

EXPOSITION OF ROMANS

Message #43

Romans 12:3-8

People who end up accomplishing powerful things for God do so because they have a transformed life and lifestyle, including body and mind, that is totally committed to understanding and applying the Word of God.

GOD'S PERFECT WILL FOR EVERY ONE OF OUR LIVES IS TO RECOGNIZE, DEVELOP, AND UTILIZE OUR SPIRITUAL GIFT FOR THE GLORY OF GOD AND FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

Dr. Walvoord said, "There is divine purpose in the life of every Christian, and spiritual gifts are keeping with that purpose."

Last time, we saw the type of commitment that is needed to bring this about:

- 1) We need to continually be a sacrifice;
- 2) We need not to be continually conformed to this world;
- 3) We need to be continually transformed by renewing our minds on God's Word.

Now the conjunction "for," which begins **verse 3**, is an explanatory conjunction. Paul uses this conjunction to explain what God's perfect will for one's life is - specifically recognize, develop, and utilize your spiritual gift for God's people.

IDEA #1 – Develop a proper recognition of your own spiritual gift. **12:3-5**

Thought #1 - A proper recognition thinks realistically. **12:3**

Notice carefully that four times in **verse 3** the word or form of the word "think" (φρονεω) is used. What this means is that God wants us to have a sensible and sane perspective of our own abilities. He wants us carefully thinking about what God has actually given us the ability to do and what He has not given us the ability to do (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, pp. 474-475).

God does not want us to think more highly of ourselves than we ought, which means we are to recognize our own spiritual gift and work on developing it and not try and think that we have, or deserve to have, a bigger or better gift other than the one God has given us.

Now notice carefully who determines which spiritual gift we have - Romans 12:3; I Corinthians 12:18; I Peter 4:10-11 - it is God. We have no say in this matter. God is the one who determines what the gifts are and who He gives specific gifts to and His ways are not our ways or our wishes.

If you want to use your gift and abilities at the highest level while on this earth, then go to work on carefully understanding and applying God's Word to your life and an amazing transformation will take place and you will accomplish just exactly what God wants.

Thought #2 - A proper recognition thinks diversely . **12:4-5**

Sound Biblical thinking realizes there is one body of Christ, but in that body is a diversity of gifts.

The body illustration is significant. My body and your body have many different parts, and in order for our bodies to function smoothly, each part must do its job. My eye cannot do the job of my hands.

Now this explains why different people in the body of Christ have a knack for different ministries and things.

IDEA #2 - Develop a proper utilization of your own spiritual gift. **12:6-8**

Gift #1 – The gift of prophecy . **12:6b**

The gift of prophecy is a temporal gift. This fact is clearly stated in Scripture (I Cor. 13:8-10). Prophecy, technically speaking, was a God-given revelation which set forth God's truth and foretold God's future. **The gift of prophecy meant that one received a direct message of revelation from God.** This gift was very much needed in the early church because there were no completed Bibles.

During Biblical times, the way one tested whether or not a prophet were true or false was by whether or not what he said came true. Today, the way we test a person as being true or false is whether or not what the person says corresponds to the Bible.

Gift #2 - The gift of service . **12:7a**

The word used for service is the Greek word diakonia (διακονία), from which we get our English word deacon . **This word means that service is a real ministry gift of God.** The basic meaning behind this word is that one has a burden to serve in the outworking of the local church. This type of person has a real heart to minister to and serve people in a local church. It seems to me that "service" is the supernatural ability to serve others in a variety of ways.

Gift #3 - The gift of teaching . **12:7b**

This is a God given supernatural ability to teach God's Word. In a general sense, we are all to be involved in sharing God's truth (i.e. Hebrews 5:11). However, this particular gift seems to indicate that one is especially gifted to study and "rightly divide" Scripture and then give sound instruction based on that study. It is possible that this gift is a single gift; however, very often it is closely associated with the gift of "pastor" (Ephesians 4:11).

Gift #4 - The gift of exhortation . **12:8a**

This Greek word (παρακαλεω) carries with it the idea of saying something to someone in a way that will encourage, comfort, and admonish. It is a supernatural ability to be able to encourage someone.

Gift #5 - The gift of giving . **12:8b**

This word (μεταδιδομι) is a rare Pauline word. It is only used five times in the N.T., and four of those times it is used by Paul (Romans 1:11; **12:8**; Eph. 4:28; I Thess. 2:8) and the other time it is used by Paul's close friend Luke (Luke 3:11).

The gift of giving is a special gift of God whereby God prospers someone so that he might give of his substance to the work of God and to the needs of others (i.e. Luke 3:11). The word literally means to give a share or to impart something to someone (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 286).

He does not comment on the act of giving, but he does comment on the attitude in which the gift is utilized - it should be with "liberality." In other words, giving should be done with a generous unselfish spirit with no thought of self-gain. **The fact is, the gift of giving is a supernatural gift of God, so if you have this gift then it ought to be used liberally.**

Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse said every Christian is to give to God, and if he doesn't, God will take His share through other means (*Romans*, Vol. 4.2, p. 55).

This teaches us a very significant lesson about spiritual gifts - not only does God keep track of the gift, but also the attitude in which the gift is being used.

Gift #6 - The gift of leading . **12:8c**

This is a God-given gift that enables a person to lead, rule, and govern other people. This is a supernatural gift and notice carefully the modifying thought it is to be done "with diligence."

The word "diligence" is one which means "haste." It seems to me that this implies that a person with a gift of ruling is one who can look at something as it relates to the church, analyze it, and make a decision without having it become a long, dragged-out process.

Gift #7 - The gift of mercy . **12:8d**

This is a supernatural ability to demonstrate compassion to others. This person has a real heart and can identify with those who are hurting or who are in a helpless condition.

The idea of "with cheerfulness" is not that you go to someone who is hurting and start telling them jokes; it is that you have a cheerful attitude about your much needed ministry - namely demonstrate compassion to others.

Seven steps to finding your spiritual gift:

(Step #1) - Meet the prerequisites of Romans 12:1-2.

(Step #2) - Stay focused on learning the Scriptures for this renews the mind.

(Step #3) - Pray and ask God to reveal your gift.

(Step #4) - Take advantage of opportunities God gives you to serve in His local church.

(Step #5) - Honestly ask yourself what you really enjoy doing.

(Step #6) - Ask spiritual people to evaluate you and your gift.

(Step #7) - When you utilize your gift, does it influence others in a God-honoring way?

Remember in any spiritual gift it is faith operative. You do not get a written letter or diploma from heaven which says this is your gift. But any believer who follows these guidelines will discover that God will use you in powerful ways in accordance with your gift and His will.

God expects each of us to recognize, develop, and utilize our spiritual gift. This is His perfect will for your life.