“This is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: 17 ‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; 18 even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.’”

The contrast from Old Testament prophets to all believers being able to prophesy was a real game-changer. Prophecy became very common in New

Testament churches. In fact, let's read something very telling in 1 Corinthians 14:29. Paul was giving instructions to believers in Corinth about how the gifts of the Spirit should function in their house churches when he made this statement: *"Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge."* Paul was telling these house churches not to allow prophets to speak their prophecies with no end in sight but rather to pause after two or three prophets speak to allow the other prophets to judge those prophecies. Wait a minute—two or three prophets speak and the others judge? How many prophets were there in each of these house churches? Evidently, there were at least several.

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This simple instruction provides us with at least three important insights. First, the gifts Jesus has given to His Church include enough people with the prophetic grace for every church—large or small—to have some. Second, we should make room in our services for prophetic messages to be shared, particularly in smaller gatherings such as a house church. Third, prophecies should not automatically be received; they should first be judged to determine whether they are in alignment with God's written Word, and if so, whether the Holy Spirit bears witness in our spirits that God is speaking that message to us today. When churches and church leaders learn to follow these instructions lovingly and regularly, everyone in the church learns how to discern a message from God and deliver it accurately. They also learn how to judge prophecies.

This also tells us that people with the prophetic grace must deliver their prophecies with humility and meekness, allowing their prophecies to be judged by others. If their prophecy is judged to be inaccurate or not from

the Lord, they should acknowledge that and humbly receive instruction. Character is of utmost importance for all of the APEST gifts. When prophets do not walk in love, grace, humility, and obedience to God and His Word, their prophetic ministries are unnecessarily limited, and their credibility suffers.

all can prophesy

The Bible also teaches us that every believer can prophesy, not only those with the prophetic grace. Remember what God said through the prophet Joel, “I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and your daughters will prophesy” (Joel 2:28, NASB). And 1 Corinthians 14:31 says, “You can all prophesy one by one.” How is this possible? It’s possible if we are filled with the Holy Spirit. Therefore, prophecy should not be limited to those with the prophetic grace (prophets) but can come through anyone— young or old—who has been filled with God’s Spirit.

prophets and spiritual gifts

Though the Holy Spirit can empower any believer with any gift of the Spirit, there are certain spiritual gifts that more commonly operate in each of the APEST gifts. The gifts of the Spirit commonly used by prophets are primarily those that discern and speak messages from God, including prophecy, words of wisdom, words of knowledge, and discerning of spirits (1 Corinthians 12:7–8). Let’s briefly look at examples of each of these in the New Testament:

Exhorting Prophecy

First Corinthians 14:3 says, “The one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort” (NIV). Acts 15:32 is an example of prophets doing this. It says, “Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words.” The phrase “many words” refers to many prophetic words.

Future Prophecy

Acts 11:27–28 says, “In those days some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them, named Agabus, stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine throughout the Roman world. This took place during the reign of Claudius” (CSB). This passage shows us that a prophet named Agabus accurately prophesied a widespread famine.

Words of Wisdom

Acts 13:1–2 says, “Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers . . . While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’” Similar to prophecy, the word of wisdom is a supernatural and timely message of God’s wisdom. It reveals what God is telling us to do in a certain situation and usually includes direction.

Words of Knowledge

In Acts 20:23, Paul said, “In every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me” (NIV). How did Paul know that prison and hardships were facing him? Because in every city the Holy Spirit was giving believers supernatural words of knowledge about what awaited Paul.

Discerning of Spirits

Discerning of spirits is the supernatural ability to see or distinguish spirits, including angels and demons, in the unseen realm. In Acts 27:23–24, Paul revealed that he had seen an angel when he said, “This very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, and he said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar.’” Acts 16:16–18 gives us an example of Paul discerning a spirit of divination in a slave girl and commanding it to come out in the name of Jesus Christ, and it came out.

Though these are commonly used gifts, those with the prophetic grace should ask God to fill them afresh with His Spirit and to use them with the best gifts for each situation.

the scope of new testament prophets

Unlike in the Old Testament when prophets were rare, there are many believers today who have received the prophetic grace. Though the Holy Spirit is able to speak through any prophet anywhere and at any time, the scope of most prophetically graced people is local and often in or near their own church. Paul mentioned this in his instructions to house churches in 1 Corinthians 14:29 when he said, “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.”

God does, however, give some New Testament prophets a larger scope of ministry. The prophet Agabus seems to be an example of this (Acts 11:28; 21:10–11).

First Peter 5:5–6 says, “Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time” (CSB).

The prophetic grace can give place to pride because people want to know what God is saying and therefore want to know anyone who can tell them what God is saying. However, the moment a prophet begins to think more about how their prophetic grace will benefit themselves rather than how it will help the people they are ministering to, they will be tempted to alter the messages God gives them to gain some advantage or esteem. This is a serious violation of the ministry of the prophet, and it will be met with resistance from God. Prophetically graced people who remain humble and speak only what God says over a period of many years will become more trusted. This is why it's important for everyone with the prophetic grace to stay humble before God and to remain anchored in a church with mature leaders around them.

prophetic grace

Let's summarize what we've studied so far. People with the prophetic grace have a God-given ability to discern and communicate spiritual realities for certain situations and communities. They are called to pray more than usual to seek God's direction. They often perceive unseen spiritual conditions such as the heart and mind of God, attacks and strategies of the devil, and a sense of God's leading. Things they sense can motivate them to ask questions, identify concerns, or suggest that a person or ministry should move in a particular direction. They carry a sense of urgency to attend to the things of God. They often hear or discern words (messages) from God that encourage, strengthen, and comfort other believers. They often discern how a certain passage of scripture applies to a particular season or moment in time.

People with the prophetic grace hear, see, or sense things still in the future. They are often used by God through words of wisdom, words of knowledge, discerning of spirits, and prophecy. Sometimes they receive insights from

God through visions or dreams. They influence other believers to be more sensitive to what God is saying and to prioritize it. They often work very closely with people with the apostolic grace to help bring spiritual health and vitality to a church or ministry.

other graces and factors

No prophet has only prophetic grace. Every person with the prophetic grace—including the examples we see in the Bible—also has graces of other APEST gifts, some more and some less. These additional graces enhance and strengthen their prophetic grace in varying ways depending on which of the other graces they have. And not only that, but every person with the prophetic grace has also been given some of the Romans 12 motivational gifts which enable them to serve, teach, exhort, give, lead, or show mercy. God has given each of us the perfect combination of graces and gifts to complete our assignments and fulfill our calling.

Remember that the progress and fruitfulness of an prophet's life and ministry will be either accelerated or hindered by their spiritual life. To see supernatural results they must:

- serve with pure motives of love.
- be obedient to God and His Word.
- be humble and not prideful.
- collaborate with others instead of competing with them.
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But there is one more thing, and it's important. Jesus told the 12 apostles to be filled (baptized) with the Holy Spirit before launching into ministry (Acts 1:4–5, 8). Like gasoline to a gas-powered car, it is the power of the Holy Spirit that makes the APEST gifts work as they should. If you have

not yet received the fulness of the Holy Spirit, ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13), and then continue to stay filled with the Spirit (this is explained more thoroughly in Jesus' Church Lesson Two).

Jesus: The Prophet

As with the other APEST gifts, Jesus was a prophet, and He Himself affirmed this on more than one occasion. For example, when He was traveling back to Jerusalem where He would be crucified, He told His disciples in Luke 13:33, "I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!" (NIV). After He was rejected in His hometown of Nazareth, He said in Matthew 13:57, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown."

why we need prophets today

There is a great need for people with the prophetic grace today. Darkness, confusion, and despair are on the rise, both in the world and in the Church. On the other hand, hearing from God brings light, peace, clarity, and confidence. This is why the prophetic grace is so valuable.

If you have received the prophetic grace, God is calling you to help advance His kingdom in many ways, including:

1. To pray earnestly, read the Scriptures, and learn to hear and discern God's voice.
2. To prophetically speak encouragement and wisdom from God to other believers with love.
3. To help other believers learn to hear God's voice through prayer and reading God's Word.
4. To help other believers accurately share, receive and judge prophecies according to the Word of God.

5. To equip and train others who have the prophetic grace, who will go on to equip and train others.
6. To find and make disciples and train others to do the same (see the Jesus' Commission group study).
7. To help plant, organize, and establish new churches and ministries that multiply disciples and churches.
8. To partner with apostolic leaders and other APEST graces to lay solid foundations for ministry on Jesus Christ and the Word of God.
9. To inspire others to see the big picture and go into new territories and nations to reach new people groups.
10. To partner with apostolic leaders and other APEST graces to help start disciple-making movements (DMMs).

Many pastors in campus-style churches are recognizing that they have an apostolic grace and are called to multiply. Helping these leaders is a significant part of the vision of BFAM Movements, which provides support and free resources through the BFAM App and at BFAMmovements.com.

God's gifts and calling

And let's remember, regardless of which grace God has given you or what mistakes you've made in the past, God's calling on your life is still in play. Romans 11:29 says, "The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." This means that right now—today—you have God's grace, and He still wants you to fulfill your calling. God is saying to you now what He said to the children of Israel in Isaiah 43:1: "This is what the LORD says— the One who created you . . . and the One who formed you . . . 'Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine'" (CSB). And Romans 8:31 says, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"

The purpose of Jesus' gifts is to build Jesus' Church to carry out Jesus' Commission. And this is what we learn in three foundational studies from BFAM Movements called 1) **Jesus' Gifts**, 2) **Jesus' Church**, and 3) **Jesus' Commission**.

read and discuss

Before we close, let's read a passage and discuss how God used some prophets to reveal His direction for the church in Antioch. Let's read Acts 13:1-4:

“Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ 3 Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. 4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.”

discussion questions

1. What were the prophets and teachers doing in this passage, and why?
2. What did the Holy Spirit do as a result of these prophets and teachers worshiping the Lord and fasting?
3. What insights can we draw from this passage about prophetically graced people?
4. How can we help those with the prophetic grace to step out in their calling?

(continued on next page)

5. Can we identify characteristics of the prophetic grace in ourselves or anyone in our group?

Pray for those who feel they have the prophetic grace.

weekly checklist

- Read this lesson again this week and make notes for yourself.
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- Pray earnestly each day for God to use you, and pray for His direction.
- Invite other believers to gather to go through Jesus' Gifts, Jesus' Church, and Jesus' Commission.
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- Find supplemental messages for this lesson on the BFAM App and at BFAMmovements.com.



lesson four

evang

elists

Welcome back to the Jesus' Gifts group study!

Let's open in prayer and ask God to teach us again about Jesus' Gifts.
[Open in prayer.]

Let's begin by reading our foundational passage, Ephesians 4:7-8 and 11-12:

“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. 8 Therefore it says, ‘When He ascended on high, He led captive the captives, and He gave gifts to people.’ . . . 11 And He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ” (NASB).

Verse 7 says each believer has been given supernatural “grace.” This grace provides us with God-given giftedness and ability to function in one of the five APEST roles. Every believer in the body of Christ has been given supernatural grace to become an apostle, a prophet, an evangelist, a pastor, or a teacher, and possibly a combination of more than one of these gifts.

what is an evangelist?

The role of an evangelist is more difficult to distinguish in the New Testament than the other four APEST roles for two reasons: 1) only one person is clearly called an evangelist, and 2) almost everyone did the work of evangelism. Since Philip is the only person named as an evangelist, it makes sense to begin this lesson by studying his ministry. Let's look at the passage that assigns Philip the title of evangelist. Let's read Acts 21:8:

“Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven.”

This passage distinguishes Philip the evangelist from the apostle Philip by calling him “the evangelist” and naming him as “one of the Seven,” who were deacons chosen to serve tables in Acts 6.

In the Greek, the word “evangelist” is derived from the verb that is translated “to preach the gospel” (good news). The primary role of an evangelist is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ so that people are saved. This aligns perfectly with what we see in Philip’s ministry. Let’s read about him in Acts 8:5–8:

“Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. 6 And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city. 9 But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, 10 to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, ‘This man is the great power of God.’ 11 And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time. 12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. 13 Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done. 14 Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard

that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, 15 who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16 For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit” (NKJV).

This passage teaches us many things about the ministry of Philip and evangelists. Let’s walk through some of them:

- Verse 5 says that Philip “preached Christ to them.” It takes confidence to go into a new city and proclaim the gospel openly, but that’s what Philip did. This supernatural confidence comes with the evangelistic grace.
- Verse 6 says that “multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.” These also are characteristics of the evangelistic grace.
- Verse 7 says, “Unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed.” Miracles captivate people’s attention and make them want to listen, but it is uncomfortable to be around demonic activity, especially if the demons are crying out. However, this kind of power demonstration spreads quickly through a city, and God uses it to draw people.
- Verse 8 tells us, “There was great joy in that city.” The ministry grace of an evangelist can completely change the atmosphere in a city, neighborhood, school, or company. The combination of the gospel, the miracles, and the people talking about the testimonies brings a sense of relief and optimism.

- Verses 9–11 tell us that the city of Samaria had been deceived by a sorcerer named Simon who performed signs of his own. However, Simon could not match the miracles performed by Philip. Why? Because Simon was operating with demonic power, but Philip was operating by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Verse 12 tells us the people of Samaria believed the message Philip preached about Jesus so much they were willing to repent and be baptized in water to make Jesus their Lord.
- Verse 13 says, “Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.” Think about that: When the leading sorcerer of a city repents, gets saved, and starts following the evangelist around like a little puppy, don’t you think many others will follow?

Let’s stop and ask, how did this happen? By the Holy Spirit and the powerful grace of an evangelist!

People who have been given this grace and put it to work can make a huge impact on other people, sometimes on large amounts of people. Imagine what will happen when the evangelistically graced people realize how powerful and important their grace is and begin stepping out to use it.

- Verses 14–17 tell us, “When the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who . . . prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.” Philip did a great job winning people in Samaria to the Lord, but apparently he didn’t teach them to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It wasn’t until Peter and John arrived that the people of

Samaria were filled with the Holy Spirit. And now you see the genius of Jesus: Where the strength of one grace diminishes, another grace shines. Evangelists can and should help people be filled with the Spirit. However, this is a wonderful picture of how we all work together to bring the whole ministry of Jesus.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 12:28:

“And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues” (NKJV).

Notice again that after listing three of the five APEST gifts, Paul then lists miracles and gifts of healings instead of evangelists or shepherds. This, along with the miracles and healings in Philip's ministry, helps us understand that grace for miracles and healings comes with the evangelistic grace. Though the Holy Spirit can empower any believer with any gift of the Spirit, there are certain spiritual gifts that more commonly operate in each of the APEST gifts. The gifts of the Spirit commonly used by evangelists are gifts of healings, working of miracles, and faith. These three gifts are often referred to as “the power gifts.” They not only help people; they also captivate the attention of many and draw them to hear the gospel. If you have the evangelistic grace, ask God to fill you with His Spirit and use you with the best gifts for each situation.

the scope of an evangelist

Since people with the evangelistic grace are called to evangelize—preach the gospel to unsaved people—a good portion of their ministry will happen outside of a church. This was very evident in the ministry of Philip. Not only did he minister powerfully in Samaria, a city without a church, but Acts

8:26 tells us that the Holy Spirit led him out into the desert to minister to one man (Acts 8:26). Acts 8:40 also tells us that Philip “preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.”

Though Philip is the only person in the New Testament to be named an evangelist, there were certainly others who had been given the grace to evangelize, whether as their primary or secondary calling.

One example could be the apostle Paul. In 2 Timothy 1:11, Paul said:

“I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles: (NKJV).”

Notice that Paul says, “I was appointed.” He’s telling us that these were not merely things he decided to do, but that these were things he was appointed to do. Paul lists three specific roles that God appointed him to play. The roles of apostle and teacher are easily identified as two of the APEST gifts, but what about the first role he listed? Paul said clearly, “I was appointed a preacher.” So what’s a preacher?

The Greek word translated “preacher” means a herald, a proclaimer, or a preacher. It’s the noun form of the same word Luke used in Acts 8:5 to describe what Philip did in Samaria—he “preached.” Now think about this: If Paul had merely told us that he preached to the Gentiles, we probably wouldn’t wonder if he had the grace of an evangelist because every believer is called to preach the gospel to all creation (Mark 16:15). But for Paul to say, “I was appointed a preacher,” and further, “I was appointed a preacher . . . of the Gentiles” tells us that this was not an assignment he shared with every believer but rather a specific appointment and calling from God. Paul was appointed as a preacher, a proclaimer, and a herald

to share the gospel with the Gentiles. Since an evangelist is a preacher, a proclaimer, and a herald to unbelievers, the apostle Paul may well have been an evangelist-apostle-teacher.

To this point we've focused on the evangelist's ministry outside the church, but those with the evangelistic grace are also called to minister to believers. Let's read Ephesians 4:11-12 again:

“[Jesus] gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry” (NASB).

An evangelist is a preacher, a proclaimer, and a herald to unbelievers.

The evangelist is called and graced to equip believers for the work of ministry just as much as any of the other four APEST gifts. What could a person with the evangelistic grace equip other believers to do? There are many things, but equipping people to preach the gospel and win the lost would certainly be high priorities. Every member of every church needs coaching, training, equipping, and encouragement to carry out Jesus' Commission.

Let's read what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 9:19-22:

“Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under

the law), so as to win those under the law. 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some" (NIV).

Now what does that sound like? It sounds like an evangelist teaching other believers how to evangelize different kinds of people. We should also mention that Paul instructed Timothy to “do the work of an evangelist” (2 Timothy 4:5).

So not only did Paul evangelize, but he also taught believers how to evangelize and carry out the Great Commission. And since Jesus commanded all believers to preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations, we know that it is not the sole responsibility of evangelists to reach and disciple everyone—that responsibility belongs to every believer in the body of Christ.

evangelistic grace

Let's summarize what we've studied so far. People with the evangelistic grace have a supernatural ability to reach new people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. They have unusual confidence when it comes to sharing the gospel, and they believe people will listen. This grace provides them with supernatural relatability and motivation to reach across cultural, economic, class, language, geographical, and generational barriers that impede others. They see opportunities to connect with people that generally go unnoticed. The evangelistic grace includes increased support from God to perform miracles and healings both to help people and to get their

attention and draw them to hear the gospel. They are also graced to teach, train, equip, and mobilize believers to step out of their comfort zones to engage unbelievers. The evangelistic grace fosters an urgency to win and disciple people, keeping the Great Commission in focus. When a person who is functioning in the evangelistic grace is around, their enthusiasm is contagious and it inspires other believers to reach out more than they normally would.

other graces and factors

No evangelist has only evangelistic grace. Every person with the evangelistic grace—including the examples we see in the Bible—also has graces of other APEST gifts, some more and some less. These additional graces enhance and strengthen their evangelistic grace in varying ways depending on which of the other graces they have. And not only that, but every person with the evangelistic grace has also been given some of the Romans 12 motivational gifts which enable them to prophesy, serve, teach, exhort, give, lead, or show mercy. God has given each of us the perfect combination of graces and gifts to complete our assignments and fulfill our calling.

Remember that the progress and fruitfulness of an evangelist's life and ministry will be either accelerated or hindered by their spiritual life. To see supernatural results they must:

- serve with pure motives of love.
- be obedient to God and His Word.
- be humble and not prideful.
- collaborate with others instead of competing with them.
- pray earnestly and in faith.

But there is one more thing, and it's important. Jesus told the 12 apostles to be filled (baptized) with the Holy Spirit before launching into ministry (Acts 1:4–5, 8). Like gasoline to a gas-powered car, it is the power of the Holy Spirit that makes the APEST gifts work as they should. If you have not yet received the fulness of the Holy Spirit, ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13), and then continue to stay filled with the Spirit (this is explained more thoroughly in Jesus' Church Lesson Two).

Jesus: The Evangelist

The ministry of the evangelist was a component of the ministry of Jesus. Let's read a few verses that illustrate Jesus' evangelistic grace and calling:

Luke 19:10 says, "The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Matthew 4:23–24 says, "Now Jesus began to go all over Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. 24 Then the news about Him spread throughout Syria. So they brought to Him all those who were afflicted, those suffering from various diseases and intense pains, the demon-possessed, the epileptics, and the paralytics. And He healed them" (CSB).

And Jesus told some of His disciples in Mark 1:17, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men."

So it is evident that Jesus not only carried out the ministry of an evangelist by preaching the gospel, but He also performed miracles and healings and taught believers to evangelize.

why we need evangelists today

In Lesson One we learned that Jesus gave gifts to build His Church to reach the world. People with the evangelistic grace are uniquely gifted to teach, train, equip, and mobilize believers to reach the lost. And with billions of people still lost and Jesus coming soon, there is an urgent and enormous need for people with the evangelistic grace to reach the lost and equip the Church to do the same.

If you have received the evangelistic grace, God is calling you to help advance His kingdom in many ways, including:

1. To develop a lifestyle of evangelizing unbelievers.
2. To be available to go wherever God leads to reach new people with the gospel.
3. To gather new believers into discipling communities that can become new churches.
4. To find and/or develop effective materials to teach and train believers to evangelize people.
5. To teach and train people in how to pray and believe God for miracles.
6. To train believers to form discipling communities.
7. To equip and train others with the evangelistic grace, who will go on to equip and train others.
8. To partner with shepherds and other leaders to build evangelism and training into a church or ministry.
9. To partner with apostolic leaders and other APEST graces to start DMMs.
10. To inspire others to prioritize the Great Commission.

Many pastors in campus-style churches are recognizing that they have an apostolic grace and are called to multiply. Helping these leaders is a significant part of the vision of BFAM Movements, which provides support and free resources through the BFAM App and at BFAMmovements.com.

God's gifts and calling

And don't forget, regardless of which grace God has given you or what mistakes you've made in the past, God's calling on your life is still in play. Romans 11:29 says, "The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." This means that right now—today—you have God's grace, and He still wants you to fulfill your calling. God is saying to you now what He said in Joshua 1:5, "No one will be able to oppose you all the days of your life" (NASB). And Romans 8:31 says, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"

The purpose of Jesus' gifts is to build Jesus' Church to carry out Jesus' Commission. And this is what we learn in three foundational studies from BFAM Movements called 1) **Jesus' Gifts**, 2) **Jesus' Church**, and 3) **Jesus' Commission**.

read and discuss

Before we close, let's read and discuss one more passage about Philip. Let's read Acts 8:26–40:

"Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' This is a desert place. 27 And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship 28 and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 And the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over and join this chariot.' 30 So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' 31 And he said, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited

Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: 'Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. 33 In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.' 34 And the eunuch said to Philip, 'About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. 36 And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, 'See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?' 38 And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39 And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea."

discussion questions

1. How many people did God lead Philip to reach in the desert? What does this teach us about the grace of an evangelist and the heart of God?
2. What supernatural things do we see in this passage?
3. What can we learn about evangelism from the way Philip ministered to this man?
4. What does verse 40 teach us about the ministry of an evangelist?

(continued on next page)

5. How can we help those with the evangelistic grace to step out in their calling?
6. Can we identify characteristics of the evangelistic grace in ourselves or anyone in our group?

Pray for those who feel they have the evangelistic grace.

weekly checklist

- Read this lesson again this week and make notes for yourself.
- Read God's Word each day and write what God is saying to you (we recommend the Solid Life Reading Plan, which you can find on the BFAM App).
- Pray earnestly each day for God to use you, and pray for His direction.
- Invite other believers to gather to go through Jesus' Gifts, Jesus' Church, and Jesus' Commission.
- Be ready to minister to others when we meet next week.
- Find supplemental messages for this lesson on the BFAM App and at BFAMmovements.com.



lesson five

shep

herds

Welcome back to the Jesus' Gifts group study!

Let's open in prayer and ask God to teach us again about Jesus' Gifts.
[Open in prayer.]

Let's begin by reading our foundational passage, Ephesians 4:7–8 and 11–12:

“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. 8 Therefore it says, ‘When He ascended on high, He led captive the captives, and He gave gifts to people.’ . . . 11 And He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ” (NASB).

Verse 7 says each believer has been given supernatural “grace.” This grace provides us with God-given giftedness and ability to function in one of the five APEST roles. Every believer in the body of Christ has been given supernatural grace to become an apostle, a prophet, an evangelist, a pastor, or a teacher, and possibly a combination of more than one of these gifts.

what is a shepherd?

The Greek word translated “pastor” in Ephesians 4:11 is translated “shepherd” the other 17 times it occurs in the New Testament. Some translations, such as the ESV, use “shepherd” all 18 times to be consistent. So, according to the New Testament, pastors are shepherds.

Let's read Ephesians 4:11 in the ESV:

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers.”

Notice that the word “the” appears before each of the APEST gifts with the exception of one: teachers. That’s because the definite article in the Greek text is missing before teachers and replaced with “and.” This causes the last two gifts to read, “the pastors and teachers.” The absence of the definite article before teachers indicates a close connection between shepherds and teachers. This is because people in churches both need to be shepherded (cared for), and they need to be taught (fed spiritually). For this reason God has given many pastors of churches both the shepherding grace and the teaching grace, making them “shepherd-teachers” or “pastor-teachers.” Pastors who have the shepherding grace but not the teaching grace need teachers to partner with them to lead a healthy church. On the other hand, pastors who have the teaching grace but not the shepherding grace need shepherds to partner with them to lead a healthy church.

Though these two graces are closely connected, they also have distinct functions. We’ll study the teaching grace in the next lesson, so let’s continue our study of the shepherding grace.

The word “shepherd” is a favorite term Jesus used to express His own relationship with the Church, His sheep (John 10:14). It is therefore natural that Jesus would use the word “shepherd” when identifying those He entrusts with the care of His flock. In addition to being the most accurate English word, another benefit of using the word

*God's care
for David
helped him
understand
how to
be a good
shepherd.*

“shepherd” instead of “pastor” is that the title of pastor has been overused and often given to people who don’t have the shepherding grace.

Most people today do not understand the close, trusting relationship that exists between shepherds and their sheep. The word “shepherd” expresses both the loving care and mutual reliance that should exist between the spiritual leaders of a church and their people. Someone with the shepherding grace will have a God-given inclination to love, feed, heal, nurture, support, and protect people—with or without a title or position. The role of a shepherd in Jesus’ Church is to do these things for believers, especially for the believers they are responsible to oversee.

shepherds in scripture

One of the most beloved shepherds in the Old Testament is David. Not only did he love and care for his father’s sheep, but he fought to protect them. Somehow David realized that he himself was a sheep in God’s pasture. It seems that God’s care for David helped him understand how to be a good shepherd.

Let’s read 1 Samuel 17:34–36 and remember what David told King Saul when offering to fight Goliath:

“David said to Saul, ‘Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, 35 I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. 36 Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them.’”

Notice that the same shepherd who fought lions and bears to protect his father's sheep was now stepping up to fight a giant to protect God's people. This was certainly one of the reasons God chose David to be king over Israel. David was a true shepherd. Let's read Psalm 78:70–72:

“[God] also chose His servant David and took him from the sheepfolds; 71 from the care of the ewes with nursing lambs He brought him to shepherd Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance. 72 So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them with his skillful hands” (NASB).

One of the best passages in the Bible to teach us what God wants shepherds to do is in Ezekiel 34. Using the metaphor of shepherds and sheep, God strongly reproves the selfish and unloving leaders of Israel. Though the context of the passage is negative, this lesson from God Himself about how to be a good shepherd is too rich to ignore. So let's read Ezekiel 34:2–8:

“Prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord GOD : Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? 3 You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. 4 The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. 5 So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered; 6 they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them. 7 Therefore,

you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: 8 As I live, declares the Lord GOD, surely because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd, and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep.”

As you can see, there are many important and obvious lessons in this passage about how God wants people to be cared for, but let's point out one that is sometimes overlooked. Notice these phrases, “My sheep were scattered . . . My sheep have become a prey . . . My sheep have become food . . . My shepherds have not searched for My sheep . . . the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed My sheep.”

The lesson should be obvious now. The sheep God asks shepherds to care for belong to Him, and therefore He closely watches to make sure they are being shepherded properly.

the scope of new testament shepherds

In the New Testament, shepherds who were appointed to oversee local churches were usually called elders. For example, in Acts 20 the apostle Paul spoke to the elders of the house churches of Ephesus about being good shepherds. The word “elder” simply denotes a person of age, but its use in the New Testament designates a high-level overseer who has been appointed because of their age, experience, wisdom, and proven character. Let's read some of what Paul said to these shepherding elders in Acts 20:17, 28–35:

“Now from Miletus, [Paul] sent to Ephesus and summoned the elders of the church. . . . 28 ‘Be on guard for yourselves and

for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood. 29 I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Men will rise up even from your own number and distort the truth to lure the disciples into following them. 31 Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for three years I never stopped warning each one of you with tears. 32 And now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all who are sanctified. 33 I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. 34 You yourselves know that I worked with my own hands to support myself and those who are with me. 35 In every way I've shown you that it is necessary to help the weak by laboring like this and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, because he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive"'" (CSB).

As you can see, Paul is calling these elders to be godly and caring shepherds. He reminds them that enemies, like "savage wolves," are constantly looking for ways to attack and destroy the people in their churches, and that they must "be on the alert" for such attacks and lay down their lives to protect God's people. Paul is using the identical language Jesus used to explain the ministry of a shepherd. Listen to what Jesus said in John 10:11-15:

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. 13 The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. 14 I am the good

shepherd; I know My sheep and My sheep know me—15 just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father—and I lay down My life for the sheep” (NIV).

Not only does Jesus distinguish the true shepherd from one who plays that role for the benefits they receive, but He clarifies that true shepherds will sacrifice their very lives to protect their flocks. Being a shepherd like Jesus requires sacrificing things such as time, personal preferences, the approval of people, better positions elsewhere, and even privileges other believers enjoy. Shepherds must also stand strong and protect the flock against people who desire positions of leadership to which they are not called or for which they are not qualified. For the people who have the shepherding grace, being this kind of shepherd does not feel burdensome; instead, it is fulfilling.

shepherds and spiritual gifts

Though shepherds appear fourth in the Ephesians 4:11 list, they are by no means low-level leaders. In fact, the New Testament teaches us that for a shepherd who is appointed to be an elder or overseer, their qualifications are among the highest found in Scripture, including being blameless, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy, and not quarrelsome (1 Timothy 3:2–3). And further, when those with the shepherding grace are given a position as an elder or overseer (bishop), their role will inevitably include overseeing other leaders in a church. Let’s look once again at 1 Corinthians 12:28:

“And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues” (NKJV).

We've already discussed more thoroughly the association of miracles and gifts of healing with evangelists, so let's now consider how helps, administrations and varieties of tongues are associated with the role of a shepherd (pastor). By "helps" Paul is likely referring to deacons and other serving roles in a church. By "administrations" Paul is likely referring to all of the leadership positions of a church, including overseers (bishops). Therefore, helps and administrations would include all the organizational roles that help care for the people of a church and fall under the authority of the shepherding elders (pastors). Paul also mentions "varieties of tongues." This speaks to the role of shepherding elders to lead a church's gatherings and guide the congregation's use of the gifts of the Spirit, including messages in spiritual languages (tongues), the interpretation of those messages, and prophecies. Again, though a larger point is being made in this passage, helps, administrations, and varieties of tongues seem to be listed together because they all fall under shepherding elders.

Though the Holy Spirit can empower any believer with any gift of the Spirit, there are certain spiritual gifts that more commonly operate in each of the APEST gifts. For shepherds, the three gifts Paul talked most about in 1 Corinthians 14 regarding church gatherings—prophecy, tongues, and interpretation of tongues—are some of the most common. Let's read 1 Corinthians 14:5:

"I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up."

Notice the words "so that the church may be built up." In this chapter, Paul is addressing church gatherings, and he spends more time teaching on prophecy, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues than he does

the other gifts of the Spirit. Shepherding elders should become very familiar with the function of these gifts in the church, and they will likely participate in using one or more of them as the Spirit leads. However, if you have been given the shepherding grace, ask God to fill you afresh with His Spirit and to use you with the best gifts for each situation.

*Ask God
to fill you
afresh with
His Spirit.*

shepherding (pastoral) grace

Let's summarize what we've studied so far. A person with the shepherding grace has the ability and desire to love, feed, heal, nurture, support, care for, and protect people. The role of a shepherd in Jesus' Church is to do these things for believers, especially for the believers they are responsible to oversee. Shepherds tend to be sensitive and aware of the needs and feelings of people. They have a God-given desire for people to become healthy and strong and to grow in the Lord. They go out of their way to foster love, meaningful relationships, and unity in the church. They are stabilizers, unifiers, peacemakers, reconcilers, and problem-solvers. They influence other believers and ministries to be safe and healthy. People with this grace often have the ability and calling to develop and refine a church's ministry structure and to appoint and oversee leaders. They are gifted to keep everyone moving together in the direction God is leading. Many shepherds have also been given the teaching grace, making them shepherd-teachers.

other graces and factors

No shepherd has only shepherding grace. Every person with the shepherding grace—including the examples we see in the Bible—also has

graces of other APEST gifts, some more and some less. These additional graces enhance and strengthen their shepherding grace in varying ways depending on which of the other graces they have. And not only that, but every person with the shepherding grace has also been given some of the Romans 12 motivational gifts which enable them to prophesy, serve, teach, exhort, give, lead, or show mercy. God has given each of us the perfect combination of graces and gifts to complete our assignments and fulfill our calling.

Remember that the progress and fruitfulness of an shepherd's life and ministry will be either accelerated or hindered by their spiritual life. To see supernatural results they must:

- serve with pure motives of love.
- be obedient to God and His Word.
- be humble and not prideful.
- collaborate with others instead of competing with them.
- pray earnestly and in faith.

But there is one more thing, and it's important. Jesus told the 12 apostles to be filled (baptized) with the Holy Spirit before launching into ministry (Acts 1:4–5, 8). Like gasoline to a gas-powered car, it is the power of the Holy Spirit that makes the APEST gifts work as they should. If you have not yet received the fullness of the Holy Spirit, ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13), and then continue to stay filled with the Spirit (this is explained more thoroughly in Jesus' Church Lesson Two).

Jesus: The Shepherd

We've already seen that Jesus called Himself a shepherd. He said in John 10:11, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for

the sheep.” In 1 Peter 5:4 Peter calls Jesus “the Chief Shepherd.” So every shepherd in Jesus’ Church is under Jesus, the Chief of all shepherds.

Jesus went to great lengths to provide all of us with loving shepherds. Jeremiah 3:15 says, “I will give you shepherds after My own heart.” Jesus was diligently working on this until the day He ascended to heaven. In the last conversation recorded in John’s Gospel, Jesus told Simon Peter, “Feed My lambs . . . shepherd My sheep . . . [and] feed My sheep.”

Today Jesus is speaking to all who have been given some of the shepherding grace and saying, “The sheep I have called you to shepherd are My sheep. I laid down My life for them, and I bought them with My own blood. I am calling you to shepherd them on My behalf and to do it the way I would do it. Love them. Care for them. Nurture them. Feed them. Heal them. Restore them. And protect them. I am calling you to be the shepherd that I have graced you to be.”

why we need shepherds today

There is a desperate need for godly shepherds today, and the need is growing due to the increasing spiritual darkness in the world. Many destructive forces come with the darkness, including addictions, bondages, mental health issues, financial challenges, confusion, deception, and the breakdown of the family. This is why Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, has given many shepherds as gifts to His Church.

If you have received the shepherding grace, God is calling you to help advance His kingdom in many ways, including:

1. To ensure that every person is receiving the love, care, and support they need.
2. To keep track of people in their church family, to find them when they are lost, and to visit them when they are sick.

3. To plan, prepare, and lead (or help lead) church gatherings.
4. To ensure that every person in the church is being fed and has the opportunity to grow spiritually.
5. To appoint and train qualified people to play each leadership role in the church.
6. To lead or serve in the organizational structure of their church.
7. To ensure that each person can play the role God wants them to play in this season.
8. To resolve conflicts and help everyone work together in love and unity.
9. To help other believers turn discipling communities into healthy churches.
10. To partner with apostolic leaders and other APEST graces to help start disciple-making movements (DMMs).

Many pastors in campus-style churches are recognizing that they have an apostolic grace and are called to multiply. Helping these leaders is a significant part of the vision of BFAM Movements, which provides support and free resources through the BFAM App and at BFAMmovements.com.

God's gifts and calling

Remember, regardless of which grace God has given you or what mistakes you've made in the past, God's calling on your life is still in play. Romans 11:29 says, "The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." This means that right now—today—you still have God's grace, and He still wants you to fulfill your calling. God is saying to you now what He said in Joshua 1:9, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for

the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go” (NIV). And Romans 8:31 says, “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”

The purpose of Jesus’ gifts is to build Jesus’ Church to carry out Jesus’ Commission. And this is what we learn in three foundational studies from BFAM Movements called 1) **Jesus’ Gifts**, 2) **Jesus’ Church**, and 3) **Jesus’ Commission**.

read and discuss

Before we close, let’s read and discuss Psalm 23.

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. 3 He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

discussion questions

1. What shepherding principles do we see in Psalm 23, and how are they relevant today?
2. What are some of the characteristics that help a person with this grace be a good shepherd?
3. How can we help those with the shepherding grace to step out in their calling?

(continued on next page)

4. Can we identify characteristics of the shepherding grace in ourselves or anyone in our group?

Pray for those who feel they have the shepherding grace.

weekly checklist

- Read this lesson again this week and make notes for yourself.
- Read God's Word each day and write what God is saying to you (we recommend the Solid Life Reading Plan, which you can find on the BFAM App).
- Pray earnestly each day for God to use you, and pray for His direction.
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- Find supplemental messages for this lesson on the BFAM App and at BFAMmovements.com.



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Welcome back to the Jesus' Gifts group study!

Let's open in prayer and ask God to teach us again about Jesus' Gifts.
[Open in prayer.]

Let's begin by reading our foundational passage, Ephesians 4:7–8 and 11–12:

“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. 8 Therefore it says, ‘When He ascended on high, He led captive the captives, and He gave gifts to people.’ . . . 11 And He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ” (NASB).

Verse 7 says each believer has been given supernatural “grace.” This grace provides us with God-given giftedness and ability to function in one of the five APEST roles. Every believer in the body of Christ has been given supernatural grace to become an apostle, a prophet, an evangelist, a pastor, or a teacher, and possibly a combination of more than one of these gifts.

Let's read Ephesians 4:11 in the ESV:

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers.”

As we discussed in Lesson Five, the absence of the definite article before teachers indicates a close connection between shepherds and teachers.

This is because people in churches both need to be shepherded, or cared for, and they need to be taught, or fed spiritually. For this reason God has given many pastors of churches both the shepherding grace and the teaching grace, making them “shepherd-teachers” or “pastor-teachers.” Pastors who have the shepherding grace but not the teaching grace need teachers to partner with them to lead a healthy church. On the other hand, pastors who have the teaching grace but not the shepherding grace need shepherds to partner with them to lead a healthy church.

are teachers gifts from Jesus?

The missing article before teachers leads some people to believe that Jesus only gave four gifts instead of five, with the fourth being “shepherd-teachers.” This is certainly a fair argument given the break in the pattern of the definite articles. However, it is clear the New Testament recognizes teachers as a distinct gift from shepherds. If teachers are indeed a distinct gift, then there must be five gifts since the definite article is present before the word “shepherds.” Here are three reasons teachers should be considered a fifth and distinct gift of Jesus.

First, when the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write about the five APEST gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:28, he listed only three of the five gifts by name. Interestingly, teachers are listed but not shepherds. Paul also asks in the next verse, “Are all teachers?” So, in both verses he uses the word “teachers” without the word “shepherds.”

Second, Acts 13:1 says, “Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers.” Here, teachers are listed with another APEST gift, and again without the word “shepherds.”

Third, the two times Paul identified his own APEST callings, he included “teacher” with no mention of “shepherd” (1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:11).

Among others, these are reasons that shepherds and teachers should be considered distinct but closely related gifts from Jesus.

what is a teacher?

• grace to learn and teach

People with the teaching grace have some of the most sought-after and supernatural abilities of all the APEST gifts. Their God-given abilities include a capacity to understand spiritual and practical truths, the motivation to find and study them in Scripture, and the capability to express them with such clarity that everyone else understands as well. What a gift! Second Timothy 3:16–4:2 says, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching,” so teachers are graced to teach the Word of God.

• preaching vs. teaching

There is a difference between preachers and teachers. Generally speaking, preachers proclaim and teachers explain. Preaching is primarily for unbelievers because they need the gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed to them. Teaching, on the other hand, is primarily for believers because they need the truths of the kingdom of God explained to them. This is why we often see Jesus teaching in the synagogues but preaching to people outside. Matthew 4:23 says, “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing” (NKJV).

• teachers are third

The apostle Paul taught us in 1 Corinthians 12:28 that when God was appointing gifts in the Church, He appointed apostles first, prophets second, and teachers third. Why would God appoint teachers third behind apostles and prophets?

Apostles are graced to start new churches and ministries and to establish them doctrinally. Prophets are graced to come alongside apostles to help establish the new ministries spiritually. But remember, the word “apostle” means “sent,” so those with the apostolic grace don’t always stay long-term. That’s where teachers come in. God appointed teachers third to continue and expand the teaching of the apostles and allow apostles to move on to other places.

Now let’s put this in perspective. The churches in New Testament times met in homes, so one teacher couldn’t teach everyone in every house church. In Jerusalem where the 12 apostles were, people were being taught both in the temple and in homes. Let’s read Acts 5:42:

“And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not stop teaching and preaching” (NASB).

But how could 12 apostles teach in hundreds of homes at the same time? They couldn’t, and that’s why God appointed teachers.

Paul told the elders (shepherds) of the house churches in Ephesus, “[I] taught you publicly and from house to house” (Acts 20:20, NKJV). But again, Paul couldn’t get to every house church and he spent most of his time traveling to bring the gospel to the rest of the world. So who continued to teach in all those house churches? People with the teaching grace.

Every church needs at least one teacher, but with so many topics and passages to teach about, having multiple people with the teaching grace is best. Let’s read what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:26:

“Whenever you come together, each one has a hymn,

***a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation.
Everything is to be done for building up” (CSB).***

This shows us that teachings do not have to be minutes or more. Teaching can happen in much less time, either in a group or with one person. Sometimes even a two, three, or four-minute teaching on a subject is impactful for a church gathering. The key is to study, pray, and be prepared when the opportunity arises. If a teacher spends time regularly in the Word of God, teaching will become a natural and consistent part of their life.

People who have developed their teaching grace are often great counselors because they see how the principles of God’s Word apply to life and they are gifted to communicate it. One-on-one teaching can quickly become counseling when the one being taught invites or welcomes the teacher to help them practically apply the Word of God to real-life situations.

• the temptation of titles

There are some dangers to becoming a teacher, especially a good teacher. One of the most common dangers is pride. It feels good to teach people things they don’t know, especially when it greatly helps them. However, without realizing it, the human heart can stop teaching for the benefit of the people and begin teaching for recognition, invitations, positions, and titles. When this happens, the teacher falls into the dangerous trap of pride. This is what Jesus confronted when He said, “Do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ” (Matthew 23:10, NKJV). We know that Jesus was not eliminating the role of teachers since He gave teachers to His Church and since the New Testament affirms the role of teachers (Acts 13:1). What then was Jesus saying? He was saying we should not seek to be called teacher or pursue titles. Since the truths you teach didn’t come from you, don’t take the credit.

• the responsibility of teachers

Jesus' brother James also gave a stern warning to teachers in James 3:1. He said, "Not many should become teachers, my brothers, because you know that we will receive a stricter judgment" (CSB).

Teachers receive a stricter judgment for two reasons. First, they are responsible to teach the ways of the Lord accurately, according to the Word of God. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for "teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:6–7). And second, they're responsible to apply what they've learned. Jesus said in Luke 12:48, "To whom much is given, from him much will be required" (NKJV).

• teachers in the new testament

Does the New Testament have any examples of teachers? It sure does. Let's read and learn from a few passages.

Acts 2:42 tells us that the Jerusalem church "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching," so it is evident that the 12 apostles of Jesus were also graced to be teachers. This shows us that teachers also have other graces and may be called to play other roles.

In 1 Timothy 2:7 and 2 Timothy 1:11, Paul said that he was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher. In these two passages, Paul tells us that he's not only an apostle to the Gentiles, but he's also a teacher of the Gentiles. This shows us that those with the teaching grace most likely have some measure of other graces and may also be called to play other roles.

Acts 18:24–28 says, "[Apollos] was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures . . . and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus . . . but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained

to him the way of God more accurately . . . [Apollos] powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.”

In this passage we see Apollos, one of the most powerful teachers in the New Testament. We also see Priscilla and Aquila coming to teach Apollos and refine his doctrine. Priscilla and Aquila were pastors of a church in their home (1 Corinthians 16:19). Because Priscilla’s name is mentioned before her husband’s four of the six times they appear in Scripture—including in this passage—it’s likely that she had the stronger teaching grace.

• **teachers and spiritual gifts**

Though the Holy Spirit can empower any believer with any gift of the Spirit, there are certain spiritual gifts that more commonly operate in each of the APEST gifts. The most common for teachers are sometimes referred to as the “revelation gifts.” These include the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and prophecy. The teaching grace greatly helps with these gifts of the Spirit because they require precise language. However, if you have been given the teaching grace, ask God to fill you afresh with His Spirit and to use you with the best gifts for each situation.

teaching grace

Let’s summarize what we’ve studied so far. The teaching grace provides God-given abilities that include a capacity to understand spiritual and practical truths, the motivation to find and study them in Scripture, and the capability to express them with such clarity that everyone else understands them as well. People with this grace help others see how to apply the Word of God to the various areas of their lives and ministries. Teachers make complex things simple and regularly take time to help other people learn. They are often great counselors because they see how the

principles of God's Word apply to real-life situations and they are gifted in communicating those applications.

Sometimes the teaching grace provides practical solutions such as organization, systems, and processes for one's personal life, work, and ministry. People with the teaching grace inspire other believers to want to learn new things and to better understand what they already know. The teaching grace also comes with such a strong desire for people to be impacted by the truths of God's Word that the teacher is motivated to prepare both practically and spiritually. This kind of preparation causes the teaching grace to grow in effectiveness, impact, and relevance. Teachers work closely with apostles and prophets to establish doctrine in new ministries, and they work with pastors to bring the truth of God's Word to every area of believers' lives. They help keep the body of Christ aligned with God's Word to protect them from falling prey to the deception of this world.

*Teachers
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other graces and factors

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mercy. God has given each of us the perfect combination of graces and gifts to complete our assignments and fulfill our calling.

Remember that the progress and fruitfulness of a teacher's life and ministry will be either accelerated or hindered by their spiritual life. To see supernatural results they must:

- serve with pure motives of love.
- be obedient to God and His Word.
- be humble and not prideful.
- collaborate with others instead of competing with them.
- pray earnestly and in faith.

But there is one more thing, and it's important. Jesus told the 12 apostles to be filled (baptized) with the Holy Spirit before launching into ministry (Acts 1:4–5, 8). Like gasoline to a gas-powered car, it is the power of the Holy Spirit that makes the APEST gifts work as they should. If you have not yet received the fulness of the Holy Spirit, ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13), and then continue to stay filled with the Spirit (this is explained more thoroughly in Jesus' Church Lesson Two).

Jesus: The Teacher

There is no doubt that Jesus was a teacher. The Greek verb translated "teach," "teaching," or "taught" is used more than any other verb to describe what Jesus did throughout His ministry—even more often than the word for "heal." Matthew 4:23 tells us that "Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues" (NLT). And in John 13:13, Jesus said to the 12 disciples, "You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am." So Jesus was certainly a teacher.

We should, however, acknowledge that Jesus was not just any teacher; His teachings were powerful and impactful. Mark 1:22 says, “[Jesus] taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law” (NIV). Luke 4:32 says people “were amazed at His teaching, because His message was delivered with authority” (NASB). How powerful were Jesus’ teachings? Mark 11:18 tells us that the chief priests and scribes “were seeking a way to destroy Him, for they feared Him, because all the crowd was astonished at His teaching.”

Some people believe that only Jesus can teach this powerfully, but it’s not true. Jesus wants everyone who is called to be a teacher to be able to teach with the same power. What factors made the teachings of Jesus so powerful? Let’s mention four.

1. Jesus was graced and called to teach (Matthew 23:8).
2. Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1, 18).
3. Jesus prayed often (Luke 5:16).
4. Jesus taught what God told Him to teach (John 8:26).

Notice that all of these things are available to teachers today. God gives teachers the grace and the calling to teach. Every believer can be filled and stay filled with the Holy Spirit. Every believer can pray fervently for God to impact people through their teachings. And everyone can be led by the Holy Spirit to teach what God wants them to teach.

Teachers may have different personalities, styles, and subjects they’re called to teach, but every teacher can be a Spirit-empowered and impactful teacher if they’ll do the things that Jesus did. Thankfully, Jesus taught His apostles how to do it. In Acts 6:4, the 12 apostles said, “We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (NKJV).

And that passage goes on to say, “Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem” (Acts 6:7 NKJV).

We also see evidence in the New Testament that other teachers invested the necessary time in prayer and preparation. Let’s read Acts 13:1-3:

“Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ 3 Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.”

Notice that each of these men was either a prophet or a teacher—or both. And what did these teachers do? They gathered with other teachers and prophets to worship the Lord, fast, and pray. By doing these things, the group received direction from the Holy Spirit to send out two new apostles, which they did. When people with the teaching grace spend time in prayer and are filled with and led by the Holy Spirit, their teaching ministries increase in power and impact!

The Holy Spirit is a teacher

It should also be mentioned that one of the primary ministries of the Holy Spirit is teaching. Jesus said in John 14:26, “The Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and remind you of all that I said to you” (NASB). This would certainly include teaching believers the Word of God because Jesus also said in John 16:13, “When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth,” and in the next chapter Jesus prayed to His Father saying, “Your Word is truth” (John 17:17).

why we need teachers today

Spirit-empowered teachers are in great need today. In fact, every believer in Jesus' Church needs the ministry of the teacher. It strengthens, enlightens, clarifies, and emboldens believers to live the life God has called them to live, including carrying out the Great Commission.

If you have received the teaching grace, God is calling you to help advance His kingdom in many ways, including:

1. To develop a lifestyle of studying and learning God's Word.
2. To learn to be guided by the Holy Spirit while studying the Scriptures.
3. To help people understand the Bible.
4. To teach people how biblical truths apply to their lives, families, careers and ministries, so they can obey and honor God.
5. To help believers learn how to hear from God as they read their Bibles.
6. To protect believers from deception by identifying and exposing false doctrines.
7. To equip and train others who have the teaching grace, who will go on to equip and train others.
8. To provide personalized teaching to people, which is often called counseling.
9. To help churches and ministries organize and systematize for both efficiency and effectiveness.
10. To partner with apostolic leaders and other APEST graces to help start disciple-making movements (DMMs).

Many pastors in campus-style churches are recognizing that they have an apostolic grace and are called to multiply. Helping these leaders is a significant part of the vision of BFAM Movements, which provides support and free resources through the BFAM App and at BFAMmovements.com.

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The purpose of Jesus' gifts is to build Jesus' Church to carry out Jesus' Commission. And this is what we learn in three foundational studies from BFAM Movements called 1) **Jesus' Gifts**, 2) **Jesus' Church**, and 3) **Jesus' Commission**.

where we go from here

As this series on Jesus' gifts draws to a close, consider how God has supernaturally gifted you to build Jesus' Church to fulfill Jesus' Commission. You are indeed a gift!

You may have noticed that just as Jesus intentionally left some questions unanswered with the 12 apostles, so He is doing with us. Jesus has been teaching us how to love and serve each other, and how to use the gifts He has given us to work together for His purposes. And now, it's the Holy Spirit's job to guide us from here.

*It's the
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As we mentioned in lesson one, the grace that is given to each of the five gifts can be compared to strengths that individual family members may

have. Some members of a family may be good at business, some may be good with home maintenance, some may be good at cooking, and some may be good at managing bills and a budget. There is no manual to explain who in the family is going to play certain roles, or to what extent. A loving family will communicate with one another and figure it out. And some roles may change and adjust from season to season as circumstances change.

As we gather together with each other, let's pray and work together to discover how each of us can use our God-given graces and become the gifts that Jesus intended us to be. As we live and grow in our giftings by the power of the Holy Spirit, we will not only strengthen one another, but we will make disciples of all nations.

So, what will we study next? Jesus' Church, Jesus' Commission, or another study? [Give time for group to discuss.]

read and discuss

Now before we close, let's read and discuss 2 Timothy 3:16–4:2:

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 4:1 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.”

discussion questions

1. What does Paul tell Timothy to teach and preach in this passage?
2. What reason(s) does Paul give for using this one resource in teaching?
3. What are some of the most important scriptural truths that people need to be taught today?
4. How can we help those with the teaching grace to step out in their calling?
5. Can we identify characteristics of the teaching grace in ourselves or anyone in our group?

Pray for those who feel they have the teaching grace.

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