

*As a prisoner for the Lord, then,
I urge you to live a life worthy of
the calling you have
received. Be completely
humble and gentle; be patient,
bearing with one another in
love.*

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

*But to each one of us grace
has been given as Christ
apportioned it.*

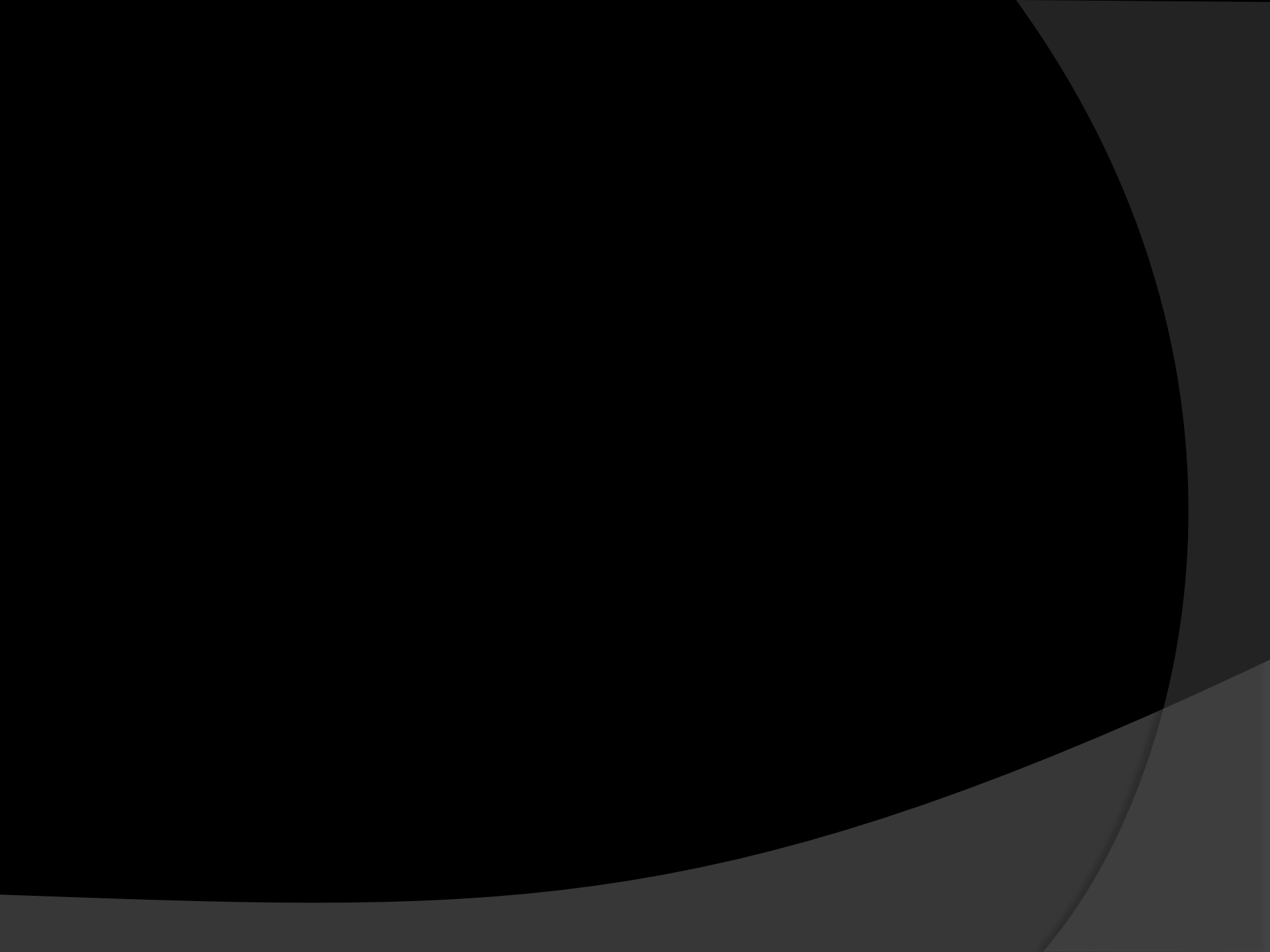
*So Christ himself gave the
apostles, the prophets, the
evangelists, the pastors and
teachers, **to equip his
people for works of service***

*so that the body of Christ
may be built up until we all
reach unity in the faith and
in the knowledge of the
Son of God and become
mature, attaining to the
whole measure of the
fullness of Christ.*

*Then we will no longer be
infants, tossed back and forth
by the waves, and blown here
and there by every wind of
teaching and by the cunning
and craftiness of people in their
deceitful scheming.*

*Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, **as each part does its work.***

Ephesians 4:1-16, NIV



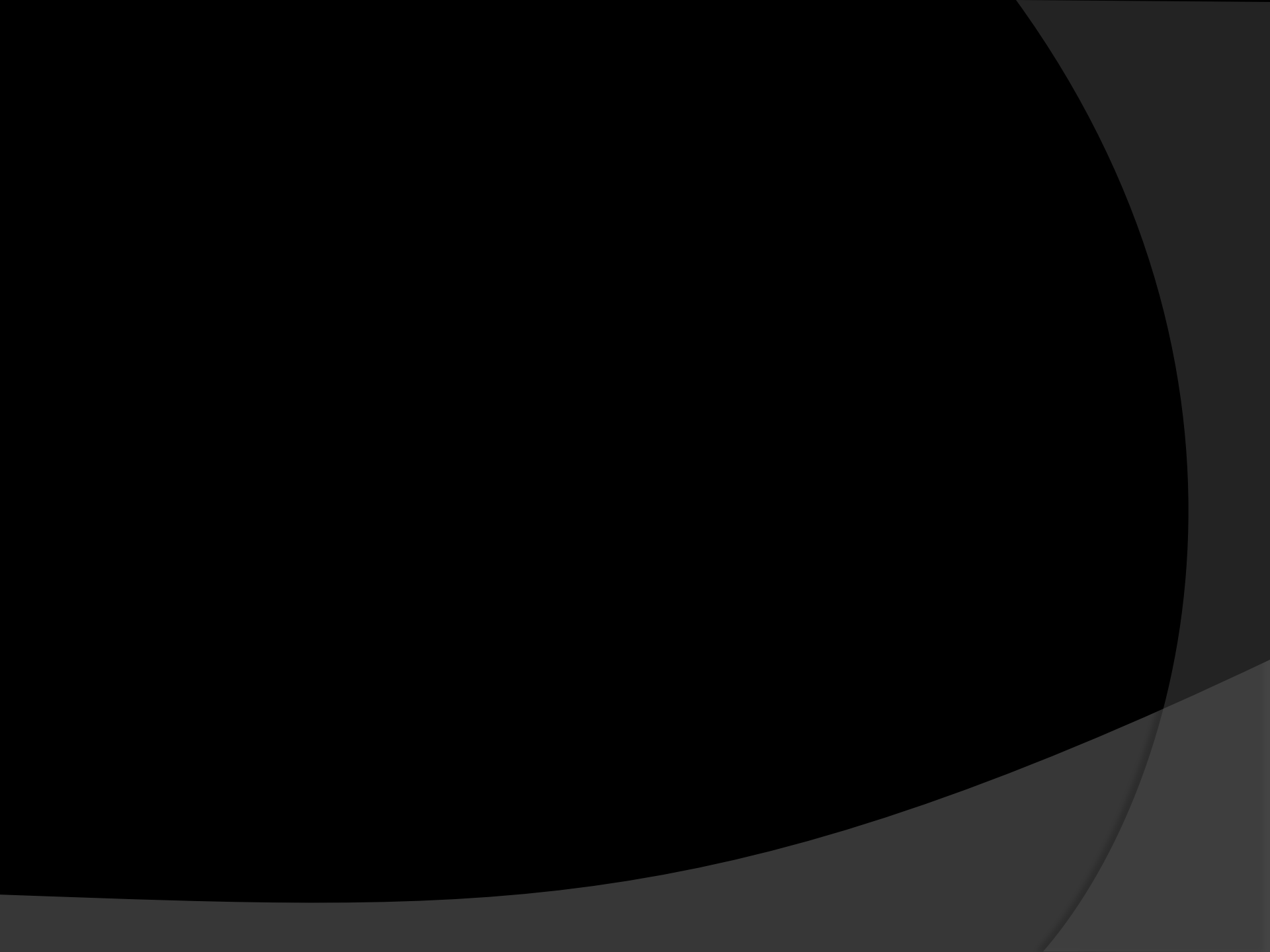
But as the believers rapidly multiplied, there were rumblings of discontent. The Greek-speaking believers complained about the Hebrew-speaking believers, saying that their widows were being discriminated against in the daily distribution of food.

*So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers They said, “We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program. And so, brothers, select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will **give them** this responsibility. Then we apostles can spend our time in prayer and teaching the word.”*

Everyone liked this idea, and they chose the following: Stephen (a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit), Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas of Antioch (an earlier convert to the Jewish faith).⁶ These seven were presented to the apostles, who prayed for them as they laid their hands on them.

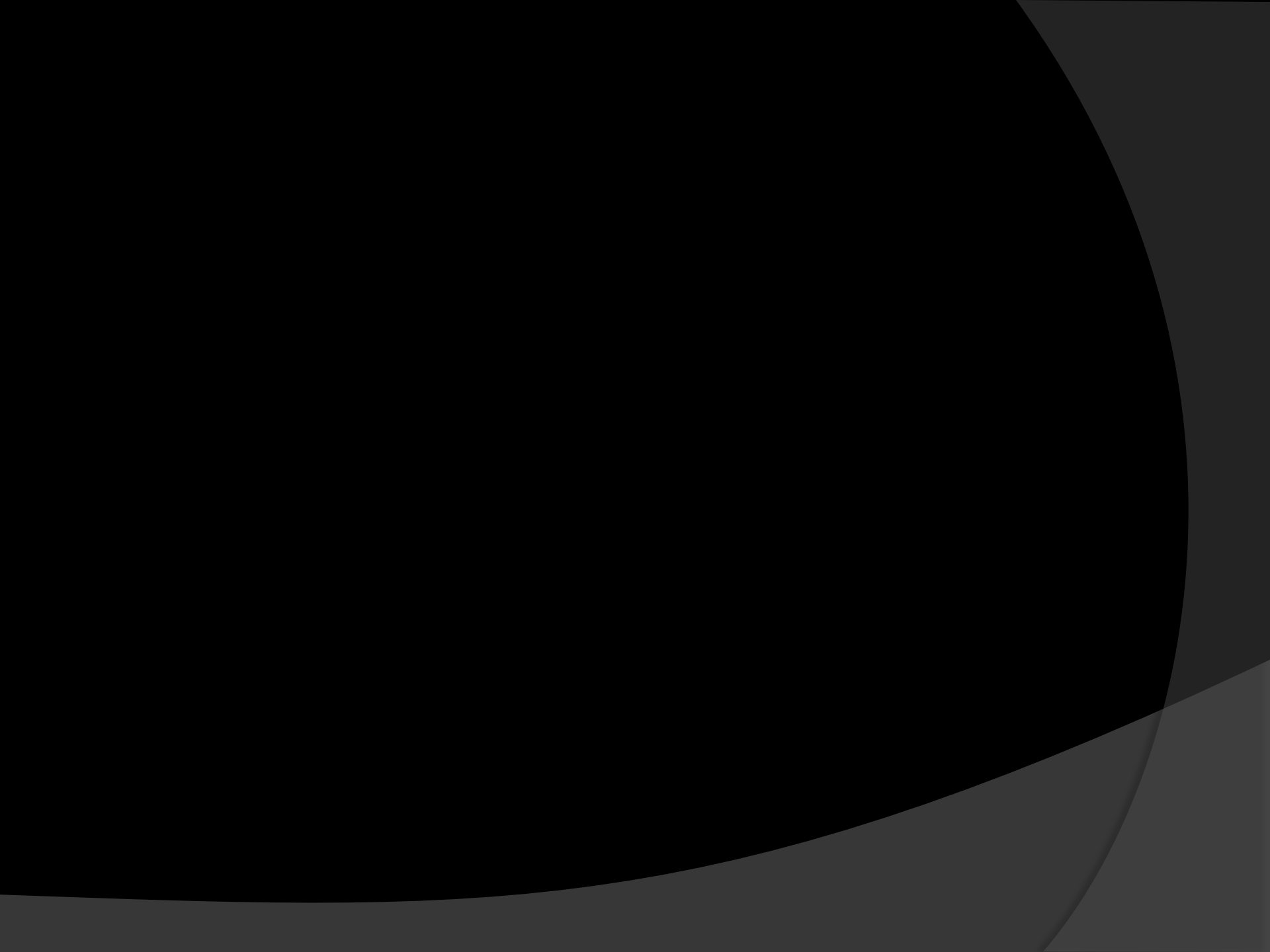
*So God's message continued
to spread. The number of
believers greatly increased in
Jerusalem, and many of the
Jewish priests were
converted, too.*

Acts 6:1-7 NIV



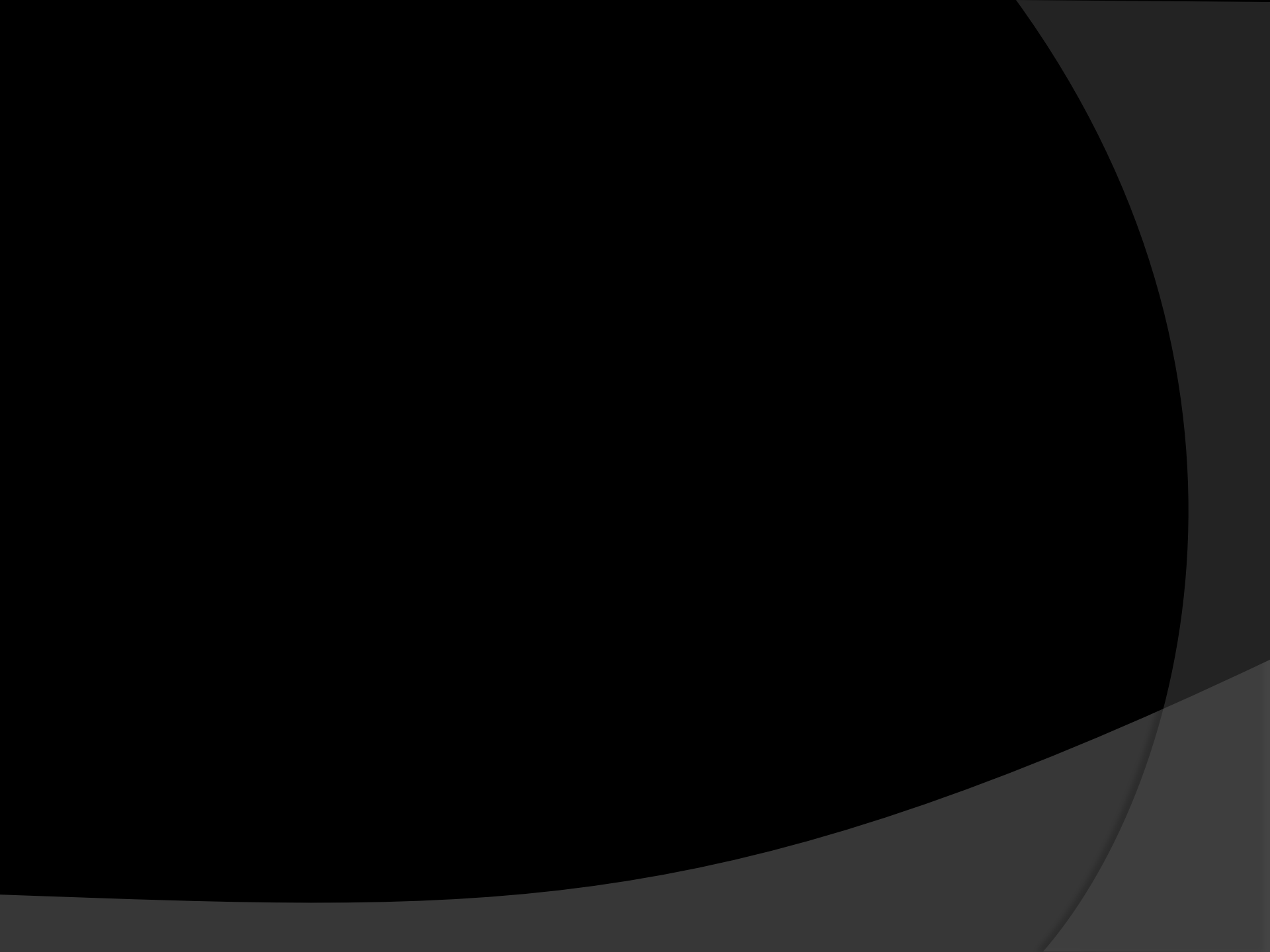
He will equip you with
all you need for doing
his will.

Hebrews 13:21



We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Romans 12:6-8 NIV



*Out of the generosity of Christ,
each of us is given his own gift.*

Ephesians 4:7 The Message

