

Ephesians 4: God defines us by the gifts he gives us

By Bob Young

God creates us as individuals. He gives us gifts. By the things God gives he defines us. God makes us what we are. By the grace of God, we individually and collectively are what we are. In the way he made us and the gifts he gives us he defines our potential, our possibilities, and our purpose. He knows why he made each of us—what we were made for. The world does not define us, we do not define ourselves. God defines us.

God not only gives us gifts in the form of talents or abilities, God gives us the things of life. God gives us the things he works for good. In the midst of a fallen world, God works all things for good. The things we consider bad could not be made to work together to contribute to the overall eternal good were it not for the things God has placed in our lives.

Let me suggest four things God gives you that help define you.

God gives you a purpose in life.

What is your purpose? Many answers could be given, but your ultimate purpose in life cannot be determined apart from God. One answer that is true for every human being is that God made us to glorify him. God wants his human creation to participate in and complete his work. He made us to do his will in order that we might glorify him by becoming like him.

Each of us has a specific niche God made us to fill. He made us with a specific purpose in mind. He created us with the potential to be a “player” on his team, to fulfill a specific role. God’s purpose in your life involves the ministry for which God equips you.

God gives you the people in your life.

Have you considered the people you know? Have you thought about whom you know, the people with whom you share life? The people who are alive at the same time you are? Think about your family, your friends, your brothers and sisters in Christ. God has placed us in the world at this specific point in time. We have people, possibilities, and unique opportunities. God places you in a context where you can harmonize and connect and work with others.

God gives you the power to accomplish your purpose among the people God has given you.

God empowers you. He does this in many ways. He empowers you by your capacities and abilities. He empowers Christians by his indwelling Spirit. He uniquely gifts you and equips you for his work in this world. He gives you the power to grow into the image and fullness of Christ.

God gives you passion.

Not everyone likes the same things. Not everyone has the same preferences. What makes one passionate in the kingdom is different than what makes another passionate. God made you with your unique aptitudes and abilities. He gave you passion for certain aspects of life, different from the passions of your brothers or sisters.

May God help us glorify him by using the gifts he gives us to fulfill his will.