



How Can We Grow Spiritually? December 31, 2017 Ephesians 4:1-16

“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming” (Ephesians 4:14).

New believers in Jesus Christ begin their walk of faith as spiritual infants, which makes them susceptible to continually changing their ideas about Christian beliefs and behaviors, to adopting, rejecting, and then accepting contradictory teachings, and to being deceived and misled by crafty people. Therefore, to avoid these dangers, Paul wrote how believers can grow spiritually and mature as Christians. To help believers morally and spiritually mature, Jesus Christ created the Church, the Body of Christ, of which each believer is a member, and He also gave the Holy Spirit to indwell each Christian in the Church. In addition, when creating and to maintain the Church, Christ gave apostles (His ambassadors, who were responsible for writing the New Testament), prophets (who declare the will of God and exhort obedience to Christ), evangelists (who share the good news about Jesus with believers and unbelievers), pastors (ministers, who shepherd those in the Church), and teachers (who explain what the Bible says). Christians spiritually mature as they use these and other gifts of Christ to help them serve the Church, which builds up the Body of Christ. In addition, the Holy Spirit works within Christians inside the Church, and through their gifts helps them come to a shared understanding of the Christian faith and a common knowledge of the truths about the Son of God, which unifies believers under the Lordship of Christ. Paul described Christian maturity as “attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13). Therefore, as we mature, we become more Christ-like.

1. What do you think Paul meant by “the calling to which you have been called” (Ephesians 4:1)?
2. What might be some reasons Paul wants believers to lead a life worthy of their calling?
3. Why do you think Jesus gives gifts to those who believe in Him?
4. Which gifts of Jesus do you think the Church and the world need most today?
5. What might happen to the Church and the world if believers do not use the gifts Jesus gives them?