*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

October 1 - 6

*The Holy Spirit*

**Monday, October 1** **Ephesians 4:1-6**

*“Unity: We are all one body . . . we have the same Spirit”*

A life worthy of being in relationship with Jesus Christ is a life marked by humility, gentleness, patience, making allowance for faults, love, and peace. This kind of life is necessary to realize the critical goal of the Holy Spirit, which is to unite Christians into one body. That is why Paul exhorts us to “make every effort” with regard to unity. We are asked to value unity, be attentive to it, and invest energy in it so that it is not threatened by pride, hostility, impatience, unwillingness to forgive, hatred and divisiveness, all of which damage unity.

Having appealed for unity in the church, Paul goes on to show that our human unity is based in and motivated by our spiritual unity. We are all a part of one body, we have all been brought to Christ through one Spirit, we all have the same Lord, we have all been given the same hope of eternal life, we have all been saved through the same faith, we are all baptized into the same relationship with God, and we all worship the same God who is the Father of all of us and who lives in us by the Holy Spirit.

*Heavenly Father, I commit to the unity in our church. Amen.*

**Tuesday, October 2**  **Ephesians 4:7-13**

*“Diversity: God has given each one of us a special gift”*

Paul’s concern for unity is balanced by an emphasis on diversity and the responsibility of each person to use his or her diverse gifts in the church. God does not work merely at the corporate level. He also works in the individual and gives grace to each person. Here, “grace” does not designate saving grace but grace for ministry, that is, the grace given to each person to do the work that God has called him or her to do. As to the amount of grace, God gives each person enough to fulfill their God-appointed responsibilities.

Paul points out that we are given gifts to serve and build up the body of Christ, that is, the church local and the church universal. This includes both the internal strengthening of the church and the building up of the church by reaching out to non-Christians, bringing them into the fellowship when they turn to Christ. “Unity in the faith and knowledge in the Son” is not merely unity of belief, but unity in living together the life of a follower of Christ. The way in which we “love one another,” as Christ commanded his disciples, is to serve one another through the use of our God-given gifts.

*Lord God, teach me how to serve others though the gifts you have given me. Amen.*

**Wednesday, October 3 1 Peter 4:10-11**

*“God has given gifts . . . so that God’s generosity can flow through you”*

Peter connects spiritual gifts with serving others as a way to practice love, the most important of all Christian virtues. This makes it clear that God does not give us spiritual gifts in order to build ourselves up or to have a spiritual ability recognized by others of which we can be proud, but to equip us to do what he asks: love one another. When we serve each other with our gifts, we love one another. The Christian speaker who speaks well because he is using his God-given gift encourages his fellow believers. The Christian helper who effectively reaches us to those in need because she is using her God-given gift serves not only the needy, but is an example for others to follow.

As we allow the Holy Spirit to do his good work within us, and as we allow him to minister through us and through the spiritual gifts God has given us, we are fulfilled and God is glorified. I am reminded of the answer to the first question in the Westminster shorter catechism: “The chief purpose of human beings is to enjoy God and glorify him forever.”

*Holy Spirit, thank you for the spiritual gifts you have given me. May I use them to serve others while avoiding the sin of pride, and may they bring you glory. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

October 1 - 6

*The Holy Spirit*

**Thursday, October 4 Romans 12:3-8**

*“We, being many, are one body in Christ”*

Our natural tendency to selfishness and individualism makes it difficult for us to accept the concept of the body of Christ, but the mind that is being led by the Holy Spirit produces a new attitude. It recognizes the uniqueness of each believer’s individual place in the church while, at the same time, knows that we all come together to make up the church.

When Christ was on earth, he inhabited a body similar to our physical bodies. He knows our physical limitations. But after his resurrection, he was free to send the Holy Spirit to inhabit many individuals who, together, become the means of Jesus’ continued ministry on earth. So varied were the abilities and ministries of Jesus that it would be unrealistic to expect any one individual to begin to emulate his work. But when many people come together as his body, they can collectively begin to do the multiplicity of ministry he desires through their united efforts.

*Dear Jesus. I am amazed at all you did when you were here on earth. I know that I, by myself, can’t come close to doing what you did. But, with my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, we can together be your body in this world and continue your ministry. Amen.*

**Friday, October 5 1 Corinthians 12:1-6**

*“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit”*

In this twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians, Paul discusses how the Holy Spirit operates in the life of the individual Christian in such a way that he or she discovers understandings and abilities not previously recognized. He calls them “gifts of the Spirit.” Bestowed by the grace of God through the Spirit, the Greek word for “gifts” (*charismata*) literally means “small bundles of grace” for they are freely and generously given by God to be used by God’s people.

While Paul celebrated the diversity of spiritual gifts, as well as the diversity of Christian activities and ministries in the church, he insisted that they had a common source and a common purpose. All were from the Holy Spirit and were for the purpose of building up the body of Christ. This means that all the gifts are important, all are to be exercised in the church, and all are to be celebrated.

*Gift-giving Holy Spirit, I thank you for the ways that you have gifted me spiritually. I commit myself to using these spiritual abilities to build up our church. Amen.*

**Saturday, October 6 1 Corinthians 12:7-11**

*“The Holy Spirit alone decides which gift each person should have”*

Each Christian is given a spiritual gift, and no believer is left out. It is truly a gift, not earned, lest we would be tempted to be proud. It may not be on the list Paul gives in this chapter, for the list is not meant to be exhaustive but to give examples of God’s gifts. A spiritual gift may not be immediately recognized but in the context of prayer, Bible study, worship, and Christian fellowship it can be identified and developed.

It may be that some of the gifts don’t surface until a need appears and we begin to pray about what to do. It is then we discover that God in his love and wisdom has already placed gifts within the church for dealing both with our problems and with our opportunities.

Paul closes this section with the reminder that all the gifts are from one God, that they represent our hope for unity, and that they are distributed according to the Spirit’s will. By accepting, developing, and dedicating them to God’s purpose, spiritual gifts are a source of joy and fulfillment in our lives.

*Dear Holy Spirit, help me to know and exercise my spiritual giftedness. Amen.*