

Our Divine Calling

4 As a prisoner of the Lord,[a] I plead with you to walk holy, in a way that is suitable to your high rank, given to you in your divine calling. **2** With tender humility and quiet patience, always demonstrate gentleness and generous[b] love toward one another, especially toward those who may try your patience. **3** Be faithful to guard the sweet harmony of the Holy Spirit among you in the bonds of peace, **4** being one body and one spirit, as you were all called into the same glorious hope *of divine destiny*.

5 For the Lord God is one, *and so are we*, for we share in one faith, one baptism, and one Father. **6** And he is the perfect Father who leads us all, works through us all, and lives in us all!

The Grace-Gifts of Christ

7 And he has generously given each one of us supernatural grace, according to the size of the gift of Christ. **8** This is why he says:

“He ascends into the heavenly heights
taking his many captured ones with him,[c]
and gifts were given to men.”[d]

9 He “ascended” means that he returned to heaven, after he had first descended from the heights of heaven, even to the lower regions, namely, the earth. **10** The same one who descended is also the one who ascended above the heights of heaven, in order to begin the restoration and fulfillment[e] of all things.

11 And he has appointed some *with grace* to be apostles, and some *with grace* to be prophets, and some *with grace* to be evangelists,[f] and some *with grace* to be pastors,[g] and some *with grace* to be teachers. [h] **12** And their calling is to nurture and prepare all the holy believers to do their own works of ministry, and as they do this they will enlarge and build up the body of Christ. **13** *These grace ministries will function* until we all attain oneness into the faith, until we all experience the fullness of what it means to know the Son of God,[i] and finally we become one into a perfect man[j] with the full dimensions of spiritual maturity and fully developed into the abundance of Christ.

14 And then our immaturity will end! And we will not be easily shaken by trouble, nor led astray by novel teachings or by the false doctrines of deceivers[k] who teach clever lies. **15** But instead we will remain strong and always sincere in our love as we express the truth. *All our direction and ministries will flow* from Christ and lead us deeper into him, the anointed Head of his body, the church.

16 For his “body” *has been formed in his image* and is closely joined together and constantly connected as one. And every member *has been given divine gifts* to contribute to the growth of all; and as *these gifts* operate effectively throughout the whole body, we are built up and made perfect in love.

Our New Life in Christ

17 So with the wisdom given to me from the Lord I say: You should not live like the unbelievers around you who walk in their empty delusions.[l] **18** Their corrupted logic has been clouded because their hearts are so far from God—their blinded understanding and deep-seated moral darkness keeps them from the true knowledge of God. **19** Because of spiritual apathy, they surrender their lives to lewdness, impurity, and sexual obsession.