

ROMANS 12:6-8 A LIST OF GIFTS

John Owen: “Spiritual gifts are that without which the church cannot subsist in the world, nor can believers be useful to one another and the rest of mankind to the glory of Christ as they ought to be. They are the powers of the world to come, those effectual operations of the power of Christ whereby His kingdom was erected and is preserved.”

emphasizing mercy-loving, Christ-treasuring humility is because this gives the focus of verses 7 and 8. I don't think verse 7 and 8 will communicate what Paul wants to communicate unless we see them through the lens of Christ-treasuring humility

Paul is not simply saying “use them,” but use them “humbly”. Use them as the expression of mercy-dependent faith. Use them as the overflow of treasuring Christ. (Piper)

But unity in diversity is impossible without mercy-loving, mercy-dependent, Christ-treasuring humility.

Paul does not intend to give us tightly distinguishable categories. The implication of this is that in seeking to receive and use spiritual gifts (which we should surely do, 1 Corinthians 14:1), we should not think mechanically, as if there is a set number, or that they have fixed boundaries, or that they come in separate packages, so that if you have one you can't have the other, or that they come complete and in no varying proportions or mixtures.

So what shall we conclude from this observation that some spiritual gifts are things that God expects in some measure from all believers? Service, mercy, contributing, exhorting—they are all ordinary Christian virtues.

My conclusion is this: Some of these virtues come more joyfully and are more fruitfully for some than for others. When that happens I think we can call it a spiritual gift. In other words, it seems to me that some take unusual spiritual delight in serving, or giving, or doing mercy, or teaching, or leading, or exhorting. The Holy Spirit has shaped their hearts so that they find themselves unusually drawn to these things. Piper

mercy and service and contributing and exhorting, as well as others, are ordinary Christian virtues that we should all have. But they become spiritual gifts when we find the virtues pouring out with unusual joy and with unusual fruitfulness for others.

A. PROPHECY (PROPHETEIA) speaking forth, proclaiming

This would be public proclamation of divine truth.

God's public spokesman would be one that has this gift. It would be to instruct, admonish, warn, rebuke, correct, comfort, and encourage.

One who stood in front of another person and spoke for him.

What does the gift of prophecy refer to? How does it relate to Scripture? Is this gift to be exercised

today? And how do we use it “in proportion to our faith”? Those are the questions I would like to try to answer today. We are focusing on Romans 12:6: “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith.”

John Calvin saw it as interpreting scripture, so that a prophet is an interpreter of God’s will. At this day it is hardly anything else, than the right understanding of the Scripture, and the peculiar faculty of explaining it

In 16th century Zurich pastors came together for what they called prophesying. They shared exegetical, expositional, and practical insights they had gleaned from Scripture that helped them serve more effectively.

One preliminary observation: be sure you don’t think of prophecy only as predictions. That is one thing a biblical prophet did, but not the only one. Prophecy is forth-telling as well as foretelling. An Old Testament prophet spoke for God, whether describing the moral condition of the people calling for repentance, or the warning of judgments to come.

1 Cor 14:3 1 Pet 4:11 1 Cor 14:24-25 Acts 11:27-28 2Tim 4:2

One more observation on this view: 1 Corinthians 14:1 says to the church, “Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.” So all of us are told to earnestly desire especially to prophesy. This would not make sense, it seems to me, if the gift only applied to a limited group of men who spoke with Scripture-level authority. But it would make really good sense if prophecy were a gift that any believer could use to offer Spirit-timed insights that God brings to mind for each other’s good.

So for these reasons I am persuaded that the gift of prophecy is valid for today and is not equal with Scripture in authority but is valuable as a Spirit-guided expression of something we otherwise would not know or say, which is powerful for that particular moment and brings conviction or exhortation or consolation for the awakening or up building of faith. It should not spook us as something uncontrollable, but should be treated as any claim to insight. It is fallible. It may prove true and it may not because the human channel is sinful and fallible and finite. John Piper

objection comes from Ephesians 2:20. There Paul says that the church is “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.” This doesn’t refer to Old Testament prophets, because Paul uses the same phrase a few verses later like this: “[The mystery of Christ] was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (3:5). So he seems to be saying that the authoritative foundation of the church, is the apostles and prophets. That would seem to put the New Testament gift of prophecy into the category of authoritative, foundational speech, not the category of helpful, valuable, but fallible speech. Piper

“apostles and prophets” may refer to one group not two, namely apostles who are also prophets. Like we say, Noël is wife and mother. Not two Noël’s, but two ways of describing the one Noël. Or another example is the way Ephesians 4:11 uses the term “pastors and teachers”—not two groups but one. One group is both pastors and teachers. The upshot, then, from Ephesians 2:20 would be that the apostles who are prophets are the teaching founders of the church, with Christ himself as the cornerstone.

. The Exaltation of Christ

Using the gift in proportion to our faith will mean that we use it to exalt Christ. That's what faith does. Practically that means that as I bow my head before entering this pulpit I ask for the gift of prophecy. That is, I say (and you can say this about your small group as you are driving there), "Lord, bring to my mind thoughts and words, beyond my preparation, which will have the greatest effect for the glory of Christ. Bring to my mind applications and insights and words, besides those I have prepared, that will penetrate through hard hearts and convict, and others that will encourage and console and guide. Yes, I believe you have given me edifying insight already in my preparation. I am only now asking that to the gift of teaching you would add a gift of prophecy." I pray that way and you can too. John Piper

B. SERVING (DIAKONIA) Serve Acts 6:1-6

practical, often lowly, ordinary needs of people.

who don't seek the limelight, but have the gift of service: who joyfully and fruitfully serve. Who say: Is there a need I can fill?

C. TEACHING (DIDASKALIA) Mt 28:19-20 2 Tim 1:11 Acts 15:35

Acts 18:24-25 Luke 24:27,32 1 Tim 3:2 Titus 1:9 1 Tim 4:16

The primary difference between prophesying and teaching is between the ability to proclaim and the ability to give systematic regular instruction in God's Word. There was regular teaching in the early church. Acts 2:42 It is presenting God's Word understandably.

Regular systematic teaching of the Word is the main function of the pastor-teacher.

D. EXHORTATION (PARAKALEO) Acts 14:21-22 2 Tim 4:2 Heb 10:24-25

Advising, pleading, encouraging, warning, strengthening, and comforting
Persuading a believer to turn from a sin or a bad habit. Help a weak believer
To walk beside a friend who is grieving, discouraged, frustrated, depressed
Wanting people to believe and follow the truth

E. GIVING (METADIDOMI) Eph 4:28 GENEROSITY (HAPLOTES)

Acts 2:44-45

delight in the ordinary, radical Christian virtue of proportionate, regular, sacrificial, cheerful giving. What matters to God is not merely that we use our gifts, but how we use them—the spirit, the attitude. What matters is not merely that we give and lead and show mercy. What matters to God is free and lavish generosity in our giving. What matters to God is passion and eagerness and zeal in our leadership. What matters to God is gladness and cheerfulness and joy in our mercy. John Piper
And my point—and I think Paul's point—is that these are the overflow of mercy-dependent, mercy-loving, self-forgetting, Christ-treasuring humility.

F. LEADERSHIP (PROISTEMI) 1 Tim 5:17

lead with a burning zeal for Christ and for his word and for the mission of this church to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ.

G. MERCY (ELEEO) Prov 14:21, 31

Special sensitivity to people suffering and in sorrow Feeling put into action

Service to the poor, handicapped, homeless

To want to strengthen the weak

You have a gift. The rest of the body needs it. You are accountable for what you do with it.