

The 4Es of Christians

1Corinthians 1:4-9

Preface

What are some of the non-material things we often desire in life? Perhaps you desire more patience or wisdom. Or maybe you wish you had the ability to speak in public or musical talents.

One thing I desire is better memory. I have never had knack for memorization. I can remember something in general but not specifically. I can remember what God's word says about something but I can never remember the exact verse and wording.

I struggle to remember birthdays, anniversaries and phone numbers. I see people read something once or twice and they have it memorized for life. I cannot do that.

Let's look at some non-material gifts we are given through Christ.

Scripture

⁴I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. ⁵For in him you have been enriched in every way--in all your speaking and in all your knowledge-- ⁶because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. ⁷Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. ⁸He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful. 1Cor 1:4 (NIV)

Introduction

Paul writes to the church at Corinth and in verse 10 he jumps right into some problems the church was experiencing with division among themselves.

But before addressing their division, Paul reminds them of who they are and the resources they possess.

God's word tells us that as believers, we become part of His family. We become joint heirs with Christ.

¹²Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. John 1:125-13 NIV

Let's look at just some of the benefits of being God's children. For simplicity we will call them the four Es of Christians.

1. Enriched (Empowered) by God's Grace (vs 4-5)

⁴I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. ⁵For in him you have been enriched in every way--in all your speaking and in all your knowledge.

Paul says he thanks God for the believers because of the grace of God that is given to us in Christ Jesus. Then he says we are **enriched in every way**.

When we accept Christ, we are enriched with the power of the grace of God. We are enriched with the Holy Spirit of God.

As believers we are enriched with the ability to overcome temptation. We have the empowerment through grace to resist temptation. We no longer are slaves to sin and temptation.

Illus: People often say, "When I get my life straight, I plan to come back to church." I tell them then it will never happen. God wants you now. **"God doesn't give us grace because we are worthy - He gives us grace so that we may be worthy."**

Notice verse 5 again. ". ⁵For in him you have been enriched in every way--in all your speaking and in all your knowledge,"

God gives us the words and knowledge to speak for Him. As Christians we have power we often neglect or overlook.

Illus: A man recently asked why we didn't object to Obama when he said we were not a Christian nation. The answer is because we don't understand the power of God.

In Verse 5, we are promised that if we are in Christ we have been **MADE RICH** in all things - ALL we speak and ALL we know.

The next time we need to speak the right words, or understand in the right way - ask God to give you the words, opportunity, wisdom and courage.

Christians are enriched with the grace of God.

2. Evidence of Christ's person (vs. 6)

⁶ *because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you.*

If we are in Christ the evidence will be obvious that we **have been made rich** in all our words and knowledge in Christ!

The word testimony is the same as the word "witness!"

People need to witness the power of God at work in us!

Acts 4:13 (NIV) *When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.*

If you have been with Jesus, others will see and hear Jesus in you.

The King James translation reads, "⁶ Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you."

In other words, the truth, the evidence of Christ and who He is rest largely upon our words and actions.

The Bible says to be saved one must repent and believe that Jesus is the Son of the Living God. Our lives can be the evidence to others that Jesus is the Son of the Living God.

3. Equipped for His purpose (vs. 7)

⁷ *Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.*

The words translated "you do not lack any spiritual gift" literally in the Greek read, "***you might not come up short in not a single gift***".

Not only has God enriched us but He has also equipped us. God provides us with every single gift we need to accomplish His purpose for us.

The idea here is that until Jesus returns to finish God's purpose for this world – you and I have been specifically gifted to fulfill God's will until that day.

Illus: People often say they just don't have any gifts. We all have abilities beyond our imagination and beyond what we think can be accomplished.

For many Christians, our gifts are sitting away collecting dust. We need dust them off and get busy using them unto the day of the Lord.

4. Effective in the work (vs. 8-9)

⁸ *He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.* ⁹ *God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.*

Again the Greek literally reads: "**He will prove you to be true until the end, above reproach, in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.**"

Who is the responsible party in verse 8? Who will prove us true to the end? God.

You and I will not be effective in our testimony. We will not be effective in resisting temptation. We will not be effective in our efforts. I will not be effective in my preaching.

But God working through you and me will make us effective.

How do we know this? The answer is at the end of verse 9. Because our God; the same one who calls us into fellowship with Christ **is faithful**. He stakes His reputation on it.

Because of God, not of our own doing, we will be effective in our service for Him.

Conclusion

Football season is in full swing. Alabama won, LSU won and Auburn won yesterday so it was a good day for sure.

I watched a couple of games yesterday and was amazed at the sheer power and ability of some of these athletes.

I was reminded of my high school days. I was a big guy but never played many sports. I played little league baseball but had to walk miles to the field and then we moved away.

I never had a father to teach me how to play or to pass with me. Not once. I never had anyone take me to practice or attend my games. I did play basketball two years in high school but mostly sat on the bench. For some time I resented that.

But as a Christian, our Heavenly father equips us. He gives us the things we need to accomplish His purpose in our life. Praise God for this is far more important than sports.