

Romans 12:3-8
The Gifts of the Gospel

- I. The gifts of the Gospel are given by God's grace.
 - A. Leon Morris points out that Paul probably has in view two ideas.
 1. The grace given him by God in salvation.
 2. The grace given him by God in putting him in the position of an Apostle.
 - a. Through God's grace, Paul is able to speak as one who knows the Living God.
 - b. Through God's grace, Paul is able to speak with the authoritative voice of God Himself.
 - B. Thomas Schreiner also proposes two reasons for Paul saying, "through the grace given me."
 1. First Paul is "...**not merely passing along good advice or his personal opinion.**" He is speaking as an Apostle called by God to deliver authoritative Scripture to the people of God.
 2. Second, Paul understands he has been made an Apostle "by the grace of God" and not through any effort on his own. Since he is exhorting others to think soberly, he is demonstrating his understanding that his gift is a gift of God.
 - C. The gifts of the Gospel are given to **ALL** the people of God.
 1. Verse 2: Paul; "I say to **every** man among you..."
 2. Each and every Christian is given the gift of faith by God.
 - a. Ephesians 2:8-9: **For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.**
 - b. Ephesians 4:7: **But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.**
 - c. Romans 12:3: "...**God has allotted to each a measure of faith.**"
 - 1) Word allotted means to apportion, bestow, or share
 - 2) It comes from a word which means to get as an allotment or share.
 - 3) In other words, God has apportioned or bestowed or allotted to each and every Christian the share of faith which he or she has.
 - D. The gifts of the Gospel are given to eliminate pride.
 1. Leon Morris: "...given **is important. It is not a matter of the believer making an earnest effort in order to produce some spectacular result in Christian character or achievement, but something God has given.**"
 2. Barnes' Notes: **People commonly regard the objects on which they pride themselves as things of their own creation, or as depending on themselves. But let an object be regarded as the gift of God, and it ceases to excite pride, and the feeling is at once changed into gratitude. He, therefore, who regards God as the source of all blessings, and he only, will be an humble man.**
 3. Even the gift of salvation is not a matter for pride.
 - a. Some feel that God must have loved them more than others because He saved them.
 - b. Scripture does not allow us to take that position.
 - 1) Romans 3:23: "...**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**"
 - 2) Romans 6:23: "**For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**"
 - 3) We **ALL** have sinned and therefore deserve death. It is only the grace of God that saves any.
 4. Verse 3: "...**I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment...**"
 - a. Verse is difficult to translate. Paul uses word play by using one Greek word four times.
 - b. Literally he says, "**I say to every man among you not to think highly more than he ought to think, but to think to think soberly.**"
 - 1) The word Paul uses for "think soberly" means to be of sound mind or sane.
 - 2) Therefore, to be arrogant or high thinking is to not be sane or of sound mind.

- 3) What then are we to think sanely or soberly about?
 - a) We are to think soberly or sanely in reference to our faith
 - b) We are to think soberly or sanely in reference to our gifts.
- 4) We must remember that God has allotted to each a measure of faith – our faith is not our own and therefore not a reason to be prideful – **nor** a reason to put ourselves down.
- 5) We must also remember that God has given us gifts (verse 6 – according to the grace given us) and therefore, even though our gifts may be different, they too are not a reason to be prideful
- c. John Murray: *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.*
- d. Barnes' Notes: *There is no sin to which people are more prone than an inordinate self-valuation and pride. Instead of judging by what constitutes true excellence of character, they pride themselves on that which is of no intrinsic value; on rank, and titles, and external accomplishments; or on talents, learning, or wealth. The only true standard of character pertains to the principles of action, or to that which constitutes the moral nature of the man; and to that the apostle calls the Roman people* (and I would add – and us).

II. The gifts of the Gospel are given for others.

- A. Paul uses the analogy of the human body to teach that each member's gift is important for the whole body.
 1. Verse 4: the body has many different members or parts and all the members do not have the same function.
 - a. The whole body is not an eye. If it were, the body could see where it was going but could not go anywhere.
 - b. The whole body is not a foot. If it were, it could go, but it could not see where it was going.
 - c. The whole body is not a hand. If it were it could grasp, but it could not see what to grasp.
 2. Every part of the human body is important and each part has a function.
 3. Every part of the body of Christ is important and each member has a function.
- B. Verse 5: **"...so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another."**
 1. The motto of the U.S.A. is **E Pluribus Unum** "from many, one."
 2. The reality of the Church is E Pluribus Unum; from many, one.
 3. Just as each of the 13 individual colonies became part of the one nation of the United States of America, so we as individuals saved by grace become part of the Body of Christ.
 4. The original 13 states depended on each other for support in the war of independence and the diversity of their people enhanced their effort to win their freedom from England.
 5. John Stott: *As one body, each member belongs to all the others... That is, we are dependent on one another, and the one-anotherness of the Christian fellowship is enhanced by the diversity of our gifts.*

III. The gifts of the Gospel must be properly used.

- A. The gift of prophecy is used **"...according to the proportion of his faith."**
 1. I believe that is an unfortunate translation of the original.
 2. Literally the phrase is **"according to the analogy of the faith"**
 3. Barnes' Notes: This word "analogian" is no where else used in the New Testament. The word properly applies to mathematics...and means the ratio or proportion which results from comparison of one number or magnitude with another.
 - a. Therefore, it denotes the measure of something compared with something else.
 - b. Prophecy therefore, must be compared with or measured against **the** faith.
 4. What Paul is teaching is that any prophecy must be compared with the standard of faith delivered to us in the Scriptures.

- B. The gift of serving is used in his serving.
1. Literally, Paul writes, "...if service, in the serving..."
 2. The word Paul uses is the noun and verb form of the word we translate as deacon or minister.
 - a. The word literally means an attendant who waits at tables.
 - b. In Christian use, it means to help or attend those in need.
 3. If God has given you the gift of serving, then you should serve.
 - a. We must remember that we all are servants.
 - b. If you are a Christian, you are a servant of God and therefore must serve Him.
 - c. If you are not a Christian, you are a servant of Satan and must repent and turn to God or suffer the eternal consequences.
 - d. Jesus says in Matthew 6:24: "**No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.**"
- C. The gift of teaching is used in teaching.
1. Literally, Paul writes, the one who teaches, in the teaching.
 2. If God has given you the gift of teaching, then you should be using that gift in the teaching of others about the Gospel.
- D. The gift of exhorting should be used in exhortation.
1. Literally, Paul writes, the one who exhorts, in the exhortation.
 2. The word Paul uses is parkaleo; the one called alongside.
 - a. It is the word we translate as Comforter as in the Paraclete.
 - b. The word means not only to exhort, but to comfort, to support.
 3. If God has given you the gift of comforting or consoling or exhorting others, you should be using that gift in the support of the church.
- E. The gift of giving should be used with liberality.
1. Literally, Paul writes, the one who shares, with simplicity.
 2. Your giving should be with a singleness or sincerity of purpose.
 - a. Your giving should be with the single purpose of giving joyful thanks to God for His blessings to you.
 - b. Giving should never be in expectation of what God might do if you are generous or what others may think of you if you are a big giver.
- F. The gift of leadership should be used with diligence.
1. Literally, Paul writes, the one who rules, with speed or eagerness.
 2. The word we translate "leads" means to stand before or preside over.
 3. The idea is that if God has given the gift of leadership, you should be eager to exercise that gift in humility.
- G. The gift of mercy should be used with cheerfulness.
1. Literally, Paul writes, the one showing mercy, with cheerfulness.
 2. The word we translate cheerfulness is the word from which we get "hilarious."
 3. The gift of mercy should always be exercised with cheerfulness and not in a sense of duty.
- H. The gifts of the Gospel must be used to build up the body of Christ.
1. All the gifts, including the gift of salvation are from God.
 2. Therefore, they are not a matter for pride.
 3. Each of you who are Christian have been given gifts to be used to benefit one another and to witness for Jesus Christ.
 4. Think soberly or sanely about what God has done for you and use the gifts He has given you.