

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ROMANS

Lessons 28 - 29

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Lesson 28:

Romans 12: 3-8

“Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don’t think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.”



Transformed Kingdom living calls for lives marked by humility and service through giftedness to the body of Christ.

In discussing the matter of giftedness, Paul reminds us that just as the physical body is made up of many members,

each with a different function,

The church is a body of many members, but all closely related and constituting a unity in Christ,

each one having individual functions and responsibilities.

We are not to inflate our own position, nor should we begrudge others their office.



v. 3 – “Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don’t think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us.”

Paul refers to his own function in the body as an authoritative apostle because of the privilege and authority God gave him.

Measuring yourselves by the faith God has given is not saving faith but the faith to receive and to exercise the gifts God apportions to us.

The phrase “faith God has given” is best understood as a synonym for “spiritual gift”.



vv. 4-5 – “Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.”

Our different gifts and abilities should make us love and depend more on one another, and therefore,

should make us more united as one body in Christ.



vv.6-8 – “In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.”

There are basically two interpretative approaches to this passage on gifts:

- 1. To see them as a category distinct from that of other NT passages, often referred to as the Father’s creational gifts.**
- 2. To see them as a repeat or overlap of many of those mentioned in either 1 Corinthians 12:12-29 or Ephesians 4:11.**



Ephesian 4:8 & 11:

“That is why the Scriptures say, “When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people.”
v. 8

“Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.” v. 11.

1 Corinthians 12:1:

“Now, dear brothers and sisters, regarding your question about the special abilities the Spirit gives us. I don’t want you to misunderstand this.”



Notice the underlined words from the three passages above from Romans 12:6; Ephesians 4:11; and 1 Corinthians 12:1.

Romans 12:6 – God [the Father] has given you gifts.

Ephesians 4:11 – Christ [the Son] gave gifts to his people.

1 Corinthians 12:1 – Holy Spirit gives us gifts.

There is no prescribed formula or “gift-mix” for any particular office (referring to the five ministry offices listed in Ephesians 4:11 that Christ gave for the nurture and equipping of His church, not for hierarchical control or ecclesiastical competition),

as God uses different people in different ways in each of these five ministries.



Uniqueness is manifested in individuals according to the varied gifts God the Father has given them (Romans 12:3-8) and joined with whatever gifts the Holy Spirit distributes to or through them.

The distinct gifts of the Father (Romans 12), the Son (Ephesians 4) and the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12) ought not to be confused,

nor should any of the five ministry offices in Ephesians 4 be limited to the operation of any particular gift.



Before we look at verses 6-8 individually, let's review the Gifts of the Godhead to mankind a bit further:

1. Foundational is our existence – human life – given to us by the Father (Genesis 2:7; Hebrews 12:9),
who also gave us His only begotten Son as the Redeemer for mankind (John 3:16).
2. Redemptively, Jesus is the giver of eternal life (John 5:38-40; 10:27, 28).
He gave His life and shed His blood to gain that privilege (Jn. 10:17, 18; Eph. 5:25-27).
3. The Father and the Son have jointly sent the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:17, 33) to advance the work of redemption through the church's ministry of worship, growth, and evangelism.



Romans 12:3-8, describes the gifts given by God the Father.

These gifts seem to characterize basic “motivations,” that is, inherent tendencies that characterize each different person by reason of the Creator’s unique workmanship in their initial gifting.

While only seven categories are listed, upon observation you will see that few people are fully described by only one.

More commonly a mix is found, with different traits of each gift (motivation) present to some degree, while usually one will be the dominant trait of that person.

These gifts of our place in God’s created order are foundational to the other gifts.



Second, in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit are listed.

Their purpose is specific – to “help” the body of Church.

The Greek word for Help is “Sumphero” meaning “to bring together, to benefit, to be advantageous,”

which is experienced as the body is strengthened in its life together and expanded through its ministry of evangelism.

These nine gifts are specifically available to every believer as the Holy Spirit distributes them (1 Corinthians 12:11).

These gifts are not to be merely acknowledged in a passive way, but rather are to be actively welcomed and expected (1 Corinthians 13:1; 14:1).



Third, the gifts which the Son of God has given are pivotal in assuring that the first two categories of gifts are applied in the body of the church.

Ephesians 4:7-16 not only indicates the “office gifts” Christ has placed in the church along with their purpose.

The ministry of these leaders is to “equip” the body by assisting each person to:

1. To perceive the place the Creator has made him to fill, by His creative workmanship in him, and the possibilities that salvation now opens to his realization of what he was made to be; and



2. To receive the power of the Holy Spirit, and begin to respond to His gifts, which are given to expand each believer's capabilities beyond the created order and toward the redemptive dimension of ministry, for edifying the church and evangelizing the world.



Gifts of the Father: Basic Life Purpose & Motivation:

1. Prophecy:

- a. To speak with forthrightness and insight, especially when enabled by the Spirit of God, Joel 2:28.
- b. To demonstrate moral boldness and uncompromising commitment to worthy values.
- c. To influence others in one's arena of influence with a positive spirit of social or spiritual righteousness.



- Note: Because all three categories of gifts (the Father's, the Son's, the Holy Spirit's) involve some expression of “prophecy”, it is helpful differentiate in this category (Romans 12) the focus is “general”,
characterized by that level of the prophetic gift which would belong to “every” believer.

The Holy Spirit's “gift of prophecy” (1 Corinthians 13:2) refers to supernatural prompting,

so much so that tongues with interpretation is equated with its operation (1 Corinthians 14:5).



The office-gift of the prophet, (Ephesians 4) which Christ gives to His church through individual ministries, is yet another expression of prophecy:

those holding this office must meet both the Old Testament requirements of a prophet's accuracy in his message and the New Testament standards of life and character required of spiritual leadership.



2. Serving:

- a. To minister and render loving, general service to meet the needs of others.
- b. Illustrated in the work and office of the deacon (elder or in our context – councilmember, ministry leader), Matthew 20:26.

3. Teaching:

- a. The supernatural ability to explain and apply the truths received from God for the church.
- b. Presupposes study and the Spirit's illumination providing the ability to make divine truth clear to the people of God.



4. Encouraging:

- a. Literally means to call aside for the purpose of making an appeal.
- b. In a broader sense it means to entreat, comfort, or instruct (Acts 4:36; Hebrews 10:25).

5. Giving:

- a. The essential meaning is to give out of a spirit of generosity.
- b. In a more technical sense, it refers to those with resources aiding those without such resources (2 Corinthians 1:12, 8:2; 9:11, 13)



6. Leading:

- a. Refers to the one “standing in front.”
- b. Involves the exercise of the Holy Spirit in modeling, superintending, and developing the body of Christ.
- c. Leadership is to be exercised with diligence.

7. Showing Kindness:

- a. To feel sympathy with the misery of another.
- b. To relate to others in empathy, respect, and honesty.
- c. To be effective, this gift (motivation) is to be exercised with kindness and cheerfulness – not as a matter of duty.



That is a quick review of the Father's Creational Gifts.
Remember, these gifts are foundational and are God's
motivations and life purposes for His people - the church.

Now, let's do another quick review of each one with
additional thoughts:



v. 6 – “Prophecy” here refers to the those whose creation gift from the Father enables them to view all of life with special ongoing prophetic insight,

independent of public office or special use by the Spirit in giving public prophecy or to the manifestation of public prophecy,

speaking something that God has spontaneously brought to mind (1 Corinthians 12:10).

The phrase “with as much faith as God has given you” likely means that prophecy of any sort is to be exercised in accordance with the biblical maturity God has granted to the speaker,

recognizing that God is the originator of the gift.



vv. 7-8 – “serving others” suggests either those whose special creation gift enables them to most effectively serve the body in physical ways or the rendering of any type of service by anyone in the church (1 Corinthians 12:5)

“Teach” refers either to those who are specifically gifted to keep an eye on and instruct the revealed truth of God’s word, regardless of public office or to those in the public office of teacher (Ephesians 4:11).

“Encouraging” describes either those whose creation gift enables them to best apply God’s truths through encouragement or to those (such as pastors) who are called to publically bring encouragement to the church.



“Giving” which does not occur in the 1 Corinthians or Ephesians listings, refers either to those gifted to contribute to the emotional and/or physical support of others,

or to those gifted with abundant financial means so as to support the work of spreading the Good News.

“Leadership Ability” refers to either those who are gifted to effectively facilitate all areas of life or to those with the public function of administration (1 Corinthians 12:28) or possibly even to a deacon (Philippians 1:1).

“Showing Kindness” defines either those with the special gift of strong, perceptive emotions or those called to special functions of Christian relief or acts of charity.



Lesson 29:

(Romans 12 continued)

vv. 9-21 – “Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you. Don’t curse them; pray that God will bless them. Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with each other. Don’t be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don’t think you know it all!



Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, “I will take revenge; I will pay them back,” says the Lord. Instead, “If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads.” Don’t let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.”



In Romans 12:9-21, Paul gives exhortations to Love.

He instructs the believer that Love is to be the guiding principle in Christian relationships not only with fellow believers (vv.9-13),

but with enemies as well (vv.14-21).

Paul mentions many specific Christian duties that are to characterize transformed living,

but love is the dominant note in all the exhortations.

In verses 9-16, Paul lists 17 duties that regulate Christian relationships:

1. Really love others, just don't pretend.
2. Hate what is wrong.
3. Hold tightly to what is good: literally means to be cemented or glued to the good.



4. Love each other with genuine affection.
5. Take delight in honoring each other.
6. Don't be lazy but work hard.
7. Serve the Lord enthusiastically: maintain zeal for the Lord.
8. Rejoice in our confident hope: let your hope be a joy to you.
9. Be patient in trouble/tribulations.
10. Keep on praying: Live a fervent prayer life.
11. When the saints are needy – be ready to help them.
12. Always be eager to practice hospitality.
13. Bless those who persecute you – don't curse them.



14. Be happy with those who are happy and weep with those who weep:

Take a lively interest in the blessings and prosperity of others without grudging. Show genuine compassion for others.

15. Live in harmony with each other.

16. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people.

17. Don't think you know it all:

Do not be overly ambitious to be rich and powerful.

Do not shun the poor by courting great men.

Associate with humble and godly people going through life with as little show and parade as possible.



In verses 17-21, Paul gives 7 duties or commands that regulate Christian conduct to the world.

1. Don't pay back evil with evil.
2. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable: Live within your means.
3. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

Because some people may remain violently opposed to us there are times when all efforts toward peace fail.

The Christian is to make certain that he/she is not at fault when peace breaks down.



4. Never take revenge, leave that to God.

Instead of taking vengeance ourselves,

we should give it over into God's hands and thereby leave our problems to the righteous anger of God.

God will exact revenge at the final judgment or even in this life, sometimes through the instrumentality of civil government (13:4). (Deuteronomy 32:35)

5. Feed and give drink to your enemy.



6. In view of the fact that God was good to you when you were His enemy (Romans 5:7-8),

you should likewise treat your enemies with goodness.

You will thus make them feel a burning sense of shame.

7. Conquer evil by doing good.

Never let evil get the better of you,

rather you get the better of evil by doing good.



After reviewing these duties/commands that govern the Believer's behavior/conduct with other believers and with the world,

where do you stand in your walk with the Lord?

Are there areas where you need to make changes or improvements?

Improvements – I need to work on based on Paul's duties/commands:

1. _____.
2. _____.
3. _____.



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