

Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further ***International Bible Lessons***

Ephesians 4:1-16

Sunday, December 31, 2017

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Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be *the answers* to the discussion questions. These indeed are “hints” a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class. The *Class Preparation Guide* includes the questions below, and it can be given to students at the end of the previous class so they can pray, read, and think ahead to prepare for the next week’s Bible class.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What do you think Paul meant by “the calling to which you have been called” (Ephesians 4:1)?

The “calling” could be a combination of the person’s occupation or occupations as the Lord leads over time (perhaps also into a series of different occupations) and the work that the Lord has called and gifted a believer to

do in the Church and in the world. The “calling” could include additional roles in a family; such as, father, mother, and child. The Bible gives guidelines on how to best serve God and others in our occupations, roles in a family, and ways of serving in the Church.

2. What might be some reasons Paul wants believers to lead a life worthy of their calling?

A worthy life will honor God and Jesus Christ as the believer follows Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Living a worthy life will bring happiness to the believer and to those believers they join with in serving the Lord. A worthy life will not abuse or take advantage of others, thus bringing fair dealing and happiness to those they serve. Leading a worthy life can provide godly leadership where needed, and serve as an example to others who pursue or will pursue a similar calling. Leading a worthy life may attract instead of repel unbelievers, who may then come to faith in Jesus Christ and receive gifts from Him to fulfill their calling and lead a worthy life.

3. Why do you think Jesus gives gifts to those who believe in Him?

Jesus probably has many reasons for giving gifts that have an effect on the lives of perhaps millions of people over thousands of years. For example, the gifts Jesus gave to the Apostle Paul still bless millions of people around the world. Therefore, the gifts Jesus gives every believer may

bless them as well as others for generations yet unborn. Jesus gives gifts because He loves us. He especially loves those who have come to faith in Him and who entrust their lives and their future to Him. He loves to give gifts to those who seek to fulfill His purposes by loving and serving others according to His will. He rejoices in the opportunity to give gifts to those He loves and He rejoices when He helps and watches believers use their gifts to His glory.

4. Which gifts of Jesus do you think the Church and the world need most today?

Jesus Christ has given the gift of the Holy Spirit to everyone who trusts in Him with saving faith. Everyone needs the fruit of the Holy Spirit: “By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things” (Galatians 5:22-23). By using a concordance or search feature in an online Bible to search for the word “gifts,” you will see that God gives many gifts. Specific to our Bible Lesson from Ephesians 4:1-16, the Church and the world today especially need the gifts of evangelists to lead more people to a Biblical faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The Church needs teachers who will teach the truth of the Bible, and who through the gift of the Holy Spirit will help believers grow in love, faith, and obedience to Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures. The Church needs pastors to help the needy and suffering in the Church, and to fulfill the other roles of

a pastor. The Church and the world needs prophets to help people better understand the times in which we live and God's future plans. The Church needs apostles who will call people back to the study of and obedience to the Bible and the gospel of Jesus Christ as the Apostle Paul did in his letters, preaching, and teaching.

5. What might happen to the Church and the world if believers do not use the gifts Jesus gives them?

Churches might (and probably assuredly would) develop the patterns of problem behavior that Paul faced when writing most of his letters that we have preserved in the Bible. Churches can become similar to and worse than the churches reprimanded by Christ in the Book of Revelation. The world will turn increasingly away from God, from Jesus Christ, and from the Bible's standards of righteousness; therefore, the world and God's people will suffer in a greater variety of ways from increasing godlessness and wickedness in churches and in the world.

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