

Living Out Our Purpose Part 3: Equip

Notes

If we are to live out our purpose of glorifying God, then we must be equipped

INTRODUCTION

An unequipped believer cannot be effective in fulfilling his or her purpose for God's glory.

A disciple's level of intentional engagement with personal spiritual disciplines and with Christian community directly affects their spiritual growth.

Failure to engage and be properly equipped leads to problems and issues in our walk with Christ.

When I was in high school, I had a 1991 Chevy S-10. The fuel pump went out, so I had to order a new one. One Friday my brother and I decided to change the fuel pump. The pump was in the gas tank which was under the bed of the truck. We set out to lower the tank but realized we could not get to the final bolts on top of the tank. So, without much thought we went and got a grinder and we cut all the bolts and brackets that were holding that truck bed on. With the bed off we were able to get access to the tank and change the fuel pump. As we went to put the bed back on, we realized that we did not have bolts to replace the ones we cut, nor did we have anyway to replace the stabilizer brackets we cut off. Suffice it to say my dad was not too happy when he got home.

How did this happen? Did we not have good intentions? Were we not mechanically inclined? Did we not have the proper tools?

We had the best of intentions, we knew how to fix things, and we had the proper tools, but what we did not take advantage of was waiting on my dad who would have gladly allowed us to do the work and he would have equipped us with 30 years of mechanic experience so we could have done the job properly.

Failure to be equipped and failure to utilize the tools, resources, and people God has placed around us can lead to good intentions with bad results.

If we are going to be the disciples and followers of Jesus we are called to be, then we must be intentional in being equipped in this gospel life.

There is no model for discipleship in the Bible without an intentional equipping component.

We cannot call ourselves disciples if we are not being equipped.

Today, as we continue to walk through our series on Living Out Our Purpose, we want to focus on what it means to be equipped, why we need to be equipped, the benefits of being equipped, and how to be equipped.

Let me ask you this morning? Are you being equipped to live for Jesus? Are you taking advantage of our Sunday school, Bible studies, and small groups?

It is my prayer that if you are here today and you have not been taking advantage of the many means of equipping at FBC De Soto you will commit today to take your Next Step and find yourself plugged into our Discipleship Pathway.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE EQUIPPED?

Every believer is called to grow in Christ and believers grow by being equipped in their faith. We are equipped as we study the word together, share life experiences, and serve one another.

Writing to the Ephesian church Paul says,

“for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:12).

We will look at verses 11 and 13 shortly, but I want to focus in on verse 12 and the word “equipping.”

For a person to be equipped means to be built up, strengthened, perfectly built, and sculpted, to be completely qualified for a specific purpose.

Notice this, and this is important here. There is an expectation that all believers are growing in Christ.

Picture a car engine. Each part of the engine is not designed for itself, but it is designed to be a part of the engine. Each part is perfectly made to equip the engine. Every part functions by itself, but in conjunction with each other.

You start out with the engine block, then you add crankcase, oil pan, pistons, headers, rods, valves, and valve covers. Once that is complete you will put on the intake with a large Edelbrock 850 carburetor. Following that you will install all your pulleys, alternator, and additional parts. Finally, you get to put on some powerful loud headers which then gives you a complete engine.

This engine is fully equipped to do what it has been designed to do.

For us to be equipped means that we take our growth in Christ serious.

Growth in Christ, maturing in the likeness of Jesus is not accidental, it is an intentional process.

Each part of your growth in Christ is specifically designed by God to make you more like Jesus and when we fail to participate in personal and corporate equipping opportunities, we severely limit our growth in Christ.

WHY DO I NEED TO BE EQUIPPED?

But now we must ask the question, why do I need to be equipped?

Well, there are several reasons, which we will cover, but the main reason is that failure to be equipped leads to us failing in our purpose in life which is to glorify God.

Let's revisit our Ephesian text again.

¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. (Eph. 4:12-13).

Now, within these two verses we not only see that there is an imperative to be equipped we also see some implications, or reasons why we need to be equipped.

We are equipped for:

The work of service

The building up of the body

Maturity in our walk with Christ.

The work of service- we are equipped so that we can effectively serve the church and those within the church.

Our equipping leads to what we will discuss next week and that is engagement.

Those who are properly equipped wholeheartedly engage in ministry and missions.

What area of ministry are you currently serving? What type of mission are you helping expand?

When we are equipped, that is growing in the word and likeness of Jesus, we take on the character of Christ and this is seen most evidently in our humility or lack thereof.

A humble person does not view themselves above any person or task. A humble person views their gifts, talents, and resources as available to God and gladly offers them up for his service.

We are also equipped so the body can be built up.

The building up of the body- as the body is built up two things happen.

The church is strengthened-Your brothers and sisters in the church depend on you to help them grow in the faith, bear their burdens, and be strengthened in Christ. We are in this for one another.

When one is strengthened, we are all strengthened and when one is weak, we are all weak (**1 Cor. 12:26**).

Part of the purpose of our personal growth in Christ is the strengthening of the church, so the church is unified in Christ.

A believer who is being strengthened in Christ is a believer who is not concerned with the petty issues that divide, but rather seeks unity for the glory of God.

The church is expanded- Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone and the apostles and prophets have laid a foundation (**Eph. 2:20**).

Every one of us, believers in Jesus, are living stones built on top of those who have come before us (**Eph. 2:21-22**).

We have a responsibility to not only be strong stones, but to work to add more stones to the building, that is the church.

How are you helping build up the body of Christ?

Every believer lives as a Spirit-filled individual and is to be strengthening the body and growing into a life that glorifies God.

Finally, we are equipped in order that we may be mature in our walk with Christ.

Maturity in our walk with Christ- notice Paul's language in verse 13. We are being equipped so we have unity in the faith, a deeper knowledge of Jesus, and walk in the fullness of Jesus.

Being equipped helps us grow into the fullness of the image of Jesus.

As we are equipped, we are allowing Christ to restore the brokenness of our lives which leads to us fulfilling our purpose of glorifying God.

If we can be honest for a moment and have a real talk about something that has been bugging me for a long time when it comes to the church world.

We often equate maturity of age with maturity of faith, and it is not the same thing.

You can be forty and have been a Christian since you were ten, but that doesn't mean you are mature in Christ. You say, "How dare you preacher!"

But it's true. Our length of time with Christ does not signify our growth in Christ. Why do I say this?

Growth in Christ happens as we consciously, intentionally, and regularly place ourselves in the word, in prayer, in groups, and in service. All four of these need to be present for growth to happen.

I can tell you I have been talked to worse by a sixty-year-old "saint" than I have by a roughneck on an oil rig.

What about you? Are you growing in Christ? Are you allowing the word of God to wash over you and cleanse you? If you could look back over the last three years, do you seek Christ-like growth in your life?

Maturity does not happen automatically. We must partner with the Holy Spirit and seek the Lord, apply the word to our heart, and obediently follow Christ in all areas of our lives.

WHO DOES THE EQUIPPING?

This may seem like a straightforward answer, but we need to take our time with this because it is intricate and important.

We need to know who does the equipping of our hearts, minds, and lives because it ties directly into living out our purpose.

Since creation, God has sought to teach and equip his creation for his glory.

Adam and Eve- Gen. 2:16-18

Noah-Gen. 6:13-22

Abraham- Gen. 12:1-3

David- 2 Sam. 5:19

The Prophets

We see that God desires his people to know him and know how to live for him. God has not left us ignorant; he desires us to grow in our knowledge of him (**Eph. 1:17**).

God spoke to his people directly, then through prophets, then kings. God decreed his word to be written down so people would know God and know how to have a relationship with him.

Now look what happens when we get to the New Testament.

Jesus, who we know is God, comes to the earth and look what John says in **John 1:14**,

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

And then in verse 17 John says of Jesus, *“For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.”*

Jesus, who is God, is referred to as “The Word” has come to earth so we may know what?

Well, verse 17 tells us that the Law (the word of God) was given to Moses and that grace and truth were realized through Jesus.

What we see is that it is actually Jesus who gave the Word to Moses and that after coming to earth, Jesus is now fulfilling the law by bringing the grace and truth of God to earth.

Still, God has not left his people without knowledge of him and how to live for him.

Jesus has come that we may have life and have it abundantly (**John 10:10**).

Jesus reveals to us the purpose of all the Old Testament by showing it all pointed to him.

Ok. So, we know God spoke to people in the Old Testament and that Jesus spoke to people in the New Testament, but what do we do now, how are we equipped? I’m glad you asked.

I want to show you a few more pieces to this because it is important.

As Jesus is preparing his disciples for his death, he knows they will need to be reminded of his words and so he makes them and subsequently all believers this amazing promise in **John 16:13-15**.

¹³ But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will

disclose it to you. ¹⁵ All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you.

Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit is our teacher and that he will teach us the Word of God.

The Spirit of God which dwells in every believer reveals the truth and life in the Word of God.

The Spirit works with the Word to move you closer to Jesus!

A word of caution is needed here. The Spirit works with the Word of God, not independently from it.

If someone tells you, "God told me," Or "The Spirit told me," And they don't have a verse in context that follows that statement they are not speaking for God, but for themselves.

Now I want you to see the purpose of the Bible. Paul tells Timothy in **2 Tim. 3:16-17**,

"¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

Notice how amazing this is! The Bible is the inspired word of God and is used to equip us for every good work God has for us.

God, since creation has supplied his creation with all we need to know him, love him, and live for him.

God has given all we need for life and godliness (**2 Pt. 1:3**).

So, what do we see about who equips us?

The Lord himself, then through prophets, priests, and kings.

Then through Jesus himself, and now the Holy Spirit in conjunction with Word, through the means of the church (**Eph. 4:11-12**).

There is nothing we need to walk for and live for God, that God has not provided.

If we are lacking anything in our faith journey, it is because of our willingness to take hold of the promises and goodness of God.

WHO IS TO BE EQUIPPED?

The next logical question, but hopefully obvious answer is who is to be equipped?

All believers are to be equipped in the Lord.

How do I know?

Let's look at **Mt. 28:18-20** and check out Jesus' words in what we know as the Great Commission.

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Notice Jesus' words here. This command is for all believers. Jesus, our Creator and Savior; Lord of all he commands all believers to do three things here:

Go and make disciples (share the gospel)

Baptize the new disciples (identify with his death/resurrection)

Train the new disciples in his commands (the whole counsel of God)

There is not a single believer whom this does not apply towards.

All of us are to be equipped, which tells us that if we are not being equipped then we are living outside the will of the Lord.

HOW DO I BECOME EQUIPPED?

Ok, so we know what it means to be equipped, why we are to be equipped, and who does the equipping, but now we ask how do we become equipped?

This is the more practical aspect of equipping.

We know we are equipped through the word, but we are also equipped through gospel-centered relationships.

What is a gospel-centered relationship and why is it important?

A gospel-centered relationship is a relationship between believers who seek to use that relationship to glorify God through the mutual building up of one another.

Why are gospel-centered relationships important? We need one another in order to be strengthened. When we become a Christian, we don't do so in a vacuum, but in a community **(1 Cor. 12:12-13)**.

When you become a Christian, you are not only given access to the Kingdom of God, but his church, and more specifically the local church.

And from the local church, individuals are strengthened in Christ **(Eph. 4:11-12)**.

Individually, we are equipped in our personal devotional time with the Lord through the word and prayer.

Here at FBC De Soto we have sought to follow Jesus' model and develop our Next Steps Discipleship Pathway.

From what we learned about Jesus' discipleship model we see the importance of large to small groups.

We want you to participate in our Pathway for the purpose of helping you fulfill your purpose of glorifying God in all areas of your life.

There are two primary ways we have here to be equipped.

Sunday School

S.S. provides a learning environment to dig deep into the word and ask questions.

It is here where your mind, your relationships, and your service grows.

S.S. allows you to develop a broader and deeper knowledge of the Word in a context that fits your particular situation in life.

D-Groups

D-Groups differ from S.S. in that they are significantly smaller, 3-4 people, and focus on gospel relation building.

D-Groups pray for each other, read scripture together, ask questions about one another's life, and walk-through life together.

If you want to start a D-Group, simply contact one of the pastors and we can walk you through the process and get you started.

Are you taking advantage of our groups here at FBC De Soto?

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING EQUIPPED?

Growth in Christ

Stronger gospel-centered relationships

Deeper knowledge of God's word

Part of a great community of believers

Learn your giftedness

Opportunities to use your gifts

Pour into the life of others

Have others pour into your life

BLUNDERS OF NOT BEING EQUIPPED?

Failure to be equipped in Christ leads to a failure to be able to grow in Christ which leads to a failure in our purpose of glorifying God with our lives.