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## ***Equipping the Saints***

*(Ephesians 4:11-16)*

The goal of our Christian life as well as the Church is perfection (spiritual maturity). Jesus said in Matt 5:48, "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." Paul also mentions in Col. 1:28 that his purpose in teaching every man with God's word is "to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Christ so organized the church to make this goal possible. We see this in Paul's examples in 1 Tim. 3:15 and Titus 1:5.

Part of the process of church growth is the equipping of God's people so that they may effectively do the work of the ministry, resulting in the building up of the whole body of Christ. Our text shows us three features of equipping that leads to the maturity or perfection of the Church.

### **1. We equip God's people through \_\_\_\_\_**

Paul outlines specific steps in the maturing process:

a. *The gifted men \_\_\_\_\_ the saints.*

The word "equipping" basically refers to that which is fit or restored to its original condition, or to be made complete (2 Cor. 13:11). God primarily uses His Word to equip the saints (2 Tim. 3:16-17; John 15:3, Col. 1:28, 2 Tim. 4:2-3). He also uses the prayers of His servants (Col. 4:12); their trials (James 1:2-4) and their sufferings (1 Peter 5:10).

b. *The saints \_\_\_\_\_ of the ministry*

Every believer is to do the work of the ministry. The ministry is everybody's business. Ministry means service. Christ called us to serve (Matt. 20:26; 1 Cor. 15:58; 1 Peter 4:10) through fellowship (Acts 2:41-47) and the exercise of our spiritual gifts (Rom. 12:3-8, Eph. 4:11 and 1 Cor 12-13; 1 Cor. 12:7; Rom. 12:6).

c. *The church \_\_\_\_\_ one another*

When the saints are equipped and they do the work of the ministry, then the church is built up (Acts 20:32). Maturity of the church is tied to the learning of and obedience to the Word of God.

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### **2. We equip God's people unto \_\_\_\_\_**

The goal of Christianity is Christlikeness. Spiritual growth unto Christlikeness shows itself in our service (Rom. 12:1-2), our unity (Eph. 4:13; Phil. 2:2-5), our character (Eph. 4:13; Rom. 8:29; Gal. 5:22-23), our doctrinal discernment (Eph. 4:14; Col. 2:6-7), and our love (Eph. 4:15; 3:17-19; 4:2; 5:1-2)

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### **3. We equip God's people to \_\_\_\_\_**

The power for being equipped and matured into lovingly authentic Christians comes as a result of every member of the Body fully using his spiritual gift in relation to the rest of the members (Col. 2:19).

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God's method of maturing His saints has not changed. It simply takes God's people with willing, faithful and loving obedience.