

THE GIFT

"THE GIFT OF GIFTS"

ROMANS 12:3-8

This Week's Core Competency

Spiritual Gifts – I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes. Romans 12:4-6, *Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.*

Spiritual gifts are manifestations of the Spirit given for the common good of the church (1Co 12:7). On this topic one author observes, "The doctrine of spiritual gifts is almost exclusively a Pauline doctrine, the only use of the word outside of Paul being in 1 Peter 4:10. The major passage in Ephesians 4 attributes the giving of gifts to the risen and ascended Christ. The major passage in 1 Corinthians 12 emphasizes the Spirit's work as the One who gives gifts. The other principal passage, Romans 12, leaves the Agent unspecified" (Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 423).

A quick comparison of the lists in these passages reveals substantial differences, which suggests that the lists are selective, and none is exhaustive. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 12:8-11, Paul lists nine "kinds of gifts," each serving as a "manifestation of the Spirit" (v. 7). Verse 28 of the same chapter lists eight "kinds of gifts," four of which were listed earlier. The Corinthian believers were likely

A spiritual gift is a God-given ability for service.

– Charles C. Ryrie

familiar with these gifts. Unfortunately, we don't share their first-hand experience with them, so we don't know for sure how each gift functioned. And some speculate that other gifts may have been given in addition to the listed ones.

Still, we do know what spiritual gifts are and what they aren't. In the first place, "the word for spiritual gifts (*charisma*), obviously related to the word for grace, means something that is due to the grace of God. The use of the word in the New Testament ranges from the gift of salvation (Rom. 6:23), to the gift of God's providential care (2 Cor. 1:11), to the most frequent use in relation to gifts of grace to the believer. When used in this latter relationship I suggest that *a spiritual gift is a God-given ability for service*. In this proposed definition the synonym for gift is ability. A spiritual gift is an ability. 'God-given' reminds us that Christ and the Spirit are the givers of gifts, and 'for service' seeks to capture the emphasis in the central passages that gifts are to be used in serving the body of Christ. Though there exists a close analogy between spiritual gifts and talents (certainly both are God-given, 1 Cor. 4:7), talents may or may not be used for serving the body" (423 italics added).

In the second place, "(1) *A spiritual gift is not a place of service*. The gift is the ability, not where that ability is used. Teaching can be done in or out of a formal classroom situation and in any country of the world. Helping can be done in the church or in the neighborhood. (2) *A spiritual gift is not an office*. The gift is the ability and can be exercised whether one holds an office in a local church or not. In this regard much confusion exists over the gift of pastor. The gift is the ability to shepherd people. This can

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done by the person who occupies what we call, in our modern ecclesiology, the office of the pastorate. Or it can be done, say, by a dean of men or a dean of women in a school. Or it can be done by a wife and mother in a home. (3) *A spiritual gift is not a particular age group ministry.* There is no gift of youth work or children's work. All ages need to be served by pastors, teachers, administrators, helpers, etc. (4) *A spiritual gift is not a specialty technique.* There is no spiritual gift of writing or Christian education or music. There are techniques through which spiritual gifts may be channeled. (5) *A spiritual gift is different from a natural talent.* I have already mentioned that a talent may or may not serve the body of Christ, while a spiritual gift does . . . Thus a spiritual gift is a God-given ability to serve the body of Christ wherever and however He may direct" (424).

Boiling it all down, here's what we know for sure. Spiritual gifts are abilities individual believers are given when they are born again. These gifts may be related to and complemented by the talents and abilities they have from birth, but spiritual gifts aren't given to everyone—only to those who believe. They are given by Christ and bestowed by the Spirit (1Co 12). Lists of spiritual gifts are found in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28, Ephesians 4:11, and Romans 12:6-8, where Paul urges believers to make the most of their gifts.

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Romans 12:3-8

3 *For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.* 4 *Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,* 5 *so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.* 6 *We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.* 7 *If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach;* 8 *if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.*

Cf., corollary passage

1 Peter 4:10-11

10 *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.* 11 *If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Circle "grace" in vv. 3, 6.
- * Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 3.
- * Circle "sober" in v. 3.
- * Bracket "measure of faith" in v. 3.
- * Box "just as" in v. 4 and "so" in v. 5 indicating *comparison*.
- * Underline "prophesying" in v. 6.
- * Bracket "in proportion to his faith" in v. 6.
- * Underline "serving" and "teaching" in v. 7.
- * Underline "encouraging," "contributing," "leadership," and "showing mercy" in v. 8.
- * Double underline "give generously," "govern diligently," and "do it cheerfully" in v. 8.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. The word "for" suggests a connection of some kind between verses 3-8 and verses 1-2. Describe the connection as you see it.
2. Explain the *contrast* in verse 3.
3. "Sober judgment" is qualified by "measure of faith." What has the one to do with the other?
4. Explain the *comparison* in verses 4-5.
5. *Three* truths are set forth in Paul's body analogy. Identify them. (See note on vv. 4-5.)
6. Explain the difference between *prophesying* and *teaching*.
7. List the seven gifts Paul mentions in verses 6-8.
8. If Paul's *purpose* is not to give a definitive list of spiritual gifts, what is it?
9. **Discussion:** Talk about what you think your spiritual gift is and why-noting whether it is on the list or not.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of its message to clarify your understanding of the passage.

Commenting on Romans 12:3-8, one commentator observes: "The main point of this paragraph is the command in v. 3: Christians are 'to regard themselves with sober judgment.' The discussion of the diversity of gifts and their uses within the one body of Christ in vv. 4-8 provides the basis for this command. Understanding that Christians belong to one another in one body and have in common the same grace of God (v. 5) and faith (vv. 3, 6) will help to stifle exaggerated ideas about one's own status or ministry. And recognition of the significant contribution made by each member of the body of Christ will prevent one from thinking too highly (or too lowly) of him- or herself" (Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT, 758-59).

Verse 3 contains a first step in the process of transformation that Paul refers to in verse 2, "be transformed by the renewing of your *mind*." Speaking with the authority of an apostle, he says, "Do not *think* of yourself more highly than you should. Instead, be modest in your *thinking*, and judge yourself according to the amount of faith that God has given you" (GNT). "Faith" in this verse does not refer to saving faith but to the believer's "ability to view and use his or her gifts as abilities that God has given [which takes faith]. It also involves trusting in God to work through us to bring blessing to others [which also takes faith]" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Romans," 2015 ed., 161, www.soniclight.com).

Verse 4 contains a *comparison* between a physical body and the spiritual body of Christ. It's an analogy that Paul develops more fully in his earlier letter to the church in Corinth (1Co 12:12-30). In that letter he writes:

Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of

smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it (vv. 14-27).

Paul's illustration provides a prophylactic to pride and debunks the notion that any gifted member of the body is more important than any other gifted member of the body.

Verses 6-8 contain a list of seven gifts. This list overlaps the lists in Ephesians 4:11, 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 and 28, but it does not match perfectly any of them. Taken together, nineteen different gifts are found on these lists (see Bruce W. Black, *The Spiritual Gifts Handbook*, 29-32). Evidently, the apostle's purpose is not to give a definitive list of all spiritual gifts. One commentator concludes: "These texts suggest that Paul, and presumably the early church generally, recognized a small number of well-defined and widely occurring gifts along with an indefinite number of other less-defined gifts, some of which may not have been manifest everywhere and some of which may have overlapped with others" (Moo, 764). About the list in Romans 12:6-8, the same author writes: "Paul is not just listing gifts; he is exhorting each member of the community to use his or her own gift diligently and faithfully to strengthen the body's unity and help it to flourish" (764).

The Message of the Passage

Recognizing your place in the body of Christ, humbly use your spiritual gift, whatever it is, with all the faith and confidence God has given you.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you through his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on the first two "living questions" below to apply what you have learned this week.

• **Journal your answers to the following *living* questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

“The Gift of Gifts”

(Use the space below for Sunday’s message notes)

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 4 **for** "No specific relationship with vv. 1-2 is evident, but this call to Christian humility and unity is certainly one important manifestation of the transformation in thinking that should characterize the believer" (Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT, 759).

v. 3 **grace** Here "grace" refers to Paul's gift of apostleship (cf., 1:5). "As an apostle, Paul has a special gift of grace for the building up of the churches (2 Cor. xiii. 10)" (C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 235). "Since individual application is called for in appropriating the teaching, the apostle finds it expedient to remind his readers of his authority to expound this subject even though he is unknown to most of them and their gifts are unknown to him (cf., 1:5; Gal 2:9; Eph 3:7)" (Everett F. Harrison, "Romans," in *The Bible Expositor's Commentary*, 10:129).

v. 3 **sober** Cf., "honest" (NLT); "modest" (GNT); "sensibly" (HCSB). The word means "to be reasonable, sensible, to keep the proper measure, not going beyond the set boundaries" (Fritz Rienecker, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, 376). "If we consider ourselves to possess gifts we do not have, then we have an inflated notion of our place and function; we sin by esteeming ourselves beyond what we are. But if we underestimate, then we are refusing to acknowledge God's grace and we fail to exercise that which God has dispensed for our own sanctification and that of others" (John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT, 117).

v. 3 **measure of faith** "The 'faith' in view in this verse, and in verse 6, seems to refer to one's ability to view and use his or her gifts as abilities that God has given. It also involves trusting in God to work through us to bring blessing to others. Such a view of oneself, in relation to his or her gifts is 'sound judgment,' because it is consistent with reality. The 'measure of faith,' therefore, does not refer to how much faith one can muster up, but to the amount of faith that God has given each Christian. This amount varies from believer to believer. We can see this evidenced, in that it is easier for some Christians to trust God than it is for others to do so" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Romans," 2015 ed., 161, www.soniclight.com). "Faith, as used in this passage, is hardly saving faith, but faith in the sense of grasping the nature of one's spiritual gift and having the confidence to exercise it rightly" (Harrison, 129).

vv. 4-5 **just as, so** "To offset the individualistic thinking with its resulting danger of pride, Paul refers to the human body—an illustration familiar from its earlier use in 1 Corinthians 12:12ff. Three truths are set forth: the unity of the body; the diversity of its members, with corresponding diversity in function; and the mutuality of the various members—each member belongs to all the others" (129-30). "It is implied by v. 4 that Christians have diverse functions which nevertheless are all necessary to the proper working of the body of which all are parts; there is no room, therefore, for any to think too highly of himself or to despise another (1 Cor. xii. 12-31)" (Barrett, 236).

v. 6 **grace** "The 'gifts' that we have are abilities that God has given us by His 'grace' (cf. 1 Cor. 12:6; Eph. 4:7; 1 Pet. 4:10). They are capacities for His service" (Constable, 161).

v. 6 **prophesying** "Paul prized this gift very highly. NT prophecy could include predictions of the future (cf. Acts 11:28; 21:10-12), but this was not its essence. More broadly, rather, NT prophecy involved proclaiming to the community information that God had revealed to the prophet for the church's edification (see esp. 1 Cor. 14:3, 24-25, 30). The truth revealed by the prophet did not come with the authority of the truth taught by the apostles, for prophetic speech was to be scrutinized by other prophets (1 Cor. 14:29-32)" (Moo, 765). "The apostles possessed the prophetic gift; they also were organs of revelation. But the apostles had other qualifications which accorded them preeminence and 'prophets' were not apostles" (Murray, 122).

v. 6 **in proportion . . .** "All the gifts, in order to be effective, must be used 'according to the proportion' (Gr. *analogia*) of the 'faith' that God has given each of us. The 'faith' in view, as in verse 3, is probably the amount of faith God has given us, not what we believe, namely, Christian teaching" (Constable, 162). "'Faith' retains the subjective force it has in v.3 and the whole phrase has the same thrust as 'measure of faith' there" (Harrison, 130). "Prophet, Paul is saying, are to make sure that their utterances are in right proportion to their faith in Christ" (Moo, 766).

v. 7 **teaching** "While both prophecy and teaching are speaking gifts that are intended to exhort the church, they are distinguishable. 'Prophecy,' as we have seen, has a revelatory basis: the prophet speaks the words that God 'puts into this mouth.' Teaching, on the other hand, involves the passing on of the truth of the gospel as it has been preserved in the church" (Moo, 767). "The office of teaching differs from the prophetic. He who expounds the Word of God is not an organ of revelation. The prophet commutates truth and to that extent imparts teaching. But he is not a teacher in the specialized sense of him whose function it is to expound the meaning of that which has been revealed. His work is directed particularly to the understanding" (Murray, 125).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

NO Connect the FAMILY this week.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse:

What Do You Think

What R U Going To Do

Core Comp

Memory Verse

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse _____, completed *Scrolls* _____, brought Bible _____, brought a friend _____.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.

Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians*

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.