

## Destiny's Child

On Sunday we continued our sermon series on the book of Ephesians by focusing on the fourth chapter, which talks about how each of us can activate our enormous spiritual potential.

1. Warm up question. Did you watch the Super Bowl? If so, what was your favorite thing – a certain play on the field, something in the halftime show, one of the commercials? (If you didn't watch the Super Bowl, what did you do with your time instead?)
2. Ephesians 4:7 says, "Each one of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore, it is said, 'When he [Jesus] ascended on high, he gave gifts to his people.'" The idea here is that each one of us has been endowed by Jesus with spiritual gifts, *i.e.*, with a certain spiritual genius, that was meant to be shared with the world. From this, we drew our first principle on Sunday: **You have enormous spiritual potential!**
  - a. Jeff told the story of Joey Alexander, a child prodigy jazz pianist, who is nominated for two Grammy Awards this year at age 12. We look at Joey with amazement. Jeff suggested that God sees each of us as having similar potential as spiritual prodigies. Do you buy that? Do you think you have the potential to exhibit a certain spiritual genius? If so, how do you think that genius might be expressed by you? Given how you're put together, what form might God's brilliant, beautiful work through you take, as your life unfolds?
  - b. Ecclesiastes 4:11 says, "God has made everything beautiful for its own time, and has set eternity in the human heart." What does the first phrase say about you? What does the second phrase say about you?
  - c. Jeff used the phrase "Spirit being," as in, "you are a Spirit being," suggesting that should be our primary self-identity. Do you like that way of seeing yourself? Why or why not?
3. Ephesians 4:11 says, "[Among] the gifts that God gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry." This is a reference to what the Ephesians were experiencing in their church. Their pastors and teachers were sharing with them the wisdom and insight of the apostles and prophets about Jesus and the Scriptures, applying it to their lives to equip them as Spirit beings. Spiritual community was the place where spiritual actualization was taking place for the early Christians. In community they were finding information, encouragement, challenge, accountability, and spiritual companionship. From this we drew our second principle: **Church is the place where our spiritual potential is fed and nurtured.**
  - a. What do you most value about being part of a spiritual community – and how does that help your soul grow?

- b. Most of us have had certain moments in spiritual community when we learned something new about Jesus or the Scriptures or spiritual life that really impacted us. Tell us about one of those moments for you. What did you learn and how did it impact you?
  - c. Most of us have had certain moments in spiritual community when we really felt comforted or nurtured. Tell us about one of those moments for you and how it impacted you.
  - d. Proverbs 27:17 says, “Just as iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens the countenance of another.” The idea seems to be that the friction of our interaction with each other cuts, carves, and shapes us, hopefully for the better. Most of us have had moments like that when someone in spiritual community really challenged us and made us better. Tell us about one of those moments for you and how it impacted you.
  - e. How does this Oasis Group help you live into your spiritual potential? What do you like most about being part of our Group?
  - f. If you were not part of our church, how would your life be different?
4. It’s impossible to be part of a spiritual community (or any community) without experiencing conflict. That led to our third insight from Sunday: **We must not let conflict derail us from spiritual community.** Chapter 4 offers practical advice for conflict management.
- a. Verse 26 says, “Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger.” What do you think this means?
  - b. Verse 15 says, “Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.” Verse 29 says, “Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.”
    - i. Speaking the truth is hard. The book “Crucial Conversations” says 95% of us struggle to speak to those around us about our concerns. Why is it so hard to speak up? What is the cost of not speaking up?
    - ii. What’s the difference between simply “speaking the truth” versus “speaking the truth in love”? Can you think of an example you’ve witness that illustrates the difference?
  - c. What’s the best way to keep conflict from derailing us from spiritual community?