Ephesians 4:7-10 - 7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it says, "When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, And He gave gifts to men." 9(Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) NASB

A. But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift – All Christians are united by the special grace which brings salvation, but each one has been given gifts specifically. This grace of gifts is given “to each one of us” Christians and in this context are for the edification of the entire body (v-11-16).

Romans 12:6-8 - 6 And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. NASB

B. "When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, And He gave gifts to men." – A quote from Psalms 68:18 which is a victory Psalm celebrating David’s conquest of the city of Jerusalem on Mount Zion. Here Paul uses it to describe Christ’s triumphant victory over sin and death and assent into heaven, at which time He brought the spoils and “captives” of His victory which He leads in triumphal procession, namely us, whom He graciously gifted after making us “captive” to His Lordship.

Psalms 68:18 - 18 Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captive Thy captives; Thou hast received gifts among men, Even among the rebellious also, that the LORD God may dwell there. NASB

C. (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) – Christ, the eternal King, left the glory of heaven and “descended” to the earth to redeem man by a great war. After His victory, He ascended back to the rightful place, “far above the heavens” where He again rules as Sovereign King. This He accomplished becoming one of us, in order to “fill all things” as to wage war as one of us, not by some abstract, far off power, but in the fray with sin and death, along with all of us who were held captive by it.

Ephesians 1:20-23 - 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. 22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. NASB

Ephesians 4:11-13 - 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. NASB

A. He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers – Here Paul elaborates on the gifts given to the captives. Specifically that “some” have received these specific gifts for a specific purpose which he further elaborates on. Each one of us Christians have received the grace of gifts but only “some” have received the grace of these specific gifts. Paul does not elaborate on each of these offices but simply mentions each one and the general purpose of them all. This is by no
means an exhaustive list of spiritual gifts, but simply a list of those offices within the church given for the equipping of the saints for their individual work of service (ministry).

**apostles and prophets** – These have formerly done the work of “laying the foundation” of the “building where God lives by His Spirit” (Eph 2:20) to **equip the saints**. This was accomplished by the revelatory Word of Holy Scripture which they brought forth by the Spirit. The 13 Apostles of our Lord and the prophets who brought forth the Old Testament scriptures.

**evangelists** – Do the ongoing work in the body of preaching the gospel and disciplemaking to **equip the saints**, but with the specific emphasis on calling the church out of darkness and seeking to convert the lost.

**pastors and teachers** – Do the ongoing work of disciplemaking in the church specifically through the ministry of teaching to **equip the saints**. The word “pastors” (poimen, poy-mane’—shepherd) is the word for shepherds, which is used elsewhere in the NT to refer to Christ (Heb 13:20, 1 Pet 2:25). Here coupled together with the word for teachers to emphasize the work of a pastor as a teacher. The ministry of a “pastor-teacher” is outlined in the books of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus where Paul gives practical instruction to Timothy and Titus.

B. for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ - Each one of these unique giftings, (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) fulfills the work of “**equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry.**” But notice here, the work of service or ministry belongs to “the saints.” Every Christian has been uniquely gifted to fulfill the “work of the ministry.” This work is the privilege and responsibility of every Christian and includes the expression of every good gift and virtue of Christ to “**edify the body**” until we have reached maturity in our unity and knowledge. The work of the ministry is specifically for the building up of the body, thus all the members of the body work together with their own gifting for the purpose of serving and building up the rest of the body of Christ.

**Colossians 1:28** - 28 And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, **that we may present every man complete in Christ**. NASB

**Romans 15:14** - 14 And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves **are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another**. NASB

1 Thessalonians 5:11 - 11 Therefore encourage one another, **and build up one another**, just as you also are doing. NASB

C. 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. – This “**equipping and building up**” is to continue until such time as we “attain to the unity, knowledge, and maturity” which Christ possesses. We are therefore to “**attain the unity of the faith**” which would include the entire message of the Christian gospel the whole body of Christian teaching. The “**knowledge of the Son of God**” would be to “know Christ” in experience as well as doctrinally. This all leads to the eventual “maturity” of the body, which is measured not by ourselves, but by the measure of “**the fullness of Christ**!” The faithful Christian presses toward a goal, high and lofty, and this pressing forward is the very nature of our Christian experience, UNTIL we have arrived at the perfection of Christ!
1 Corinthians 1:10 - 10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. NASB

Colossians 2:2-3 - 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself. 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. NASB

Ephesians 4:14-16 - 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. NASB

A. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming. Since we are all working in the ministry to build one another up to maturity, we will “grow up in our salvation” and “no longer be children.” Children, or young immature Christians, are carried away with dangerous and destructive doctrines, which are prevalent within the professing church, put forth by the “deceitful scheming” of false teachers. These deceive for some purpose of personal gain. Therefore we see the contrast between mature and immature Christians, namely the immature Christian is “doctrinally ignorant” and the mature Christian is “doctrinally grounded” in the knowledge of the Son of God. The goal here then is to become mature in the knowledge of Christ and of the will of God for life and its meaning, purpose and duty.

2 Peter 2:1-3, 18 - 2:1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. 2 And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; 3 and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. 18 For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, NASB

B. 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies – Here is how the body is built up primarily. It is by speaking the truth in love that we grow up. This is the work of the ministry to admonish, teach, and encourage one another with spiritual wisdom and knowledge. We then “grow up in all aspects into Christ”, which is to say that we attain the knowledge of God’s will and character and then begin to live it out practically as we are transformed into His perfect likeness. Here is Christian maturity, “grown up into Him”, that is, that we become like Him in thought, word and deed! And this is accomplished by the “mothering” of the church as each member of the body fulfills its purpose supplying what is needed to “fit us together.”

1 Peter 2:1-3 - 2:1 Therefore, putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2 like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation. 3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. NASB

C. according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. – Each individual part has a “proper working.” No
Christian is an island unto himself, but as a member of the body, has important and vital part to contribute. Not to do so would be to sin against Christ and His church. It is through this work of the ministry, admonishing, teaching, and encouraging one another with spiritual wisdom and knowledge that the body is built up to the stature of Christ. All of this is an expression of the love of God that we have in Him, and through this loving process we become in practice what we are in position.

Romans 12:4-6 - 4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: NASB