

A Word Study on “Equipping”

A main reason Jesus gave the five-fold ministry gifts was to “equip the saints, for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.”

*Eph 4:10-13 He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.) (11) And He gave some as **apostles**, and some as **prophets**, and some as **evangelists**, and some as **pastors** and **teachers**, (12) for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; (13) until 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.*

While every leader in the church may not be a fivefold minister, they do share in the important task of equipping the saints.

- **Concordance Definitions** – 2677 katartismos from 2675 katartízō - fit (join) together; met: I compact together, prepare, perfect, for his (its) full destination or use, bring into its proper condition (whether for the first time, or after a lapse). The overall meaning is to adjust, fit, or put in good working order to fully function as designed.
- **Definition “Equipping”** – Preparing, furnishing, mending, and equipping. **The basic idea of equipping is putting a thing into the condition in which it ought to be.** It includes mending/cleaning (restoring when it is damaged due to challenge), motivating, or the idea of **repairing** and **preparing**. It carries with it the idea of providing something with what it needs so it might serve the purpose for which it is made.

The idea of equipping includes inspiration, motivation, providing vision, giving examples, showing opportunities and challenges, mending, fixing, cleaning, providing resources, preparing, providing administrations, providing connections and collaborations, or things needed so one can serve the purpose for which they are made.

The word appears in 13 passages in the New Testament

- **Matthew 4:20-21** *Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. (21) Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, **mending their nets**; and He called them.*
- **Matthew 21:16** *and said to Him, "Do You hear what these children are saying?" And Jesus *said to them, "Yes; have you never read, 'OUT OF THE MOUTH OF INFANTS AND NURSING BABIES YOU HAVE **PREPARED PRAISE FOR YOURSELF**'?"*
- **Mark 1:19** *Going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat **mending the nets**.*

- **Luke 6:39-40** And He also spoke a parable to them: "A blind man cannot guide a blind man, can he? Will they not both fall into a pit? (40) "A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully **trained**, will be like his teacher.
- **Romans 9:21-22** Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? (22) What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath **prepared** for destruction? (23) And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He **prepared** beforehand for glory,
- **1 Corinthians 1:10** Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made **complete** in the same mind and in the same judgment.
- **Galatians 6:1** Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, **restore such** a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.
- **Ephesians 4:11-12** And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, (12) for the **equipping** of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;
- **1 Thessalonians 3:10** as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and may **complete** what is lacking in your faith?
- **1 Peter 5:10-11** After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself **perfect**, confirm, strengthen and establish you. (11) To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.
- **Hebrews 10:5** Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE **PREPARED** FOR ME;
- **Hebrews 11:3** By faith we understand that the worlds were **prepared** by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.
- **Hebrews 13:20-21** Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, (21) **equip you** in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Old Testament Septuagint (LXX Greek translation of the Old Testament) contains the Greek word for equipping. Here are a few of the verses but not a complete list.

- **Exodus 15:17** "You will bring them and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, The place, O LORD, which You have made for Your dwelling, The sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands have **established**.
- **Ezra 4:12** let it be known to the king that the Jews who came up from you have come to us at Jerusalem; they are rebuilding the rebellious and evil city and are finishing the walls and **repairing** the foundations.
- **Ezra 4:16** "We inform the king that if that city is **rebuilt** and the walls finished, as a result you will have no possession in the province beyond the River."
- **Ezra 5:3** At that time Tattenai, the governor of the province beyond the River, and Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues came to them and spoke to them thus, "Who issued you a decree to **rebuild** this temple and to finish this structure?"
- **Ezra 5:9** "Then we asked those elders and said to them thus, 'Who issued you a decree to **rebuild** this temple and to finish this structure?'

- **Psalms 8:2** *From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have established **strength** Because of Your adversaries, To make the enemy and the revengeful cease.*
- **Psalms 17:5** *My steps have **held fast** to Your paths. My feet have not slipped.*
- **Psalms 68:9** *You shed abroad a plentiful rain, O God; You **confirmed** Your inheritance when it was parched.*
- **Psalms 74:16** *Yours is the day, Yours also is the night; You have **prepared** the light and the sun.*
- **Psalms 89:37** *"It shall be **established** forever like the moon, And the witness in the sky is faithful." Selah.*

In "Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary" by Harold Hoehner, it lists three primary ways in which the word "equipping/katartizō" is used in Scripture:

- **Mend/restore** Ez 4:12, 16, 5:3, 9, Ps 68:9, Mt 4:21, Mk 1:19, Gal 6:1, 1 Thes 3:10.
- **Establish/lay foundations** Ex 15:17, Ps 8:2, 17:5, 74:16, 89:37, Heb 11:3.
- **Prepare/train/equip** Lk 6:40, Rom 9:23, Eph 4:12, Heb 10:5.

Equipping is not a gift that some have, but rather what leaders are called to DO with their gift.

There are 5-word pictures in the 13 verses in the New Testament where the word appears. Three times we get a picture of repairing and three times we get a picture for preparing.

1. Repairing what is displaced like a physician.

- **Ephesians 4:11-12** *And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, (12) for the **equipping** of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.*
- **Galatians 6:1** *Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, **restore** such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.*

The equipper as physician is here in Eph 4:12 and Galatians 6:1. In ancient Greece the word has a medical history. A doctor would *katartizo* a body by setting a bone, putting it back into right connection with the other parts of the body. It's too easy to become displaced. When we have a broken relationship, or anger and bitterness, we get out of joint. Someone has to come alongside to restore us.

2. Mending by undoing damage, cleaning, and preparing for future service like an off-duty fisherman

- **Matthew 4:20-21** *Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. (21) Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, **mending** their nets; and He called them.*
- **Mark 1:19** *Going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat **mending** the nets.*

The equipper as off-duty fisherman appears in Matthew 4:21 and Mark 1:19. There are two meanings in this one: first, undoing the damage of previous service by mending the net, and second, preparing the

nets for further service. The second task, preparing a net for service, involves cleaning it – getting rid of the unwanted stuff that collects in the net through long use. Too many believers are saved, but continue to carry the baggage of the old life: wrong ideas, bad attitudes, resentment and pain. But the Lord wants to bring us healing, starting here and now: deliverance from death is step one, the journey to freedom is an ongoing process.

3. A Potter shaping.

Equipping is building into people what they need to function effectively in the church and in the world. 2 Tim.3:17 “thoroughly equipped for every good work.” The potter shapes the clay, and then when the shape is right fixes it – makes it permanent by firing at high temperature. A pot is useful for many tasks –carrying, providing nurture, storing things that are needed later.

- **Romans 9:21-23** *Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? (22) What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? (23) And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,*
- **1 Peter 5:10-11** *After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. (11) To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

4. A teacher of a pupil.

- **Luke 6:39-40** *And He also spoke a parable to them: “A blind man cannot guide a blind man, can he? Will they not both fall into a pit? (40) “A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.*

5. A parent who raises children.

- **1Thessalonians 2:11** *just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children...**3:10** as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith?*

Parents walk with children to teach them and help them imitate their life. Paul did this with people and Jesus did with the 12. He didn't go to lectures with the 12; He took them with Him and lived alongside them.

There is a sixth picture In the Greek Translation of the Old Testament (LXX).

6. Stone mason who picks up fallen stones and putting them back in order again to make walls strong and useful.

- **Ezra 4:12** *let it be known to the king that the Jews who came up from you have come to us at Jerusalem; they are rebuilding the rebellious and evil city and are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations.*

- **Ezra 4:16** "We inform the king that if that city is rebuilt and the walls finished, as a result you will have no possession in the province beyond the River."
- **Ezra 5:3** At that time Tattenai, the governor of the province beyond the River, and Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues came to them and spoke to them thus, "Who issued you a decree to **rebuild** this temple and to finish this structure?"
- **Ezra 5:9** "Then we asked those elders and said to them thus, 'Who issued you a decree to **rebuild** this temple and to finish this structure?"

The "Holy temple" that God is building is a wall made of living stones (1 Peter 2). The equipper as stone mason finds the missing stone, the solitary stone, and then engineers it to a fit into the wall, then continues to help it stay in the wall.

Doug K's thoughts on equipping...

Equipping isn't a one time, or seasonal thing.

It is a continual ongoing process.

Leaders never stop equipping.

Leaders equip by reminding, encouraging, teaching, giving example, setting things in order, and mending and cleaning others where they have become dirty or damaged in Kingdom work.

Leaders must constantly equip the saints.