

# Romans 12:3-6 Commentary

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**Romans 12:3** [For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. \(NASB: Lockman\)](#)

**Greek:** Lego (1SPA1) gar dia tes charitos tes dotheises (APPFSG) moi panti to onti (PAPMSD) en humin me hyperphronein (PAN) par o dei (3SPA1) phronein (PAN) alla phronein (PAN) eis to sophronein, hekasto os o theos emerisen metron pisteos.

**Amplified:** For by the grace (unmerited favor of God) given to me I warn everyone among you not to estimate and think of himself more highly than he ought [not to have an exaggerated opinion of his own importance], but to rate his ability with sober judgment, each according to the degree of faith apportioned by God to him. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**NLT:** As God's messenger, I give each of you this warning: Be honest in your estimate of yourselves, measuring your value by how much faith God has given you. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** As your spiritual teacher I give this piece of advice to each one of you. Don't cherish exaggerated ideas of yourself or your importance, but try to have a sane estimate of your capabilities by the light of the faith that God has given to you. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** For I am saying through the grace which is given me, to everyone who is among you, not to be thinking more highly of himself, above that which the necessities in the nature of the case impose upon him to be thinking, but to be thinking with a view to a sensible appraisal of himself according as to each one God divided a measure of faith. (Eerdmans)

**Young's Literal:** For I say, through the grace that was given to me, to every one who is among you, not to think above what it behoveth to think; but to think so as to think wisely, as to each God did deal a measure of faith,

ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS				
Romans 1:18-3:20	Romans 3:21-5:21	Romans 6:1-8:39	Romans 9:1-11:36	Romans 12:1-16:27
SIN	SALVATION	SANCTIFICATION	SOVEREIGNTY	SERVICE
NEED FOR SALVATION	WAY OF SALVATION	LIFE OF SALVATION	SCOPE OF SALVATION	SERVICE OF SALVATION
God's Holiness In Condemning Sin	God's Grace In Justifying Sinners	God's Power In Sanctifying Believers	God's Sovereignty In Saving Jew and Gentile	God's Glory The Object of Service
Deadliness of Sin	Design of Grace	Demonstration of Salvation		
		Power Given	Promises Fulfilled	Paths Pursued
Righteousness Needed	Righteousness Credited	Righteousness Demonstrated	Righteousness Restored to Israel	Righteousness Applied
God's Righteousness IN LAW	God's Righteousness IMPUTED	God's Righteousness OBEYED	God's Righteousness IN ELECTION	God's Righteousness DISPLAYED
Slaves to Sin	Slaves to God			Slaves Serving God
Doctrine				Duty
Life by Faith				Service by Faith

Modified from Irving L. Jensen's excellent work "[Jensen's Survey of the NT](#)"

**FOR THROUGH THE GRACE (gift) GIVEN TO ME I SAY TO EVERY MAN (no believer excluded) AMONG YOU: Lego (1SPAI) gar dia tes charitos tes dotheises (APPFSG) moi panti to onti (PAPMSD) en humin:**

- Ro 12:6, 7, 8; 1:5; 15:15,16; 1Co 3:10; 15:10; Ephesians 3:2,4,7,8; 4:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; Col 1:29; 1Ti 1:14; 1Pe 4:11
- [Romans 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Romans 12 Relationships	
Romans 12:1, 2	Relationship to God
Romans 12:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	Relationship with the Body of Christ
Romans 12:9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21	Relationship with others

**For (term of explanation) (gar)** explains that a proper opinion of oneself (i.e., to not to think more highly) is the immediate effect of a surrender to God, a non conforming to the world and a transformation produced by the renewing of our mind. Paul illustrates in his own person, in giving this advice, the rule he is laying down for the Church by emphasizing that what is communicating is "through the grace given" him and therefore without haughtiness or presumption. In addition note that Paul emphasizes that the truth he is communicating here is is a word to "every man" -- Everyone in the Body of Christ needs to hear and heed this message! No exceptions.

**What is the "grace given to" Paul?** Paul is alluding to his being an apostle and that this "grace" was only because God chose him to be an apostle. Paul had nothing to do with it as he reminded his beloved disciple Timothy in his last known written communication beginning the letter with acknowledgement that he was...

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God' (2Ti 1:1-note)

There were surely people associated with Paul who would have loved to have been an apostle, but God didn't choose them. He chose Paul, a man who proved to be a channel through which **His grace** could bountifully flow as shown in many of his epistles...

For example, Paul reminded the Corinthian church that what he did, he did not do in his strength alone...

But by the **grace** of God I am what I am, and His **grace** toward me did not prove vain (fruitless and without effect); but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the **grace** of God with me. (1Cor 15:10, cp 2Cor 12:9-note; 2Co 12:10-note)

Paul testified in Galatians to the grace given to him...

(Speaking before the Jewish council at Jerusalem Paul declared that) He (the same God) who **effectually worked** for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised **effectually worked** for me also to the Gentiles, and recognizing the **grace that had been given to me**, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we might go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. (Galatians 2:8,9)

To the **Ephesians** Paul repeatedly emphasized the **grace given to him** writing...

2 if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's **grace which was given to me** for you;

3 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.

4 And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,

5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;

6 to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,

7 of which I was made a minister, **according to the gift of God's grace** which was given to me according to the working of His power.

8 To me, the very least of all saints, **this grace was given**, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, (Ep 3:2-note, Ep 3:4-note, Ep 3:7,8-note)

Writing to the **Colossians** of his great objective to present every man complete (mature, "full grown") in Christ, he explained that it was...

And for this purpose also I labor (to the point of weariness), striving (agonizing) according to His power (made available by His grace which is perfected in weakness), which mightily works within me (Col 1:29-note)

**MacArthur** explains the preposition "**For**" this way: "**For**" indicates a transition from what the apostle has just commanded, tying spiritual service to spiritual dedication, the bridge between them being **spiritual attitude**. The Christian's proper attitude is humility, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think. Lack of that foundational virtue causes many believers to stumble. No matter how well grounded we may be in God's Word, how theologically sound we may be, or how vigorously we may seek to serve Him, our gifts will not operate so that our lives can be spiritually productive until **self** is set aside. **From self denial in the spiritual worship of God flows self surrender to the will of God, and from self surrender flows selfless service in the work of God.**" (emphasis added)

**Denney** - "The duties of members of the Church as such; avoidance of self-exaltation, and mutual service in the measure of the gift bestowed on each. The **for** indicates that 'humility is the immediate effect of self-surrender to God' (Gifford). Paul illustrates in his own person, in giving this advice, the rule he is laying down for the Church. He speaks '**through the grace given him**,' and therefore without presumption; but he does speak, and so puts wisdom and love at the service of the Church." ([Romans 12 - The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

How fitting in this section on SERVICE that Paul begins with acknowledgement of the power for all God honoring service, **God's grace**, ("for through the grace given to me") a truth he continually reminded the saints of in his letters (cf Ro 1:5-note, Ro 15:15, 16-notes, 1Co 3:10, 15:10, Ga 2:8, 9, Ep 3:2-note, Ep 3:7, 8-note, Ep 4:7-note, 1Ti 1:14).

Remember that the practical section that follows is not possible apart from a presentation of ourselves to God (Ro 12:1-note, Ro 12:2-note), once and for all and then each morning for the rest of our life.

Someone has well said that there are only two kinds of people in the world, those who wake up in the morning and say, 'Good

morning, Lord," and those who wake up in the morning and say, "Good Lord, its morning!"

Let us seek to be among those who greet the day acknowledging He is Lord of the new day and I am His **bondservant** ready to do His will. It will make a radical difference in the way we respond to all the distractions, interruptions, harsh words, unfair treatment, etc that are part of life.

The evidence of a surrendered life then is an available body, a willingness to help, to put yourself out, to be expendable, to respond to the needs God's has placed in your life. The first place where this service becomes visible is in the church itself -- in the body of Christ. Therefore this section deals with living out the spiritual gift(s) (see study of **charisma**) God has given to every believer. However, before Paul gives specific instructions regarding spiritual gifts he prefaces it with an admonishment concerning humility, for he is fully aware of pride that is prone to arise from spiritual giftedness (1Co 8:2,10:12, Pr 16:18, Isa 5:21) Remember also that spiritual giftedness does not necessarily equal spiritual maturity.

**Stedman** prefaces this section on service with this thought- I don't think the Christian life is worth a 'snap of the finger' if something exciting isn't happening from time to time. It really never begins for us until we begin to see that God intends to work through us individually, and that, when God is at work, things begin to happen. It isn't always some spectacular, outward display, but things take place... Once you discover this, as a result of the availability of the life-changing, transforming character of Christ dwelling in us, life becomes an exciting thing. You can hardly sleep at night, at times." The question for each of us then is " Is there anything you are excited about that God has done in your life recently? ([The Body at Work](#))

**NOT TO THINK MORE HIGHLY OF HIMSELF THAN HE OUGHT (dei = necessary) TO THINK: me huperphronein (PAN) par o dei (3SPAI) phronein (PAN):**

- Ro 11:20,25, Pr 25:27,26:12 Eccl 7:16, Mic 6:8, Lk 18:11
- 1Co 4:7, 8, 2Co 12:7, Ga 6:3, Php 2:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, Jas 4:6,1Pe 5:5, 3Jn 9
- [Romans 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

not to estimate himself above his real value (Williams)

**Think more highly** ([5252](#)) (**huperphroneo** from **huperphron** = over-proud in turn from **huper** = above, over + **phroneo** = think) literally means to over think or think above and so to be haughty.

The idea is "to over-think," "to think above," or "to proudly think."

**Alford** renders the text "not to be high-minded above that which he ought to be minded, but to be so minded as to be sober-minded."

Or one might render it "I say to everyone, do not super-think of yourself". One can clearly see Paul's emphasis on **themind** and specifically in context on what a **renewed mind** looks like ([Ro 12:2](#)).

A believer should appraise the gifts God has given him fairly, glorifying God for their bestowal, and then exercise them through dependence upon the Holy Spirit and not in mock humility make light of them. A renewed mind thinks soberly about oneself.

An individual with a renewed mind comprehends that he or she is a member of a body, that every member of that body does not perform every function but that God gives each believer a specific spiritual gift ("function"). Therefore since we do not all have the same gifts, it logically follows that we need one another and one another's different gifts. Thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think is a universal tendency of the human race. Our old Adamic nature loves to over-think about it**SELF**.

**Denney** - "To himself, every man is in a sense the most important person in the world, and it always needs much grace to see what other people are, and to keep a sense of moral proportion." ([Romans 12 - The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

**Wuest** - a Christian should appraise the gifts God has given him fairly, glorifying God for their bestowal, and their exercise through dependence upon the Holy Spirit, and not in mock humility make light of them.

Our tendency to focus on self is the major cause for the deadly pestilence in the church (and the world) called **'comparisonitis'** — the tendency to measure one's worth by comparing oneself to others. Do you look down on others and think highly of yourself because you possess a more "showy" spiritual gift than they? Paul's antidote for comparisonitis is not to see ourselves as we stack up against others, but to exercise sound judgment. What needs to change in your self assessment for you to judge yourself soberly? Jesus parable in ([Lk 18:9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14](#)) illustrates the deadly nature of comparisonitis and it therefore behooves us to diligently heed Paul's instruction.

**Kent Hughes** has these thoughts on 2 ways high minded thinking is manifest: "This can take two classic forms. Primarily it is that of the self-elevating braggart—the person who tells you how smart he is, how much he has done, how strong he is, how rich he will be when he gets his big break—legends in their own mind... The other form of overestimation is more subtle—that of self-deprecating... those who self-consciously talk about themselves as if they were nobodies. I remember Dr. Lloyd-Jones telling of being at a train station where a man met him and said, "Oh, Dr. Jones, I am just a chimney sweep in the house of the Lord. Let me carry your suitcase. I am a nobody, and you are a man of great gifts." Dr. Jones saw through the man immediately and did not deal too kindly with him. When a person acts like this, his expectation is that you will correct him. "No, no, you are really a great person." (The way to expose [him] is to say, "You know, I think you're right!")" (See [Romans: Righteousness from Heaven](#))

**Hughes** adds this insightful summary:

The thought chain of Romans is compelling...

<b>Romans 1:1-11:32</b>	<b>Profound theology</b>
<b>Romans 11:33–36</b>	<b>Profound doxology</b>
<b>Romans 12:1, 2</b>	<b>Profound dedication</b>
<b>Romans 12:3ff</b>	<b>Profound humility</b> resulting in action

#### BUT TO THINK SO AS TO HAVE SOUND JUDGMENT: *alla phronein* (PAN) *eis to sophronein*:

- [Torreys](#) topic on "sobriety"
- 1Timothy 2:9,15; Titus 2:2,4,6,12; 1Peter 1:13; 4:7; 5:8
- [Romans 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

but to rate his ability with sober judgment. (Amplified)

but try to have a **sane estimate** of your capabilities. (Phillips)

but to cherish a habit of thought tending to sobriety of mind (Denney)

#### But - term of contrast

**Sound judgment** ([4993](#)) (**sophroneo** from **sozo** [Vine] = to save {from **sos** = sound} + **phren** = mind, which would then literally describe a "saved mind"!)) (Click studies on the related words **sophron** and **sophronismos**) means literally to be of sound mind. The idea is to to keep one's mind safe and sound or to be in one's right mind. To think of one's self soberly. To put a moderate estimate on one's self. To curb one's passions. It means to be able to reason and think properly and in a sane manner. It means to have understanding about practical matters and thus be able to act sensibly.

**Related topics:** in depth study on **sozo**; in depth study on related word **sound mind** = **sophronismos**

Here are the 6 NT uses of **sophroneo** - Mk 5:15 (demon possessed man now healed); Lk 8:35 (healed of demon possession); Ro 12:3; 2Co 5:13; Titus 2:6-note (a sound mind is a self controlled mind); 1Pe 4:7-note(in light of the end of all things)

The idea of **sophroneo** is to "be in one's right mind" (2Co 5:13).

**Luke** records that after Jesus had entreated the demons out of the demoniac...

the people went out to see what had happened; and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting down at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his **right** (sound) **mind** (**sophroneo**); and they became frightened. And those who had seen it reported to them how the man who was demon-possessed had been made well. (Lk 8:35, 36)

In a nutshell then Paul is advocating sober thought instead of "super-thought"!

**A T Robertson** adds that in a sense "self conceit is here treated as a species of insanity."

A right estimate of oneself will always be a **humble** estimate (cf Ga 6:3, 4, 5), a recognition that, in ourselves, we can do nothing (Jn 15:5), but that in Christ we can be used to the glory of God (Jn 15:8). In context Paul is addressing one's attitude toward spiritual

gifts. He wants us not to consider our gift to be of greater importance than another saint's gift but to have a humble attitude, an attitude which when you know you have it, you have lost it! Humility ([TTT](#), [NTB](#)) means putting Christ first, others second, and self last ("J.O.Y." is Jesus, then Others, finally Yourself). Humility ([TTT](#), [NTB](#)) is a lack of pre-occupation with self.

**Sound judgment** understands that "[Every good thing given](#) and [every perfect gift](#) is from [above, coming down](#) from the [Father of lights](#), with [whom there is no variation or shifting shadow](#)" (see note James 1:17)

This realization serves as a corrective against self-complacency and pride. What room for glorying is there in that which we have received? Such "sober judgment" not only excludes an exaggerated opinion of oneself, but also warns us not to underestimate the abilities God has given us. Sometimes a false modesty may be just as detrimental to the church as pride.

**Matthew Henry** adds "We must not say, I am nothing, therefore I will sit still, and do nothing; but, I am nothing **in** myself, and therefore I will lay out myself to the utmost, in the strength of the grace of Christ." (emphasis added)

**Wiersbe** - "Each Christian must know what his spiritual gifts are and what ministry (or ministries) he is to have in the local church. It is not wrong for a Christian to recognize gifts in his own life and in the lives of others. What is wrong is the tendency to have a false evaluation of ourselves. Nothing causes more damage in a local church than a believer who overrates himself and tries to perform a ministry that he cannot do. (Sometimes the opposite is true, and people undervalue themselves. Both attitudes are wrong.)"

#### AS GOD HAS ALLOTTED TO EACH A MEASURE OF FAITH: hekasto os o theos emerisen metron pisteos:

- Ro 12:6; John 3:34; 1 Cor 4:7; 12:7, 8, 9, 10, 11; 2 Cor 12:13; Eph 4:7,13,16
- [Romans 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Allotted** ([3307](#)) ([merizo](#) from [meris](#) = part, portion) meaning to divide into parts and so to distribute as in (1Co 7:17, 2Co 10:13) The Holy Spirit distributes the correct proportion of the spiritual gift to each believer (1Pe 4:10-note; 1Pe 4:11-note) so that each may fulfill his or her role in the body of Christ (1Co 12:7,11).

**Merizo** - 14 in the NT - Mt. 12:25-26; Mk. 3:24-26; 6:41; Lk. 12:13; Ro 12:3; 1 Co. 1:13; 7:17, 34; 2Co. 10:13; Heb 7:2

**Measure of faith** conveys the truth that each believer can know the limitations of their gift. God has given the gift and the faith to discern the limits of your gift.

**MacArthur** - "In this context, a **measure of faith** seems to refer to the correct measure of the spiritual gift and its operating features that God sovereignly bestows on every believer. Every believer receives the exact gift and resources best suited to fulfill his role in the body of Christ... every person has his own special but limited set of capabilities. Trying to operate outside those capabilities produces frustration, discouragement, guilt feelings, mediocrity, and ultimate defeat. We fulfill our calling when we function according to God's sovereign design for us."

**Denney** - Whatever the characteristic of any individual may be, it is due to the discriminating act of God in measuring out faith to him in greater or less degree. Taken in connection with what precedes, the idea seems to be: There are various degrees of self-estimation proper, for God gives one more and another less; but all are fundamentally regulated by humility, for no one has anything that he has not received. 1 Corinthians 4:7. ([Romans 12 - The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

**Wuest** (quoting Vincent) - This estimate or appraisal of one's God-given gifts is to be "according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." "According to" is kata (κατά), the root meaning of which is "down," the idea of domination being brought out by the word. Our estimate of our gifts is to be governed by the measure of faith God gives each of us.

**Vincent** - The **measure of faith**. An expression which it is **not easy to define accurately**. It is to be noted: 1. That the point of the passage is a warning against an undue self-estimate, and a corresponding exhortation to estimate one's self with discrimination and sober judgment. 2. That Paul has a standard by which self-estimate is to be regulated. This is expressed by hos as, according as. 3. That this scale or measure is different in different persons, so that the line between conceit and sober thinking is not the same for all. This is expressed by emerisen (merizo) hath imparted, distributed, and hekastos to each one. 4. The character of this measure or standard is determined by faith. It must be observed that the general exhortation to a proper self-estimate is shaped by, and foreshadows, the subsequent words respecting differences of gifts. It was at this point that the tendency to self-conceit and spiritual arrogance would develop itself. Hence the precise definition of faith here will be affected by its relation to the differing gifts in Ro 12:6. Its meaning, therefore, must not be strictly limited to the conception of justifying faith in Christ, though that conception includes and is really the basis of every wider conception. It is faith as the condition of the powers and offices of believers, faith regarded as spiritual insight, which, according to its degree, qualifies a man to be a prophet, a teacher, a minister, etc.; faith in its relation to



character, as the only principle which develops a man's true character, and which, therefore, is the determining principle of the renewed man's tendencies, whether they lead him to meditation and research, or to practical activity. As faith is the sphere and subjective condition of the powers and functions of believers, so it furnishes a test or regulative standard of their respective endowments and functions. Thus the measure applied is distinctively a measure of faith. With faith the believer receives a power of discernment as to the actual limitations of his gifts. Faith, in introducing him into God's kingdom, introduces him to new standards of measurement, according to which he accurately determines the nature and extent of his powers, and so does not think of himself too highly. This measure is different in different individuals, but in every case faith is the determining element of the measure. Paul, then, does not mean precisely to say that a man is to think more or less soberly of himself according to the quantity of faith which he has, though that is true as a fact; but that sound and correct views as to the character and extent of spiritual gifts and functions are fixed by a measure, the determining element of which, in each particular case, is faith. ([Romans 12 - Vincent's Word Studies](#))

**Hodge** - The expression **measure or proportion of faith**, is variously explained. **Faith** may be taken in its usual sense, and the meaning of the clause be, 'Let every one think of himself according to the degree of faith or confidence in God which has been imparted to him, and not as though he had more than he really possesses.' Or **faith** may be taken for what is believed, or for knowledge of divine truth, and the sense be, 'according to the degree of knowledge which he has attained.' Or it may be taken for that which is confided to any, and be equivalent to gift. The sense then is, 'Let every one think of himself according to the nature or character of the gifts which he has received.' This is perhaps the most generally received interpretation, although it is arrived at in different ways; many considering the word faith here as used metonymically for its effects, viz., for the various (charismata) graces, ordinary and extraordinary, of which it is the cause. This general sense is well suited to the context, as the following verses, containing a specification of the gifts of prophesying, teaching, ruling, etc., appear to be an amplification of this clause. The first mentioned interpretation is, however, most in accordance with the usual meaning of pistis. ([Romans 12 - Hodge's Commentary on Romans](#))

**Faith** ([4102](#))(**pistis**) in this context does not refer to saving faith, but as noted above rather the faith to discern the limitation of your gift. Every believer receives the exact gift and resources he needs to fulfill his role in the body of Christ.

The noble American preacher and theologian Jonathan Edwards was so fearful that his personal mannerisms and inflections might interfere with the power of God's Word, that he not only read his sermons but often delivered them almost mechanically. Yet the Holy Spirit strongly used those messages, and listeners were sometimes so convicted of sin that they screamed for God's mercy and tightly gripped their pews for fear of falling immediately into hell. God was able to use him in such ways because he lived up to the following resolutions (abbreviated) that he made early in his ministry:

Resolved, to live with all my might while I do live.  
Resolved, never to lose one moment of time,  
to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can.  
Resolved, never to do anything which I should despise  
or think meanly of in another.  
Resolved, never to do anything out of revenge.  
Resolved, never to do anything which  
I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life.  
--Iain H. Murray, Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography

**Romans 12:4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, (NASB: Lockman)**

**Greek:** kathaper gar en eni somati polla mele echomen (1PPAI), ta de mele panta ou ten auten echei (3SPA1) praxin

**Amplified:** For as in one physical body we have many parts (organs, members) and all of these parts do not have the same function or use, (Amplified Bible - Lockman)

**NLT:** Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, (NLT - Tyndale House)

**Phillips:** For just as you have many members in one physical body and those members (Phillips: Touchstone) differ in their functions,

**Wuest:** For even as in one body we have many members but all the members do not have the same function, (Eerdmans)

**FOR JUST AS WE HAVE MANY MEMBERS IN ONE BODY: kathaper gar en eni somati polla mele echomen (1PPAI), ta de mele panta ou ten auten echei (3SPAI) praxin:**

## **MANY MEMBERS ONE BODY**

1Cor 12:4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.

1Cor 12:12 For even as the body is one and [yet] has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.

1Cor 12:27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.

Eph 4:15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all [aspects] into Him, who is the head, [even] Christ,

Eph 4:16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

**For just** - These words links this verse closely with verse 3 because when we think rightly about ourselves, we will be able to think accurately about others—the Body of Christ.

In Ro 12:1-[note](#) Paul urges believers to present their physical body as “a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God.” Now he uses the figure of the “body” as a metaphor to illustrate the form and function of the church, the Body of Christ. Paul focuses on unity by emphasizing “one body” in both verses (Ro 12:4, 5) and then explains that members do not have the same function but that all are necessary for proper function. When a person trusts Christ, he is immediately baptized by the Holy Spirit into this body (1 Co 12:12,13). The baptism of the Spirit into “one body” is not a post conversion experience—but occurs the instant a person believes in Jesus Christ.

**Members** ([3196](#)) (**melos**) is a “limb of the body” and can refer literally to the different physical members of our body such as the hands, feet, eyes, ears, mouth, which is the intended meaning in this verse (as in Mt 5:29,30 [“parts”]-[note](#); Ro 6:13-[note](#), Ro 6:19-[note](#); Ro 7:5-[note](#), Ro 7:23-[note](#); Ro 12:4; 1Co 12:12, 14,18, 19, 20,22,25,26; James 3:5,6; 4:1; Col 3:5-[note](#)).

In the next verse “**members**” is used figuratively to illustrate the individual believers who are “members” of the church, the body of Christ (1 Co 12:27,Ep 5:30-[note](#)), of which He is the Head (Ep 1:22, 23-[note](#), Eph 4:15-[note](#), Ep 5:23-[note](#), Col 1:18-[note](#), Col 2:19-[note](#))

Here are the 34 uses of **melos** in the NT -- Matt. 5:29, 30; Ro. 6:13, 19; 7:5, 23; 12:4, 5; 1 Co. 6:15; 12:12, 14, 18, 19, 20, 22, 25, 26, 27; Eph. 4:25; 5:30; Col. 3:5; James. 3:5, 6; 4:1

There are 10 uses of **melos** in the Septuagint - Ex 29:17; Lev. 1:6, 12; 8:20; 9:13; Jdg. 19:29; Job 9:28; Ezek. 2:10; 24:6; Mic. 2:4;

**Hodge** - . In these verses we have the same comparison that occurs more at length in 1Corinthians 12:1-31, and for the same purpose. The object of the apostle is in both cases the same. He designs to show that the diversity of offices and gifts among Christians, so far from being inconsistent with their union as one body in Christ, is necessary to the perfection and usefulness of that body. It would be as unreasonable for all Christians to have the same gifts, as for all the members of the human frame to have the same office. This comparison is peculiarly beautiful and appropriate; because it not only clearly illustrates the particular point intended, but at the same time brings into view the important truth that the real union of Christians results from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as the union of the several members of the body is the result of their being all animated and actuated by one soul. Nothing can present in a clearer light the duty of Christian fellowship, or the sinfulness of divisions and envying among the members of Christ's body, than the apostle's comparison. ([Commentary on Romans](#))

**AND ALL THE MEMBERS DO NOT HAVE THE SAME FUNCTION: ta de mele panta ou ten auten echei (3SPAI) praxin:**

## **MANY FUNCTIONS IN THE BODY**

**Denney** - The comparison of the community to a body—the social organism—is very common in classical writers. Every member



has its gift, but it is limited by the fact that it is no more than a member: it is not the whole body. 1 Corinthians 12:17. many as we are, we are one body in Christ; it is the common relation to Him which unites us. ([Romans 12 - The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

**Function** (4234) (**praxis**) has the basic meaning of a doing of something, that is, a deed. It later came to mean something that was ordinarily done or practiced, a normal **function** and in the present context refers to "**spiritual gifts**". Expanding his metaphor Paul reminds us of what we all know -- that our "members" such as our hands or feet do not have the same **function** as the eyes, etc., etc. It is interesting that in Acts 19:18 praxis seems to be the antithesis of God's spiritual gifts, for the practices are "occult gifts" (so to speak) from which the new believers in Ephesus repented. In Romans 8:13 and Col 3:9 praxis refers to sinful deeds.

**Praxis** - 6 uses in the NT - Usage: action(1), deeds(2), function(1), practices(2).

Matthew 16:27 "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS **DEEDS**."

Luke 23:51 (he had not consented to their plan and **action**), a man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God;

Acts 19:18 Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their **practices**.

Romans 8:13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the **deeds** of the body, you will live.

Romans 12:4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same **function**,

Colossians 3:9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil **practices**,

**Praxis** - 7 uses in the Septuagint - 2Chr. 12:15; 13:22; 27:7; 28:26; Job 24:5; Pr. 13:13; Da. 4:1

Now just as our physical body is a unit, the church (not referring to a physical building or denomination) likewise is a unified whole (one body), yet we are distinct within that one body (individually members). We are unified, but there is not a uniformity in the body of Christ.

We err when we neglect either aspect -- **unity** should never be promoted at the expense of individuality, and **individuality** should never diminish the church's essential unity in Christ. He is our common ground, we are one body in Christ

Even as the health and welfare of the human body depend on the proper functioning of each member, so too does the spiritual vitality and the impact of "the body's" life on the lost world depend on the proper use and interaction of the spiritual gifts of ALL of the members of the Body of Christ.

After World War II, a group of German students volunteered to help rebuild an English cathedral that had been severely damaged by German bombs. As work progressed, they became concerned about a large statue of Jesus, whose arms were outstretched and beneath which was the inscription: "Come unto Me." They had particular difficulty trying to restore the hands, which had been completely destroyed. After much discussion, they decided to let the hands remain missing and changed the inscription to: "Christ has no hands but ours."

**John MacArthur** offers these wise practical pithy comments on what this all means: "As we have seen, the first obligation of the **bondsman** of Christ is the supreme worship expressed in offering himself to his Lord as a living sacrifice (Ro 12:1 [note](#)). That is God's fundamental requirement for every believer. Only as a living sacrifice can we be what He wants us to be, do what He wants us to do, and thereby "prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Ro 12:2-[note](#)). That act of spiritual worship marks the Christian's entrance into divine usefulness. God's order of obedience for His people has always been worship and then service. (Ro 12:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) adds the marvelous truth that, although Christ sends forth His servants with a common commission to serve Him, He equips them for that responsibility with greatly diverse gifts. His divine plan for believers is unity in message and commitment but diversity in service. The primary purpose of these verses is to make clear that, although we must enter the place of usefulness for Christ with the same total self sacrifice, we are equipped to fulfill that usefulness in uniquely distinct ways. The purpose of offering ourselves to God as living sacrifices is not mystical or monastic but eminently practical. Devotion to the Lord and active, faithful ministry for Him are inseparable. We cannot be truly sacrificed to Him and be inactive in His work. And, on the other hand, we cannot be truly successful in His work without being genuinely devoted to Him. Service to God brings honor to Him and blessing for us only when it is the outflow of our worship in offering ourselves as living sacrifices. Such commitment naturally and inevitably produces effective ministry. There is no godly commitment without God blessed ministry, and no God blessed ministry without godly commitment. This passage utterly destroys the notion that a Christian can be committed to Christ but be inactive in His service, that he can love the Lord but not obey the Lord, that he can be surrendered to the Lord but not minister for

the Lord. True worship cannot be divorced from service. Unfortunately, the church has always had members who piously claim closeness and devotion to the Lord but whose lives exhibit no service for Him. It also has always had those who are busily active in the work of the church but who exhibit little personal depth of devotion to the Lord of the church. Both are a shame to the Lord and are a hindrance to His work, because they thwart the spiritual maturity of the saved and the evangelism of the lost. ([MacArthur, J: Romans 9-16. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**Romans 12:5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually \* members one of another. (NASB: Lockman)**

**Greek:** houtos oi polloi en soma esmen (1PPAI) en Christo, to de kath eis allelon mele.

**Amplified:** So we, numerous as we are, are one body in Christ (the Messiah) and individually we are parts one of another [mutually dependent on one another].(Amplified Bible - Lockman)

**NLT:** so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of his one body, and each of us has different work to do. And since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others. (NLT - Tyndale House)

**Phillips:** so we, though many in number, compose one body in Christ and are all members of one another. (Phillips: Touchstone)

**Wuest:** thus we, the many, are one body in Christ, and members severally one of another. (Eerdmans)

**Young's Literal:** for as in one body we have many members, and all the members have not the same office,

**SO WE WHO ARE MANY ARE ONE BODY IN CHRIST: houtos oi polloi en soma esmen (1PPAI) en Christo:**

- Ro 12:4; 1 Cor 10:17; 12:12, 13,14,20,27,28; Eph 1:23; Ep 4:25; Ep 5:23, Ep 5:30; Col 1:24; Col 2:19
- [Romans 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ONE BODY IN CHRIST

This truth of **One body in Christ** is emphasized in several of Paul's letters

- Romans 12:4 For just as we have many members in **one body** (UNITY) and all the members do not have the same function (DIVERSITY),
- 1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized (nothing to do with water here -- it means we were all supernaturally placed) into **one body**, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.
- 1 Corinthians 12:20 But now there are many members, but **one body**.
- Ephesians 2:16-[note](#) and might reconcile them (Jews and Gentiles) both in **one body** to God through the Cross (all equal at the foot of the almighty Cross), by it having put to death the enmity.
- Ephesians 4:4-[note](#) [There is] **one body** and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
- Colossians 3:15-[note](#) Let the peace ("no walls") of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in **one body**; and be thankful.

The Body of Christ reflects **diversity** working in **unity** and in **harmony** (when we are all walking in the Spirit, listening to the "Head", cp Eph 4:3-[note](#) continually making haste, "[being diligent](#) [IT IS NOT AUTOMATIC! ENABLED BY THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD WE ALL NEED TO WORK AT PRESERVING THIS UNITY!] to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.). When the parts are functioning in harmony the Body is able to be and to do what Christ the Head directs it to be and to do. All members filled with the Spirit and walking by the Spirit is the formula for unity of the Spirit and optimal "efficiency" in a local Body of Christ. Have you ever been part of a local body that approached this ideal? I was once and it was wonderful and glorious! But diabolos came sneaking in and caused division and eventually the church did split apart. So sad. This must sorely grieve the heart of God!

**W E Vine** comments on the metaphor of the **BODY** noting that "As with the natural illustration (of the physical body in Ro 12:4), so with the spiritual analogy. There is not only vital unity and harmony in operation, but diversity, all being essential to [effectivity](#) (**Ed**: success in producing God's desired or intended result). The unity is not due to external organization but to common and vital union in Christ."

**MacDonald** has a succinct summary of the principles in (Ro 12:3-5): There is unity (one body), diversity (many), and interdependency (members of one another). Any gifts we have are not for selfish use or display but for the good of the body. No gift is self-sufficient and none is unnecessary. When we realize all this, we are thinking soberly (Ro 12:3). ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**In Christ** - see discussion of in Christ and in Christ Jesus. Christ is the "Head" as Paul explained in Colossians

and not holding fast to the **HEAD** (Christ), from Whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God. (Col 2:19-[note](#))

**Hodge** - Believers, though many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.' We, the many, are one body. In one respect we are many, in another we are one. Just as the body is many as to its members, and one in their organic connection. Believers are one body, i.e. a living organic whole, not in virtue of any external organization, but in Christ, i.e. in virtue of their common union with him. And as this union with Christ is not merely external, or by profession, or by unity of opinion and sentiment only, but vital, arising from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Christ, so, the apostle adds, the union of believers one with another, is also a vital union. They are every one members one of another. The relation of believers to each other is far more intimate than that between the members of any external organization, whether civil or ecclesiastical. It is analogous to the mutual relation of the members of the same body, animated by one soul. ([Commentary on Romans](#))

#### AND INDIVIDUALLY MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER: to de kath eis allelon mele:

No matter how humble my gift may be (1 Co 12:22, 23, 24), every other member of the body depends on it (even as the eye that sees danger needs the feet to flee from the danger) and no matter how honorable my gift may be, I am dependent upon and blessed by even the humblest contribution of every other member.

"individually we are parts one of another [mutually dependent on one another]." (Amplified Version)

Members one of another is beautifully explained in (1Co 12:26) where Paul instructs us that when one member is honored, the others rejoice and when one member suffers, the others suffer. It's like the story the pastor told

"A number of years ago I fell and injured my wrist rather severely. It swelled up and got very painful. And the rest of my body felt so bad about it that it sat up all night to keep it company. That is what the body of Christ is to do when one member is hurt."

Each of us belongs to the mystical Body of Christ and needs the other members of that Body. The Christian faith is therefore in its essence a corporate experience (see the 9 "one another's" in Romans below). Although each member has come to faith by a separate and individual act of faith, the believing community lives out its Christian experience in fellowship with one another.

**John Donne's "No man is an island"** (Read poem below) is true of the church of Jesus Christ. "Lone Ranger Christianity" is a contradiction in terms. If your life seems stuck even though you read your Bible and pray, it may be that you are neglecting getting together with other believers and are depriving yourself of the exchange necessary for spiritual growth (cf. the significance of "able to comprehend with all the saints" in Eph 3:18- [note](#)).

No man is an island,  
Entire of itself,  
Every man is a piece of the continent,  
A part of the main.  
If a clod be washed away by the sea,  
Europe is the less.  
As well as if a promontory were.  
As well as if a manor of thy friend's  
Or of thine own were:  
Any man's death diminishes me,  
Because I am involved in mankind,  
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;  
It tolls for thee.

All three of the important "body passages" in the New Testament deal with both unity and diversity:

\_\_\_\_\_

UNITY	DIVERSITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ro 12:1, 2, 3, 4, 5</li> <li>▪ 1 Cor 12:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13</li> <li>▪ Eph 4:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ro 12:5, 6, 7, 8</li> <li>▪ 1 Cor 12:14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31</li> <li>▪ Eph 4:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13</li> </ul>

Unity and diversity must work together or one will destroy the other. Unity without diversity is uniformity, but diversity without unity is anarchy. The church needs both unity and diversity if it is to function in this world. God has given diverse gifts to His people and these gifts must be used for the building up of the body of Christ. The only thing that can balance unity and diversity is maturity, "growing up" to become more like Jesus Christ.

**F. F. Bruce** - "Diversity, not [uniformity](#), is the mark of God's handiwork. It is so in nature; it is so in grace, too, and nowhere more so than in the Christian community. Here are many men and women with the most diverse kinds of parentage, environment, temperament, and capacity. Not only so, but since they became Christians they have been endowed by God with a great variety of spiritual gifts as well. Yet because and by means of that diversity, all can co-operate for the good of the whole."

If you are feeling estranged from the "Body" for any reason, take some time and meditate on God's good and acceptable and perfect will for each member of the Body toward "One another." Hold your pointer over each Scripture and make a list of what Scripture teaches concerning **one another**.

## THE ONE ANOTHERS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

### The Positive

- ><> Ro 12:10,16, 13:8,14:13,19,15:5, 7, 14,16:16
- ><> 1 Co 12:25, 16:20, 2 Co 13:12, Gal 5:13, Ep 4:2, 25, 32, 5:19, 21
- ><> Phil 2:3, Col 3:13, 16
- ><> 1Th 3:12, 4:9,18, 5:11,13,15, 2Th 1:3, Heb 3:13,10:24, 25
- ><> James 5:16, 1Pe 1:22, 4:8, 9, 10, 5:5, 14,
- ><> 1Jn 1:7,3:11,23,4:7,11, 12, 2Jn 1:5

### The Negative

- <>< 1 Co 6:7, 7:5, 11:33, Ga 5:15, 26, Col 3:9, James 4:11, 5:9

**Romans 12:6** Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith* (NASB: Lockman)

**Greek:** echontes (PAPMPN) de charismata kata ten charin ten dotheisan (APPFSA) hemin diaphora, eite propheteian kata ten analogian tes pisteos

**Amplified:** Having gifts (faculties, talents, qualities) that differ according to the grace given us, let us use them: [He whose gift is] prophecy, [let him prophesy] according to the proportion of his faith; (Amplified Bible - Lockman)

**NLT:** God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out when you have faith that God is speaking through you. (NLT - Tyndale House)

**Phillips:** Through the grace of God we have different gifts. If our gift is preaching, let us preach to the limit of our vision. (Phillips: Touchstone)

**Wuest:** Having therefore gifts differing according to the grace given us, whether that of prophecy, prophesy

according to the proportion of faith; (Eerdmans)

**Young's Literal:** so we, the many, one body are in Christ, and members each one of one another.

**AND SINCE WE HAVE GIFTS THAT DIFFER ACCORDING TO THE GRACE GIVEN TO US: echontes (PAPMPN) de charismata kata ten charin ten dotheisan (APPFSA) hemin diaphora:**

- [See Multiple Devotionals below from Our Daily Bread on Spiritual Gifts](#)
- [See Resources Related to Spiritual Gifts](#)
- [Romans 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Ro 1:11; 1 Corinthians 1:5-7; 12:4-11,28-31; 13:2; 1 Pe 4:10,11

**HERE IS MY SUMMARY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS...**

### **SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE...**

- Supernatural abilities
- Sovereignly given to
- Strengthen His
- Saints who are to
- Serve (minister) one another being good
- Stewards of the manifold grace of God

**Gifts** (5486) (**charisma** from **charis** = grace + the ending --ma which indicates the result of something, in this case the result of grace, "the subjective grace that works within and shows itself in its result" - Wuest) is a Pauline word (with exception of 1Pe 4:10) which literally means a **gift of grace** or a **free gift**. Considering that the root is charis (grace) the favor or gift which one receives is without any merit of one's own. Stated another way, whatever spiritual gift a man has comes from God, and should be no cause for personal pride or praise. It is something given to a man by God which the man himself could not have acquired or attained.

**Thayer** writes that charisma "in the technical Pauline sense of extraordinary powers distinguishing certain Christians and enabling them to serve the church of Christ, the reception of which is due to the power of divine grace operating in their souls by the Holy Spirit."

The world uses **charisma** to describe a person with magnetic personality and a commanding appearance. God uses it to describe every saint because every saint has at least one spiritual gift.

Here are all the NT uses of **charisma** -- Ro 1:11; 5:15, 16; 6:23; 11:29; 12:6; 1Co 1:7; 7:7; 12:4, 9, 28, 30, 31; 2Co 1:11; 1Ti 4:14; 2Ti 1:6; 1Pe 4:10

Notice that sixteen of the seventeen NT uses of charisma are connected to God as the Giver of the free gift. Specifically Paul explains (esp in 1 Cor 12:4, 6, 7, 11) that charisma is a special spiritual gift (or ability) bestowed by the Holy Spirit according to His will for the profit of the body of Christ and the work of the ministry in turn to enable believers to fulfill certain assigned functions in the body.

Notice also that the context states that each one (each and every one) who is a genuine Christian (who has the gift of the Spirit - Romans 8:9 -note) has received at least one gift from the Spirit (1Co 12:1-11), both the gift of the Spirit and the spiritual gift being bestowed by God at the moment of conversion (see 1Co 12:13ff).

**Richards** writes that "Charisma is a special term for grace gifts. It focuses attention on how we are called to function within the body of Christ. God has given each believer a special endowment of the Spirit, so that he or she can make a distinctive contribution to individuals and to the community of faith. Living together, united by the bonds of brotherly love, each of us is used by God to enrich our brothers and sisters and to stimulate their growth to Christian maturity. (Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency)

**Cremer** (in Herzog) writes that in the technical Pauline sense charismata denote "extraordinary powers, distinguishing certain Christians and enabling them to serve the church of Christ, the reception of which is due to the power of divine grace operating in their souls by the Holy Spirit."

In Romans, Paul uses **charisma** in reference to the gift of salvation (Ro 5:15, 16, 6:23), the blessings of God (Ro 11:29), and divine

enablements for ministry as in the present verse (Ro 12:6). Every other use of the word by Paul, and the one by Peter (1Pe 4:10), relates it to spiritual gifts = the divine enablements for believers to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit = the spiritual endowments empowered by the Holy Spirit.

**Ray Stedman** has some insightful thoughts on "spiritual gifts":

Suppose I had here a number of electrical appliances -- a toaster, an iron, an electric fan, a hair dryer, and a few other gadgets such as we have abundantly available today. Each of them is designed to do a different thing, each has a different function, but they all use the same power -- and unless they are connected to that power, they are useless. This is the way with the spiritual gift -- it is a divinely-given capacity to receive power. However, that power can be: The power of the Holy Spirit so that the gift is exercised in such a way as to bless, to minister, to help, and to advance the cause of God, or it can be: The power of the flesh so that the gift is exercised in such a way as to destroy, to injure, to divide, and to sever....God has given gifts. Paul calls them graces, and we have different gifts, according to the specific gift of grace that is given to us. I like that term for gifts because it indicates something about them. Graces are graceful. Something graceful is a delight to watch in action. This is true about a spiritual gift. It is an ability God has given you because he wants you function along this line. It enables you to do this thing so naturally and smoothly and beautifully that others will take note of it, and ask you to do it, and enjoy watching you do it. And you will enjoy it too. A spiritual gift is a fulfilling thing when you are using it. You enjoy doing it, and that is why it is called a grace that is given to you. It is not a hard, painful thing to do; it is something you delight in doing. And you can improve in it as you do it. Therefore it is one of the things that will make life interesting and fulfilling for you. Imagine how hurt you parents would be if you gave gifts to your children, wrapped them all up in beautiful packages and put them under the Christmas tree, and then handed them out to your children and the child just took it and laid it aside. What if he said, "Thank you," and never bothered to open it, never made any effort to find out what was in it. Can you imagine how the Lord must feel when he has given gifts to us that he intends us to use and we never take the trouble to find out what they are, and never put them to work, and excuse ourselves by saying that we can't do anything. But the Word of God tells us there is not a single Christian who is left out in this matter of the distribution of gifts. It is clear from this account that the gifts Paul lists here are intended to be used." (emphasis added) ([The Body at Work](#))

God's grace distributes **differing gifts** to **different people** (1Co 12:11, Ep 4:7-note). Each believer's gift is a God-designed blend of spiritual capabilities, which acts as a channel through which the Spirit of God ministers to others. God sovereignly bestows these spiritual gifts on believers according to His own divine will, apart from any merit, qualification, or seeking. This truth should blunt any tendency toward pride in the gift(s) we possess. Unfortunately since saints still possess the **old flesh nature**, pride concerning one's spiritual gifts has a way of raising its "ugly head". This sinful attitude can be "self inflicted" but can also be energized by others who insist on exalting men for how God has gifted them.

Wiersbe - Spiritual gifts are tools to build with, not toys to play with or weapons to fight with. In the church at Corinth, the believers were tearing down the ministry because they were abusing spiritual gifts. They were using their gifts as ends in themselves and not as a means toward the end of building up the church. They so emphasized their spiritual gifts that they lost their spiritual graces! They had the gifts of the Spirit but were lacking in the fruit of the spirit—love, joy, peace, etc. (Ga 5:22-note, Ga 5:23-note).

**EACH OF US IS TO EXERCISE THEM ACCORDINGLY IF PROPHECY, ACCORDING TO THE PROPORTION OF HIS FAITH: eite propheteian kata ten analogian tes pisteos:**

- Matthew 23:34; Luke 11:49; Acts 2:17; 11:27,28; 13:1; 15:32; 21:9; 1 Cor 12:10,28; 13:2; 14:1,3, 4, 5,24,29,31,32; Eph 3:5; 4:11; 1 Th 5:20)
- **according to the proportion** - Ro 12:3; Acts 18:24, 25, 26, 27, 28; 2 Cor 8:12; Php 3:15
- [Romans 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Let each exercise them accordingly** - These words are added by the NAS translators. These words are not in the original Greek.

**THOUGHT TO PONDER** - Are you a faithful steward of the spiritual gift God has so graciously entrusted to your care to use for His glory? Paul's words apply to all saints when he says "Now, a person who is put in charge as a manager ([oikonomos](#)) must be faithful ([pistos](#))." (1Cor 4:2NLT+) As our Lord Jesus said "I'm talking to any faithful ([pistos](#)), sensible servant ([oikonomos](#)) to whom the master gives the responsibility of



managing his household and feeding his family. If the master returns and finds that the servant ([doulos](#)) has done a good job, there will be a reward. I assure you, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns." (Lk 12:42-44NLT+ - original version of NLT) And in Luke 16:10-11NLT+ Jesus said "Unless you are faithful in small matters, you won't be faithful in large ones. If you cheat even a little, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven?" And again Jesus said "The master was full of praise. 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'" (Mt 25:21NLT). Paul made it very clear that we "must (not optional) all appear before the judgment seat ([bema](#)) of Christ, so that each one (individually) may be recompensed ([komizo](#)) for his deeds in the body (AND HOW ONE HAS USED HIS OR HER SPIRITUAL GIFT OR GIFTS), according to what he has done, whether good ([agathos](#) - see [good deeds](#)) or bad ([phaulos](#)- worthless, accomplished in our energy, not in the power of the Spirit and ultimately not for God's glory). (2Cor 5:10+)

**PRAYER** - May God's Spirit so move in each of our hearts and give us the desire and the power (Php 2:13NLT+) to "have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him," by using the spiritual gift(s) He has given to each of us. (2Cor 5:9+) In Jesus' Name. Amen

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**Prophecy** (4394) ([propheteia](#) from **pro** = before or forth + **phemi** = to say or tell) literal means speaking forth or telling before. **Prophecy** in this context is not necessarily "fore-telling" in a predictive sense but is more accurately described as "forth-telling" (see Vine's note below).

**A. H. Strong** explains that "All modern prophecy that is true is but the republication of Christ's message—the proclamation and expounding of truth already revealed in Scripture.

**Vincent** (Word Studies) - In the New Testament, as in the Old, the prominent idea is not prediction, but the inspired delivery of warning, exhortation, instruction, judging, and making manifest the secrets of the heart. See 1 Cor. 14:3, 24, 25. The New-Testament prophets are distinguished from teachers, by speaking under direct divine inspiration. (From his notes on Luke 7:26 Vincent adds) The popular conception of a prophet is limited to his foretelling future events. This is indeed included in the term, but does not cover its meaning entirely. The word is from phemi, to speak, and pro, before, in front of. This meaning of the preposition may have reference to time, viz., before, beforehand; or to place, viz., in front of, and so, publicly; and this latter meaning, in turn, easily runs into that of in behalf of; for. The prophet is, therefore, primarily, one who speaks standing before another, and thus forming a medium between him and the hearer. This sense runs naturally into that of instead of. Hence it is the technical term for the interpreter of a divine message. So Plato: "For this reason it is customary to appoint diviners or interpreters to be judges of the true inspiration. Some persons call them diviners, seers (manteis); they do not know that they are only repeaters of dark sayings and visions, and are not to be called diviners at all, but interpreters ((prophetai)) of things divine" ("Timaeus," 72). Similarly of an advocate to speak for, or instead of one. The central idea of the word is, one to whom God reveals himself and through whom he speaks. The revelation may or may not relate to the future. The prophet is a forth-teller, not necessarily a foreteller. The essence of the prophetic character is immediate intercourse with God. One of the Hebrew names for "prophet," and, as some maintain, the earlier name, signified a shewer or seer. See 1 Sa 9:10; and in 1 Cor. 14:26-30, Paul shows that revelation stands in necessary connection with prophesying. ([Luke 7 - Vincent's Word Studies](#))

**Barclay** - There is the gift of prophecy. It is only rarely that prophecy in the New Testament has to do with foretelling the future; it usually has to do with forthtelling the word of God. The prophet is the man who can announce the Christian message with the authority of one who knows. To announce Christ to others a man must first know him himself. "What this parish needs," said Carlyle's father, "is a man who knows Christ other than at second-hand." ([Romans 12 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

**Vine** - Though much of OT prophecy was purely predictive (see Micah 5:2, e.g., and cp Jn 11:51), prophecy is not necessarily, nor even primarily, fore-telling. It is the declaration of that which cannot be known by natural means (Mt 26:68), it is the forth-telling of the will of God, whether with reference to the past, the present, or the future, see Ge 20:7; Dt 18:18; Re 10:11-[note](#); Re 11:3-[note](#). ... In such passages as 1 Co 12:28; Ep 2:20-note, the 'prophets' are placed after the 'Apostles,' since not the prophets of Israel are intended, but the 'gifts' of the ascended Lord, Ep 4:8-note, Ep 4:11-note; cp. Acts 13:1; the purpose of their ministry was to edify, to comfort, and to encourage the believers, 1 Co 14:3, while its effect upon unbelievers was to show that the secrets of a man's heart are known to God, to convict of sin, and to constrain to worship, 1 Co 14:24,25. With the completion of the canon of Scripture prophecy apparently passed away, (1 Co 13:8,9-note). In his measure the teacher has taken the place of the prophet (cp. the significant change in 2 Pe 2:1-note). The difference is that, whereas the message of the prophet was a direct revelation of the mind of God for the occasion, the message of the teacher is gathered from the completed revelation contained in the Scriptures. (Notes on Thessalonians by Hogg and Vine, pp. 196,197)

It is interesting to note that **phemi** the root word for **propheteia** is in turn derived from a root word (phao) that means "to cause to

shine" and thus means to bring to light by speech. It follows that the gift of **propheteia** refers to the ability to take the Word of God and "make it shine" so to speak (cf 2 Pe 1:19-note), so that everybody sees what to do and where to go and how to act and function. The gift of prophecy is a gift of communicating, preaching, or proclaiming revealed truth from the Word of God in a manner that produces a powerful effect upon the hearers, exhorting and equipping them up (Acts 20:32, cp 2 Ti 4:2-note). Oftentimes one who has this gift will have penetrating things to say about specific problems in society or life but these statements are not in any way to be taken as equating with a "new revelation" from God.

The gift of prophecy is not confined only to those who are pastors but includes laymen who have the gift of prophecy and are able to speak forth the truth in a powerful way. Though it can be exercised in the flesh (a deadly thing when a preacher preaches in the energy of the flesh), it is to be exercised rightly in the power of the Spirit. The Spirit gives the gift and the Spirit alone can energize and empower the gift.

**Paul** gives an excellent "definition" of the **gift of prophecy** as "one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation." (1Co 14:3)

**Peter's** admonition also applies to the gift of prophecy "Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1Pe 4:11-note).

**Ray Stedman** notes that "Others may be helpful in helping you determine whether you have this gift, because sometimes we don't always recognize it in ourselves. Dr. Ironside used to speak of those who thought they had the gift of preaching but to whom nobody had the gift of listening.

**Proportion** (Robertson = "analogous, conformable, proportional") ([356](#)) (**analogia**) which means the right relation. To Aristotle it meant arithmetical or geometric proportion.

The proportion of his faith concerns the faith of the individual as God has made it available in a certain measure (Ro12:3). Stated another way, the gift of prophecy must not be exercised assuming a measure of faith which the individual does not possess. In a sense, this serves as a warning against going beyond what God has given and what faith is able to receive.

**Vincent** - Analogia - proportion - occurs only here in the New Testament. In classical Greek it is used as a mathematical term. (Romans 12 - Vincent's Word Studies)

**Henry Morris** - One with a prophetic gift (that is, ability to transmit divinely inspired messages) was to be able to use such a gift effectively in direct proportion to the strength of his faith.(Defenders Study Bible)

**John MacArthur** has a slightly different thought: "Whatever the form his message may take, the prophet is to minister it according to the proportion of his faith. Because the Greek includes the definite article, faith may here refer to the faith, that is, the full gospel message. In that case, according to the proportion of his faith would relate objectively to the prophet's being careful to preach in accordance with the gospel revealed through the apostles—"the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3). It could also relate subjectively to the believer's personal understanding and insight concerning the gospel—to his speaking according to the individual proportion of...faith that God has sovereignly assigned to him for the operation of his gift." (MacArthur, J: Romans 9-16. Chicago: Moody Press) (emphasis added)

## Spiritual Gifts

### International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

#### SPIRITUAL GIFTS (charismata):

##### 1. Gifts Connected with the Ministry of the Word

- (1) **Apostleship**
- (2) **Prophecy**
- (3) **Discerning of spirits**
- (4) **Teaching**
- (5) **The Word of Knowledge**
- (6) **The Word of Wisdom**
- (7) **Kinds of Tongues**
- (8) **Interpretation of Tongues**

## 2. Gifts Connected with the Ministry of Practical Service

- (1) Workings of Miracles
- (2) Gifts of Healings
- (3) Ruling, Governments
- (4) Helps

The word **charisma**, with a single exception (1Pe 4:10), occurs in the New Testament only in the Pauline Epistles, and in the plural form is employed in a technical sense to denote extraordinary gifts of the Spirit bestowed upon Christians to equip them for the service of the church. Various lists of the charismata are given (Ro 12:6, 7, 8; 1Co 12:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 28, 29, 30; compare Ephesians 4:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12), none of which, it is evident, are exhaustive.

Some of the gifts enumerated cannot be said to belong in any peculiar sense to the distinctive category. **Faith** (1Co 12:9), for example, is the essential condition of all Christian life; though there were, no doubt, those who were endowed with faith beyond their fellows.

**"Giving"** and **"mercy"** (Ro 12:8) are among the ordinary graces of the Christian character; though some would possess them more than others.

**"Ministry"** (Ro 12:7), again, i.e. service, was the function to which every Christian was called and the purpose to which every one of the special gifts was to be devoted (Ep 4:12).

The term is applied to any spiritual benefit, as the confirmation of Christians in the faith by Paul (Ro 1:11). And as the general function of ministry appears from the first in two great forms as a ministry of word and deed (Acts 6:1, 2, 3, 4; 1Co 1:17), so the peculiar charismatic gifts which Paul mentions fall into two great classes--those which qualify their possessors for a ministry of the word, and those which prepare them to render services of a practical nature.

### 1. Gifts Connected with the Ministry of the Word:

#### (1) Apostleship

(1 Corinthians 12:28; compare Ephesians 4:11).--The name "apostle" is used in the New Testament in a narrower and a wider sense. It was the peculiar title and privilege of the Twelve (Matthew 10:2; Luke 6:13; Acts 1:25), but was claimed by Paul on special grounds (Romans 1:1; 1 Corinthians 9:1, etc.); it was probably conceded to James the Lord's brother (1 Corinthians 15:7; Galatians 1:19), and in a freer use of the term is applied to Barnabas (Acts 14:4,14; compare 1 Corinthians 9:5,6), Andronicus and Junias (Romans 16:7). From the Didache (xi.4) we learn that the ministry of apostles was continued in the church into the sub-apostolic age (see LITERATURE, SUB-APOSTOLIC). The special gift and function of apostleship, taken in the widest sense, was to proclaim the word of the gospel (Acts 6:2; 1 Corinthians 1:17, etc.), and in particular to proclaim it to the world outside of the church, whether Jewish or Gentile (Galatians 2:7,8).

#### (2) Prophecy

(Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10,28,29), under which may be included exhortation (Romans 12:8; compare 1 Corinthians 14:3). The gift of prophecy was bestowed at Pentecost upon the church as a whole (Acts 2:16), but in particular measure upon certain individuals who were distinctively known as prophets. Only a few of the Christian prophets are directly referred to--Judas and Silas (Acts 15:32), the prophets at Antioch (Acts 13:1), Agabus and the prophets from Jerusalem (Acts 11:27), the four daughters of Philip the evangelist (Acts 11:9). But 1 Corinthians shows that there were several of them in the Corinthian church; and probably they were to be found in every Christian community. Some of them moved about from church to church (Acts 11:27; 21:10); and in the Didache we find that even at the celebration of the Eucharist the itinerant prophet still takes precedence of the local ministry of bishops and deacons (Didache x.7).

It is evident that the functions of the prophet must sometimes have crossed those of the apostle, and so we find Paul himself described as a prophet long after he had been called to the apostleship (Acts 13:1). And yet there was a fundamental distinction. While the apostle, as we have seen, was one "sent forth" to the unbelieving world, the prophet was a minister to the believing church (1 Corinthians 14:4,22). Ordinarily his message was one of "edification, and exhortation, and consolation" (1 Corinthians 14:3). Occasionally he was empowered to make an authoritative announcement of the divine will in a particular case (Acts 13:1). In rare instances we find him uttering a prediction of a future event (Acts 11:28; 21:10).

#### (3) Discerning of Spirits

With prophecy must be associated the discernings of spirits (1 Corinthians 12:10; 14:29; 1 Thessalonians 5:20; compare 1 John 4:1). The one was a gift for the speaker, the other for those who listened to his words. The prophet claimed to be the medium of

divine revelations (1 Corinthians 14:30); and by the spiritual discernment of his hearers the truth of his claim was to be judged (1 Corinthians 14:29). There were false prophets as well as genuine prophets, spirits of error as well as spirits of truth (1 John 4:1-6; compare 2 Thessalonians 2:2; Didache xi). And while prophesying was never to be despised, the utterances of the prophets were to be "proved" (1 Thessalonians 5:20), and that in them which came from the Spirit of God spiritually judged (1 Corinthians 2:14), and so discriminated from anything that might be inspired by evil spirits.

#### **(4) Teaching**

(Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28).--As distinguished from the prophet, who had the gift of uttering fresh truths that came to him by way of vision and revelation, the teacher was one who explained and applied established Christian doctrine--the rudiments and first principles of the oracles of God (Hebrews 5:12).

#### **(5) The Word of Knowledge**

Possibly the word of knowledge (gnosis).

#### **(6) The Word of Wisdom**

The word of wisdom (sophia) (1 Corinthians 12:8) are to be distinguished, the first as the utterance of a prophetic and ecstatic intuition, the second as the product of study and reflective thought; and so are to be related respectively to the functions of the prophet and the teacher.

#### **(7) Kinds of Tongues**

(1 Corinthians 12:10,28,30).--What Paul means by this he explains fully in 1 Corinthians 14. The gift was not a faculty of speaking in unknown foreign languages, for the tongues (glossai) are differentiated from the "voices" or languages (phonai) by which men of one nation are distinguished from those of another (1Co 14:10,11). And when the apostle says that the speaker in an unknown tongue addressed himself to God and not to men (1Co 14:2,14) and was not understood by those who heard him (1Co 14:2), that he edified himself (1Co 14:4) and yet lost the power of conscious thought while praying with the spirit (1Co 14:14 f), it would appear that the "tongues" must have been of the nature of devout ejaculations and broken and disjointed words, uttered almost unconsciously under the stress of high ecstatic feeling.

#### **(8) Interpretation of Tongues**

Parallel to this gift was that of the interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10,30). If the gift of tongues had been a power of speaking unknown foreign languages, the interpretation of tongues would necessarily have meant the faculty of interpreting a language unknown to the interpreter; for translation from a familiar language could hardly be described as a charisma. But the principle of economy makes it improbable that the edification of the church was accomplished in this round-about way by means of a double miracle--a miracle of foreign speech followed by a miracle of interpretation. If, on the other hand, the gift of tongues was such as has been described, the gift of interpretation would consist in turning what seemed a meaningless utterance into words easy to be understood (1 Corinthians 12:9). The interpretation might be given by the speaker in tongues himself (1 Corinthians 12:5,13) after his mood of ecstasy was over, as he translated his exalted experiences and broken cries into plain intelligible language. Or, if he lacked the power of self-interpretation, the task might be undertaken by another possessed of this special gift (1 Corinthians 12:27,28). The ability of a critic gifted with sympathy and insight to interpret the meaning of a picture or a piece of music, as the genius who produced it might be quite unable to do (e.g. Ruskin and Turner), will help us to understand how the ecstatic half-conscious utterances of one who had the gift of tongues might be put into clear and edifying form by another who had the gift of interpretation.

## **2. Gifts Connected with the Ministry of Practical Service:**

### **(1) Workings of Miracles**

(1 Corinthians 12:10,28,29).--The word used for miracles in this chapter (dunameis, literally, "powers") is employed in Acts 8:7,13; 19:11,12 so as to cover those cases of exorcism and the cure of disease which in Paul's list are placed under the separate category of "gifts of healing." As distinguished from the ordinary healing gift, which might be possessed by persons not otherwise remarkable, the "powers" point to a higher faculty more properly to be described as miraculous, and bestowed only upon certain leading men in the church. In 2 Corinthians 12:12 Paul speaks of the "powers" he wrought in Corinth as among "the signs of an apostle." In Hebrews 2:4 the writer mentions the "manifold powers" of the apostolic circle as part of the divine confirmation of their testimony. In Romans 15:18 Paul refers to his miraculous gifts as an instrument which Christ used for the furtherance of the gospel and the bringing of the Gentiles to obedience. The working of "powers," accordingly, was a gift which linked itself to the ministry of the word in respect of its bearing upon the truth of the gospel and the mission of the apostle to declare it. And yet, like the wider and lower gift of healing, it must be regarded primarily as a gift of practical beneficence, and only secondarily as a means of confirming the truth and authenticating its messenger by way of a sign. The Book of Acts gives several examples of "powers" that are different from ordinary

healings. The raising of Dorcas (9:36) and of Eutychus (20:9) clearly belong to this higher class, and also, perhaps, such remarkable cures as those of the life-long cripple at the Temple gate (3:1) and Aeneas of Lydda (9:32).

## **(2) Gifts of Healings**

(1 Corinthians 12:9,28,30).

## **(3) Ruling, Governments**

(Romans 12:8; 1 Corinthians 12:28).--These were gifts of wise counsel and direction in the practical affairs of the church, such as by and by came to be formally entrusted to presbyters or bishops. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, the ministry of office had not yet supplanted the ministry of inspiration, and Christian communities were guided and governed by those of their members whose wisdom in counsel proved that God through His Spirit had bestowed upon them the gift of ruling.

## **(4) Helps**

(1 Corinthians 12:28).--This has sometimes been understood to denote the lowliest Christian function of all in Paul's list, the function of those who have no pronounced gifts of their own and can only employ themselves in services of a subordinate kind. But the usage of the Greek word (*antilempsis*) in the papyri as well as the Septuagint points to succor rendered to the weak by the strong; and this is confirmed for the New Testament when the same Greek word in its verbal form (*antilambano*) is used in Acts 20:35, when Paul exhorts the elders of the Ephesian church to follow his example in helping the weak. Thus, as the gift of government foreshadowed the official powers of the presbyter or bishop, the gift of helps appears to furnish the germ of the gracious office of the deacon--the "minister" paragraph excellence, as the name *diakonos* denotes--which we find in existence at a later date in Philippi and Ephesus (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-13), and which was probably created, on the analogy of the *diakonia* of the Seven in Jerusalem (Acts 6:1), as a ministry, in the first place, to the poor.

LITERATURE. Hort, *Christian Ecclesia*, Lect X; Neander, *Hist of the Planting of the Christian Church*, I, 131; Weizsacker, *Apostolic Age*, II, 255-75; Lindsay, *Church and Ministry*, passim; EB, IV, article "Spiritual Gifts"; ERE, III, article "Charismata"; PRE, VI, article "Geistesgaben."

J. C. Lambert

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## **Bricklayers and Violinists**

Read: Romans 12:1-8 | Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them. —Romans 12:6

A concert violinist had a brother who was a bricklayer. One day a woman began talking to the bricklayer about how wonderful it was for him to be in the same family as the noted musician. But then, not wanting to insult the bricklayer, she added, "Of course, we don't all have the same talents, and even in the same family some just seem to have more ability than others."

The bricklayer replied, "You're telling me! That violinist brother of mine doesn't know a thing about laying bricks. And if he wasn't able to make some money playing that fiddle of his, he couldn't hire a guy with know-how like mine to build his house. If he had to build a house himself, he'd be ruined."

If you want to build a house, don't look up "violinist" in the yellow pages. And if you need someone to play the violin in an orchestra, don't hire a bricklayer. No two of us are exactly alike, and no one possesses every gift. In that way, houses get built and music gets played.

In the church, God has gifted us in different ways too. Our responsibility is to exercise the spiritual gifts that He has given us. When we do, we build each other up in the faith, and there is harmony in the body of Christ. y Haddon Robinson (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

It matters not what others do,  
It is my task to see  
My life is patterned in the mold  
The Lord has planned for me. —Beers

**There are no unimportant members in the body of Christ.**

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## **The Blacksmith and the King**

Read: Exodus 31:1-11 | Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters. Colossians

3:23

In 1878, when Scotsman Alexander Mackay arrived in what is now Uganda to serve as a missionary, he first set up a blacksmith forge among a tribe ruled by King Mutesa. Villagers gathered around this stranger who worked with his hands, puzzled because everyone “knew” that work was for women. At that time, men in Uganda never worked with their hands. They raided other villages to capture slaves, selling them to outsiders. Yet here was this foreign man at work forging farming tools.

Mackay’s work ethic and life resulted in relationships with the villagers and gained him an audience with the king. Mackay challenged King Mutesa to end the slave trade, and he did.

God calls us to know Him more fully—and He will show us how to serve Him

In Scripture, we read of Bezalel and Oholiab, who were chosen and gifted by God to work with their hands designing the tent of meeting and all its furnishings for worship (Ex. 31:1-11). Like Mackay, they honored and served God with their talent and labor.

We tend to categorize our work as either church work or secular. In truth, there is no distinction. God designs each of us in ways that make our contributions to the kingdom unique and meaningful. Even when we have little choice in where or how we work, God calls us to know Him more fully—and He will show us how to serve Him—right now.

Father, grant me an awareness of my place in Your work. Help me to see You at work in the people and places where I spend my time.

God will show us how to serve Him—wherever we are.

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## **We’re A Community**

By C. P. Hia

**Read:** 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 | [The Lord] gave some . . . for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. —Ephesians 4:11-12

A pastor’s wife was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease. That put the family in a difficult, stressful situation. The pastor wondered how he was going to be able to take good care of her while he still had responsibilities for his church family. But he needn’t have worried because church members stepped up and volunteered to assist him with meals and some of her care.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church about the purpose for which the Lord gave them their spiritual gifts. Before he listed the diversity of gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, he reminded them that “a spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other” (v.7 nlt). God does not give His spiritual gifts for our own selfish use but to serve others, and in so doing, we serve Him.

We are all given different gifts to be used at different times and in different ways. But they are all to be used in love for the “edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:12). Wherever God has placed us, we can use what He has gifted us to do as we see the need, remembering that we are all part of the church—the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13-14).

Thank You, Father, for the wonderful gifts You have given Your church. Help me to understand how You have gifted me to encourage other believers, and to spread the message of Your love to the world.

Use your gifts to exercise care for others.

**INSIGHT:** Spiritual gifts are discussed in 1 Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians, and 1 Peter. In 1 Corinthians 12–14, Paul emphasizes how these gifts relate to one another within the body of Christ, the church. In Romans 12:3-8, he gives a shorter list, but also emphasizes the exercising of those gifts. In Ephesians 4:11-13, he describes gifted leaders God has given to the church for its development in life and service. In 1 Peter 4, the apostle Peter says that the purpose of all gifts is that “God may be praised through Jesus Christ” (v. 11).

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## **The Perfect Gift**

**Read:** Romans 12:1-8 | Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts. Psalm 96:8

Every year our local botanical garden hosts a celebration of Christmas around the world. My favorite display is a French nativity. Instead of the traditional scene showing shepherds and wise men with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh gathered around the



manger, it shows French villagers bringing their gifts to baby Jesus. They bring bread, wine, cheese, flowers, and other items that God has given them the ability to produce. This reminds me of the Old Testament command to bring the firstfruits of our labor to the house of the Lord (Ex. 23:16-19). This depiction of the nativity illustrates that everything we have comes from God, so the only thing we have to give is something that God has given us.

When Paul instructed the Romans to present themselves as a living sacrifice, he was telling them to give back to God what God had given them—their own selves (Rom. 12:1). This includes the gifts He gave them, even their ability to earn a living. We know that God gives people special abilities. Some, like David, were skilled in music (1 Sam. 16:18). Some, like Bezalel and Oholiab, were skilled in artistic works (Ex. 35:30-35). Others have skill in writing, teaching, gardening, and many other things.

When we give back to God what He has first given to us, we give Him the perfect gift—ourselves.

What can you offer to Jesus?

Give your all to Christ who gave His all for you.

INSIGHT: There are five listings of spiritual gifts in the New Testament: Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; 12:28-30; Ephesians 4:11; and 1 Peter 4:11. In each of these lists the emphasis is not on the different types of gifts but on their diversity and how they are to be used in a way that promotes love and unity in the church (1 Cor. 12:12–13:13). Gifts are to be used to build up the spiritual maturity of the believers (Eph. 4:12-16) and to bring glory to the Lord (1 Peter 4:9-11). In Romans 12 Paul encourages believers to use their gifts in humility (v. 3), in unity (vv. 4-5), and with sincere love and respect (vv. 9-10).

By Julie Ackerman Link (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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### **A New Bucket List**

**Read:** Romans 12:6-21 | Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another. — Romans 12:10

A friend told me he had recently accomplished one of the things on his “bucket list” (a list of things to do before you die) when he took his sister to Europe. Although he had traveled there many times, she had never been there. What struck me was the unselfish nature of having that goal on his “bucket list.” It caused me to wonder how many of my dreams and goals are focused on others, not on myself.

Romans 12:6-21 speaks of God’s gifts to us as members of the body of Christ and how we should use them in everyday life. All of them are outward in focus. Teaching, for example, is not for the teacher’s self-fulfillment but for the benefit of others. So too with the other gifts mentioned in verses 6 through 8. Paul summarized this openhanded approach by urging us to “be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves” (v.10 niv).

Paul exemplified this attitude by including others in his ministry and investing his life in the next generation of believers. Generosity, hospitality, forgiveness, and compassion guided his behavior.

Our goals in life should include giving away the gifts God has given to us.

Grant us, then, the grace for giving

With a spirit large and free,

That our life and all our living

We may consecrate to Thee.

—Murray

For a healthier spiritual life, exercise humility and care for others.

By David McCasland (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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### **Job Titles**

**Read:** Ephesians 4:11-16 | For the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith. —Ephesians 4:12-13

When the British Broadcasting Corporation asked for examples of important-sounding, obscure, and even bizarre job titles, one

writer offered hers: Underwater Ceramic Technician. She was a dishwasher at a restaurant. Sometimes titles are used to make a job sound more important.

When the apostle Paul listed some of God's gifts to the church in Ephesians 4:11, he did not intend for these to be understood as high-sounding job titles. All the parts of the body are necessary for the body to function properly. No one part is better than another.

What was of primary importance was the purpose of these gifts. They were "for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to . . . the stature of the fullness of Christ" (vv.12-13).

It matters little what title we hold. What is important is that we strengthen the faith of God's people. When we gauge our effectiveness by the standard that the Bible gives us, it will not matter when we are moved to another role or no longer hold a specific title. Out of love for God, we serve to build up fellow believers, and we let God give His commendation in heaven as He sees fit (Matt. 25:21).

Lord, please use me as Your instrument to touch others' lives. Help me not to be concerned about what title I hold but instead that my life might show others Your grace.

God's gifts to us are not for us but for others.

INSIGHT: Today's reading records Christ giving spiritual gifts to the church, the body of Christ. These gifts include: apostles, those who open up new mission territories to the gospel; prophets, who apply the Word in spiritually compelling ways; evangelists, who have a special ability to share the gospel that often brings a positive response; and pastors/teachers, who communicate the Word so that believers are built up in their faith. The goal of the use of these gifts is that Christians will be "perfected" in their faith and move on to maturity. The effective use of gifts creates a unity that bears witness to the reality of Christ (John 13:35).

By C. P. Hia (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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## Helpers Needed

Read: Romans 16:1-16 | The Helper, the Holy Spirit, . . . will teach you all things. —John 14:26

To some people, the term helper carries with it second-class connotations. Classroom helpers assist trained teachers in their classes. Helpers assist trained electricians, plumbers, and lawyers on the job. Because they aren't as skilled in the profession, they might be viewed as having less value. But everyone is needed to accomplish the task.

The apostle Paul had many helpers in his work of ministry. He listed them in his letter to Rome (ch.16). He made special reference to Phoebe, who "has been a helper of many and of myself also" (v.2). Priscilla and Aquila risked their own lives for Paul (vv.3-4). And Mary, Paul said, "labored much for us" (v.6).

Helping is a spiritual gift, according to 1 Corinthians 12:28. Paul listed it among the gifts from the Holy Spirit that are given to believers in Christ's body, the church. The gift of "helps" is just as needed as the others that are listed.

Even the Holy Spirit is called a "Helper." Jesus said, "The Helper, the Holy Spirit, . . . will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (John 14:26).

In whatever ways the Holy Spirit, the Helper, has gifted you, let Him use you for His honor.

Dear Lord, thank You for the gifts You have given me so that I might serve the body of Christ. Help me to be faithful to use my gifts to bring You glory.

You are a necessary part of the whole.

INSIGHT: Today's passage is found near the end of Paul's theological masterpiece—the epistle to the Romans. As Paul concludes his letter, he greets people by name. His final appeal to maintain unity in Christ is followed by this marvelous phrase of worship: "To God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen" (v.27).

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## In Harmony

Read: 1 Peter 4:7-11 | As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. —

1 Peter 4:10

I love playing the 5-string banjo. But it has one drawback. The fifth string will harmonize with only a limited number of simple chords. When other musicians want to play more complicated music, the banjoist has to adapt. He can lend marvelous melodic tones to a jam session only by making the right adjustments.

Just as musicians adjust with their instruments, we as believers also need to make adjustments with our spiritual gifts if we want to harmonize with others to serve God. For instance, those who have the gift of teaching must coordinate with those who have the gift of organizing meetings and with those who make sure meeting rooms are set up and cleaned. All of us have spiritual gifts, and we must work together if God's work is to get done.

The apostle Peter said, "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:10). Stewardship requires cooperation. Think about your spiritual gifts (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4; 1 Peter 4). Now reflect on how you can dovetail their use with the gifts of other believers. When our talents are used in a complementary way, the result is harmony and glory to God.

Without a note we sing in tune,  
An anthem loud we bring,  
When willingly we give our gifts  
Of labor to our King.  
—Branon

Keeping in tune with Christ keeps harmony in the church.

INSIGHT: The Bible Reader's Companion provides these helpful insights into today's reading: "Peter has described the pagan's choice: to satisfy their human desires. He now describes the lifestyle that pagans can make no sense of, but which reflects the will of God for His people. This includes: self-control, prayer, mutual love, unstinting hospitality, using gifts for the benefit of others, serving wholeheartedly and 'with the strength God provides.'"

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## A Piece Of The Puzzle

Read: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 | God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. —1 Corinthians 12:18

At her birthday celebration, the honored guest turned the tables by giving everyone at the party a gift. Kriste gave each of us a personal note expressing what we mean to her, along with encouraging words about the person God made us to be. Enclosed with every note was one piece of a jigsaw puzzle as a reminder that each of us is unique and important in God's plan.

That experience helped me to read 1 Corinthians 12 with new eyes. Paul compared the church—the body of Christ—to a human body. Just as our physical bodies have hands, feet, eyes, and ears, all are part of a unified body. No follower of Christ can claim independence from the body, nor can one part tell another that it is not needed (vv.12-17). "God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased" (v.18).

It's easy to feel less important than others whose gifts are different and perhaps more visible than ours. The Lord, however, wants us to see ourselves as He does—uniquely created and highly valued by Him.

You are one piece of a picture that is not complete without you. God has gifted you to be an important part of the body of Christ to bring Him honor.

Lord, help me not to compare myself with others in Your family. May I seek instead to be the person You've made me to be, and help me to use what You've given me to bless others today.

Your life is God's gift to you; make it your gift to God.

By David McCasland (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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## Corine

Read: 1 Peter 4:7-11 | Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. —1 Peter 4:9

A group of us were helping to put together packets of material at an Our Daily Bread event in Orlando last winter when Corine greeted us. It was mid-morning, and she was sure we must be hungry and thirsty. I told her we were “fine,” and she replied, “I know you’re fine, but you need something to eat.” A few minutes later she came back with cold water and snacks.

Throughout the 2 days we were there, Corine came by to check on us, bring us food or water, and take away our trash. On one occasion, I thanked her and said, “You have the gift of hospitality, don’t you, Corine!” She looked down and replied, “I don’t know. But you write the devotional articles, and I’ll clean up. And God will be glorified.”

Corine’s desire is to bring God glory by helping people. She definitely has the gift of hospitality and practices it well. God has graced each of His children with skills and abilities so that He can minister to others through us. You can find those gifts listed in Romans 12:4-13, 1 Corinthians 12:27-31, Ephesians 4:7-12, and 1 Peter 4:9-11.

The Lord has gifted us “that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever” (1 Peter 4:11).

All Christians have been gifted  
By grace from God above,  
Equipped to build and strengthen  
The church in faith and love.  
—Fitzhugh

You are one of a kind— designed to glorify God as only you can.

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### **Let’s Stick Together**

Read: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 | For in fact the body is not one member but many. —1 Corinthians 12:14

Most regions of the world are familiar with the amazing phenomenon of snow. Snowflakes are beautiful, uniquely crafted ice crystals. Individual snowflakes are fragile, and they quickly melt if they land on your hand. Yet, en masse they create a force to be reckoned with. They can shut down major cities while creating beautiful landscapes of snow-laden trees whose pictures decorate calendars and become the subject of artwork. They provide pleasure on the ski slopes and joy for children as they make snowmen and ammunition for snowball fights. All because they stick together.

So it is with those of us who follow Christ. Each of us has been uniquely gifted with the capacity to make a contribution to the work of Christ. We were never intended to live in isolation but to work together to become a great force for God and the advance of His cause. As Paul reminds us, the body of Christ “is not one member but many” (1 Cor. 12:14). All of us are to use our gifts to serve one another so that together we can make a significant difference in our world.

Put your giftedness to work, joyfully cooperate with the giftedness of those around you, and let the wind of the Spirit use you for His glory!

Lord, teach us to use our strengths in cooperation with the strengths of others. Help us to serve as one so that we might know the joy of the power of our togetherness for Your name’s sake and the advance of Your kingdom.

We can accomplish more together than we can alone.

By Joe Stowell (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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### **Gifted To Serve**

Read: Romans 12:3-13 | There are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. —1 Corinthians 12:6

It occurred to me one day that my right foot does all the pedal work when I’m driving my automatic transmission car. It alone works the accelerator and the brake. The left foot is idle. What happens if I decide that to be equitable, my left foot ought to replace my right foot half the time when I am driving? If you have never done so, please don’t try it!

If we don’t require such equality of the members of our own body, why is it that we sometimes expect it of people in the church? That seems to be an issue that the first-century church at Rome faced. Some were thinking more highly of themselves than they

ought (Rom. 12:3) just because they were doing some things others were not doing. But Paul reminds us that “all members do not have the same function” (v.4). We’ve been gifted according to God’s grace (v.6). He gave us those gifts to serve others, not ourselves (vv.6-13). Our service is to be marked by diligence and fervor, for we are serving the Lord, not man (v.11).

So, let’s not look over our shoulders to see what others are doing or not doing. Look at how God may be able to use you in His kingdom today. He has gifted you just as He has pleased (v.3).

Lord, lead me today as You see best. Use the gifts You have given me to encourage others on their journey. Help me not to compare myself with others but to be content with who You have made me to be.

We can’t all play the same part in God’s band of service, but we should all play in harmony.

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### **You’re Necessary**

Read: 1 Corinthians 12:14-26 | But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it. —1 Corinthians 12:24

The story has been told about a conductor who was rehearsing his orchestra. The organ was giving a beautiful melody, the drums were thundering, the trumpets were blaring, and the violins were singing beautifully. But the conductor noticed something missing—the piccolo. The piccolo player had gotten distracted and hoped his instrument wouldn’t be missed. The conductor reminded him: “Each one of us is necessary.”

This was essentially the same message Paul communicated to the Corinthian believers in his first letter to them (12:4-7). Every Christian plays an important role in the body of Christ. Paul gave a list of gifts of the Spirit and compared their use to the functioning of the various parts of the human body for the good of the whole (vv.8-10). The Corinthian believers may have had different cultural backgrounds, gifts, and personalities, but they were filled with the same Spirit and belonged to the same body of Christ. Paul made special mention of the parts of the body that were weak and obscure, and taught that all believers play a necessary and significant role. No one part was more necessary than any other.

Remember, Jesus has given you a significant part to play and will use you to build up His people.

The church, a living body, containing all the parts—  
It lives, it moves, it functions, and touches many hearts;  
When each part is committed to do the Savior’s will,  
His members are united, His purpose they fulfill.  
—Fitzhugh

As a member of the body of Christ, you are a necessary part of the whole.

By Marvin Williams (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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### **Unused Gears**

Read: Titus 3:1-8 | Be ready for every good work. —Titus 3:1

My first bike had one gear. Whether I was going fast or slow, uphill or downhill, that gear did everything. My next bike had three gears: one for level surfaces, one for going uphill, and one for going downhill. My third bike had ten gears, allowing me an even broader range of choices. Even though my last bike had several gears to choose from, I didn’t use all of them every time I rode. Some were best suited for starting and climbing, others were reserved for gaining speed, and others were best for a leisurely pace. But the thing about gears is this: Even though I wasn’t using all of them at the time, it didn’t mean I would never need them.

The same can be true in regard to our spiritual gifts and abilities. During times when I feel I am not being used to do certain things I once did, instead of feeling useless and unappreciated I thank God for the “gear” I’m currently able to use. Just because a skill is not needed right now doesn’t mean it never will be.

Our spiritual gifts are needed in different ways at different times. Needs and circumstances change in unforeseeable and unpredictable ways. The apostle Paul reminded Titus, “Be ready for every good work” (Titus 3:1). May that be true of us as well.

Heavenly Father, I need to remember that what I do is up to You, but how I do it is up to me. Whether I am busy or still, may I be peaceable, gentle, humble, kind, and loving.

Keep your tools ready—God will find work for you.

By Julie Ackerman Link (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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### **To God Be The Glory**

Read: 1 Chronicles 25:1-8 | Chenaniah, leader of the Levites, was instructor in charge of the music, because he was skillful. —1 Chronicles 15:22

When Jason was asked to sing at a church he was visiting, he was delighted to participate even though he wasn't asked until a few minutes before the service started. He chose a familiar hymn, "To God Be the Glory," because it was a song that was especially meaningful to him. He practiced it a few times in the church basement and sang it without accompaniment in the church service.

Several weeks later, Jason learned that some people in the church didn't appreciate his ministry. They thought he was showing off. Because they did not know him, they wrongly assumed that he was singing to impress them, not to honor the Lord.

From the Old Testament we learn that God appointed people with skill to be involved in temple worship. From construction workers to worship leaders—people were chosen based on their skill (1 Chron. 15:22; 25:1,7).

The Lord gave each of us different talents and spiritual gifts to be used for His glory (Col. 3:23-24). When we serve with that purpose, not to lift up ourselves, we don't need to be concerned with what others think. God gave His very best to us—His Son Jesus—and we honor Him by giving our best to Him.

The Master needs what you have to offer,  
No matter if you think it's small;  
His work on earth is done through His children,  
So give Him your best, give your all.  
—Hess

We are at our best when we serve God from our hearts.

By Julie Ackerman Link (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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### **Sharing Space**

Read: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 | Those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. —1 Corinthians 12:22

The number of people who run a business out of their homes is in the millions. But some have found that working alone can be a little too lonely. To give these lonely ones a community, "co-working" spaces have been designed. Large facilities are rented out where people working by themselves can share space with others. They have their own work area but can exchange ideas with fellow independent workers. It's for those who feel they can work better together than they do alone.

Sometimes Christians think they work better alone. But we are meant to work together with others in the church. Every Christian has been placed into "the body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:27). And the Lord desires that we take part in fellowship with a local community of believers—using our spiritual gifts and working together in His service.

Yet for various reasons, some aren't able to join in. Because of health issues, they may be shut in at home or may not know how to fit in at church. Yet they are a needed part of the body (vv.22-25). That's when others can meet their need for togetherness. Let's do our part so that others may feel they're an integral part of the community of faith. We work better together than alone.

Thinking It Over

What can you do to help others feel a part of your church community? Visit, pray with them, read Scripture together, drop a note, or invite them to join you in serving others.

Fellowship builds us up and binds us together.

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## A Perfect Fit

Read: Ephesians 2:1-10 | Those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. —Titus 3:8

“What kind of skill set do you bring?” That question, posed in a job interview, was intended to determine if my friend would be a good fit for a position. My friend quickly did a mental review of his skills and talents, hoping to emphasize the unique characteristics he possessed that would contribute to the success of the company.

What if we already had the perfect set of skills required to accomplish what God wants us to do? Well—as a matter of fact—we do! The spiritual gifts we possess, along with our experiences, training, natural talents, and a submissive heart make up a unique individual who has the skills needed for the “good works” that God has “prepared beforehand” (Eph. 2:10). If God has something He wants to accomplish and that you feel He is calling you to do, He will provide what you need to complete the task. Or, as one paraphrase emphasizes, God wants us “to join Him in the work He does, the good work He has gotten ready for us to do” (Eph. 2:10 The Message). The one thing He requires of us is that we “be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2).

Have you found a place in God’s service where you can be used of Him? Let’s “do good” and “be rich in good works” (1 Tim. 6:18).

Think not that you are limited  
Because of what you cannot do,  
But think instead of all you have—  
The talents God has given you.  
—D. De Haan

Spiritual gifts are meant to be used, not admired.

By Cindy Hess Kasper (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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## A Supporting Role

**Read:** Romans 12:9-21 | Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another. —Romans 12:10

After the American TV personality Ed McMahon died in 2009, one newspaper headline read, “When it came to being the No. 2 man, he was No. 1.” Best known for his 30-year tenure as Johnny Carson’s late-night sidekick, McMahon excelled at helping Carson succeed in the spotlight. While most entertainers strive for top billing, McMahon was content with a supporting role.

When the apostle Paul gave instructions about how to exercise our gifts as members of the body of Christ (Rom. 12:3-8), he affirmed the value of supporting roles. He began by saying that we should have a realistic opinion of ourselves (v.3), and he concluded with a call to genuine, unselfish love: “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another” (v.10). Or, as J. B. Phillips translates it, “a willingness to let the other man have the credit.”

Our gifts and abilities come to us by God’s grace and are to be used by faith (vv.3,6) in love and service for Christ—not for personal recognition.

May God grant us the ability to embrace with enthusiasm the supporting roles to which He calls us. The ultimate goal is His glory and not our own.

The church, a living body, containing all the parts—  
It lives, it moves, it functions, and touches many hearts;  
When each part is committed to do the Savior’s will,  
His members are united, His purpose they fulfill.  
—Fitzhugh

The church works best when we see ourselves as participants, not as spectators.

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## The Wooden Rule

**Read:** 1 Corinthians 12:14-26 | The body is not one member but many. —1 Corinthians 12:14

Legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden had an interesting rule for his teams. Whenever a player scored, he was to acknowledge the person on the team who had assisted. When he was coaching high school, one of his players asked, “Coach, won’t that take up too much time?” Wooden replied, “I’m not asking you to run over there and give him a big hug. A nod will do.”

To achieve victory on the basketball court, Wooden saw the importance of teaching his players that they were a team—not “just a bunch of independent operators.” Each person contributed to the success of everyone else.

That reminds me of the way the body of Christ should work. According to 1 Corinthians 12:19-20, each of us is a separate part of one body. “If they were all one member, where would the body be? But . . . there are many members, yet one body.” Is the success of a pastor, a Bible study, or a church program based solely on one person’s accomplishments? How many people contribute to the smooth operation of a church, a Christian organization, a family?

Coach Wooden’s rule and 1 Corinthians 12 are both rooted in the principle of seeing our need for one another. Let’s use our gifts within the body of Christ to build up, strengthen, and help to carry out God’s purposes (vv.1-11).

All Christians have been gifted  
By grace from God above,  
Equipped to build and strengthen  
The church in faith and love.  
—Fitzhugh

There are no unimportant people in the body of Christ.

By Cindy Hess Kasper (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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## The Mighty Toe

**Read:** 1 Corinthians 12:14-26 | If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? —1 Corinthians 12:15

Recently, I heard of a sport that challenges my imagination—I can’t comprehend why anyone would play it. It’s called “Toe Wrestling.” Every year, people from across the globe gather in England for the world championships. Competitors sit on the ground facing each other and then lock the big toe of the other’s bare foot. The object is to pin the opponent’s foot in a manner similar to the way an arm wrestler pins a competitor’s wrist. It sounds strange to me.

In a way, this unusual competition gives honor to a part of the body that’s largely ignored—until we drop something on it. Our toes and feet are vital parts of our anatomy, yet we pay little attention to them unless they hurt.

Perhaps that’s why Paul used the foot to remind us that there are no unimportant parts in the body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 12:15, he said, “If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,’ is it therefore not of the body?” The only correct answer: “Of course it’s part of the body.”

Paul wants us to realize that each person in the body of Christ is important. Even if you think of yourself as the most overlooked and ignored member of the body of Christ, you have value. And you can honor God like a true champion by using your unique skills for God’s glory.

God builds His church with different stones,  
He makes each one belong;  
All shapes and sizes fit in place  
To make the structure strong.  
—Sper

The Lord uses small tools to perform large tasks.

By Bill Crowder |(Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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God’s grace deals out different gifts to different people (believers). And God gives the strength or ability to use those gifts, reflecting

God's sovereignty (1Co 12:6-11, 18, 28, 1Pe 4:10-note). On the other hand each believer has a solemn, holy responsibility to use his or her God-given abilities as would any good steward (see stewardship in ISBE) (1Pe 4:11-note). Whatever gift we have must be dedicated to God and used for the good of the body of Christ. It is sad (and not Biblical) when a specific gift is emphasized over other gifts in the local body. As 1 Corinthians 12 (1Co 12:14-31) emphasizes all gifts are critical for the local body to be optimally functioning as God intended. Does this describe your church, dear pastor?

## RESOURCES RELATED TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- [Spiritual Gifts - Devotionals, Quotations, Illustrations](#) (Including Multiple Devotionals from Our Daily Bread)
- [Summary Chart on Spiritual Gifts](#)
- [ISBE Article on Spiritual Gifts](#)
- [Spiritual Gifts - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Spiritual Gifts - Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible](#)
- [Bible.org multiple sermons and articles on Spiritual Gifts](#)
- [BORROW Mirror, mirror on the wall : discovering your true self through spiritual gifts \(INDEX\)](#) - Ken Hemphill - Recommended  
- From the preface "*When you find your true gifted identity in Christ, you will discover why you are here and how to please your Creator. This discovery brings a lasting and healthy self-image.*"

**ED:** And I would add it not only will this "discovery" (and Spirit enabled using of your gift or gifts) impact your life during your short stay on earth (Jas 4:14+, Ps 144:4, Job 7:6, 7, Job 9:25, 26 pray Ps 90:12), but it will radically impact and enrich your experience of eternity future (cf 2Co 5:9,10+, 1Ti 4:7-8+, etc).

### Topic - The Holy Spirit

- [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)
- [A Spirit Filled Church](#)
- [Spirit-Filled Believers Are Like Artesian Wells](#)
- [Acts 1:8 Commentary](#)
- [Ephesians 5:18 Commentary](#)
- [Illumination of the Bible](#)
- [Loving Obedience-Obedient Love](#)
- [Our Anointing - The Holy Spirit](#)
- [Praying in the Spirit](#)
- [The Holy Spirit-2](#)
- [1 Corinthians 2:10-16 Commentary](#)
- [1 John 4:4 Commentary](#)

### Bible Dictionaries, Theological Articles

- [Baker Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology - Gift of the Holy Spirit - Craig Blomberg](#)
- [Baker Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology - Holy Spirit](#)
- Torrey Topical Textbook [Gift of the Holy Spirit](#)
- [SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN CHURCH HISTORY \(1\) Sam Storms](#)
- [SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN CHURCH HISTORY \(2\) Sam Storms](#)
- [SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN CHURCH HISTORY \(3\) Sam Storms](#)
- [10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT GOD'S POWER \(IN YOU\) By: Sam Storms](#)
- [Holman Bible Dictionary - Spiritual Gifts - Fisher Humphreys](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Spiritual Gifts](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Spiritual Gifts](#)
- [International Standard Bible Encyclopedia - Spiritual Gifts](#)
- [The Holy Spirit in Divine Revelation](#) -John Walvoord
- [Spiritual Renewal](#) -John Walvoord
- [New Morality](#) -John Walvoord
- [Spiritual Gifts Today](#) -John Walvoord
- [Spiritual Power Today](#) -John Walvoord

- [Spiritual Gifts: Definitions and Kinds - James F Stitzinger \(34 page article\)](#)
- [Women, Spiritual Gifts, and Ministry -- Ann L. Bowman](#)
- [Concerning Spiritual Gifts- A Study Of 1 Corinthians 12 -- Thomas A. Jackson](#)
- [Calvin And The Spiritual Gifts -- By: Paul Elbert \(22 page article\)](#)
- [And Prophecy Shall Cease- Jonathan Edwards On The Cessation Of The Gift Of Prophecy -- Philip A. Craig](#)

**Questions related to Spiritual Gifts and the Holy Spirit from excellent site - Gotquestions.org:**

- [What is the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives today?](#)
- [Spiritual gifts survey - what are the different spiritual gifts the Bible mentions?](#)
- [How does God distribute spiritual gifts?](#)
- [Is there any value to a spiritual gifts test/inventory/assessment?](#)
- [Is there a biblical spiritual gifts list?](#)
- [What does it mean for salvation to be a gift from God?](#)
- [What are the spiritual gifts of the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge?](#)
- [What is the difference between a talent and a spiritual gift?](#)
- [How do I identify my spiritual gift?](#)
- [What is continuationism? What is a continuationist?](#)
- [What is the spiritual gift of teaching?](#)
- [What is the spiritual gift of healing?](#)
- [What is the spiritual gift of faith?](#)
- [What is the spiritual gift of miracles?](#)
- [What is the spiritual gift of helps?](#)
- [What is the spiritual gift of leadership?](#)
- [What does it mean that tongues will cease?](#)
- [What is the spiritual gift of prophecy?](#)
- [What is the spiritual gift of interpreting tongues?](#)
- [What is glossolalia?](#)
- [What is praying in tongues? Is praying in tongues a prayer language between a believer and God?](#)
- [What is the gift of encouragement?](#)
- [Women pastors / preachers? Can a woman be a pastor or preacher?](#)
- [What is the Charismatic movement?](#)
- [What is the Vineyard Movement?](#)
- [What is the International House of Prayer \(IHOP\)?](#)
- [What is the Latter Rain Movement?](#)
- [How can I know if I have received a call to ministry?](#)
- [Questions about the Holy Spirit](#)
- [Is cessationism biblical? What is a cessationist?](#)
- [What is continuationism? What is a continuationist?](#)

**Wayne Barber sermon series** (discussion of spiritual gifts)

- [Romans 12:1 Our Responsibilities Under Grace - Pt 1](#)
- [Romans 12:2 Our Responsibilities Under Grace - Pt 2](#)
- [Romans 12:3-5 Our Responsibilities Under Grace - Pt 3](#)
- [Romans 12:5-8 Our Responsibilities Under Grace - Pt 4](#)
- [Romans 12:1-8 Our Responsibilities Under Grace - Pt 5](#)

**Bible.org Website - List of Contents Related to Spiritual Gifts**

- [Content On: Spiritual Gifts - numerous articles](#)

**Kenneth Boa**

- [The Gifts of the Spirit](#) - adapted from his book "Conformed to His Image" ([BORROW](#))

**J Hampton Keathley, III**

- [The Stewardship of Talents \(Multiplying the Life Through our Spiritual Gifts\)](#)

**Spiritual Gifts are discussed in the following on site Verse by Verse Commentaries by Bruce Hurt:**

- **ROMANS** - Ro 12:6+, Ro 12:7+, Ro 12:8+,
- **EPHESIANS** - Eph 4:11+, Eph 4:12+, Eph 4:13+, Eph 4:14+,
- **1 PETER** - 1 Pe 4:10+, 1 Pe 4:11+

**Messages by Steven Cole**

- [Ephesians 4:7-10 Christ's Purpose for His Church](#)
- [Saved to Serve - 1 Timothy 1:1-2](#)
- [Serving the Savior \(Luke 8:1-3\)](#)

**Messages by S Lewis Johnson**

- [1 Corinthians 12:1-11 The Issue of Spiritual Gifts](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:4-11 Unity and Variety of the Gifts](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:12-26 The Church -- Body of Christ](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:27-31 Exercise of Gifts in the Body](#)

**Messages by John Piper - a [continuationist](#)**

**Cessationism**...is the view that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, such as healing, tongues, and prophetic revelation, pertained to the apostolic era only, served a purpose that was unique to establishing the early church, and passed away before the canon of Scripture was closed (comp. 1 Cor. 13:8-12 with Heb. 2:3-4). It is contrasted with continuationism, which is the view that the miraculous gifts are normative, have not ceased, and are available for the believer today. (Source:Theopedia)

- [1 Corinthians 12:1 Spiritual Gifts](#)
- [Romans 12:1-8 We, Though Many, Are One Body in Christ](#)
- [Romans 12:1-8 Using Our Gifts in Proportion to Our Faith, Part 1](#)
- [Romans 12:1-8 Using Our Gifts in Proportion to our Faith, Part 2](#)
- [Romans 12:3-8 Using Our Gifts in Proportion to Our Faith, Part 3](#)
- [1 Peter 4:10-11 Spiritual Gifts](#)

**John MacArthur - [cessationist](#)**

- [Marks of a Healthy Church - Selected Scriptures - 8 Sermons](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:1 Concerning Spiritual Gifts, Part 1](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:1 Concerning Spiritual Gifts, Part 1 - Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:1 The Counterfeit Background of Spiritual Gifts - Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:1-11 The Gifts of the Body, Part 1](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:1-3 The Importance of Spiritual Gifts - Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:2-3 Concerning Spiritual Gifts, Part 2](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:2-3 Concerning Spiritual Gifts, Part 2 Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11 The Source of Spiritual Gifts - Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11 The Source of Spiritual Gifts](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11 Concerning Spiritual Gifts, Part 3 Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:28a The Gifted Men--Apostles and Prophets - Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:28a The Gifted Men--Apostles and Prophets](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:28a The Gifted Men--Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers - Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:28a The Gifted Men--Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:8-10 Permanent Edifying Gifts-The Speaking Gifts - Study Guide](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:8-10 Permanent Edifying Gifts-The Serving Gifts: Leadership, Serving & Giving - SG \(drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:8-10 Permanent Edifying Gifts-The Serving Gifts: Leadership, Serving & Giving](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:9-10 Permanent Edifying Gifts-The Serving Gifts: Mercy, Faith & Discernment - SG \(drop down\)](#)

- [1 Corinthians 12:9-10 Permanent Edifying Gifts-The Serving Gifts: Mercy, Faith & Discernment](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:10 The Temporary Sign Gifts--Miracles - Study Guide](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:10 The Temporary Sign Gifts--Miracles](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30 The Temporary Sign Gifts--Healing- 1 - Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30 The Temporary Sign Gifts--Healing- 2 - Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30 The Temporary Sign Gifts--Healing- 2](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30 The Temporary Sign Gifts, Part 3](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:12-13 Spirit Baptism - Study Guide](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:12-13 Spirit Baptism](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 18, 24, 28 One Body, Many Gifts- 1 - Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 18, 24, 28 One Body, Many Gifts- 1](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:15-31 One Body, Many Gifts- 2 - Study Guide \(see drop down\)](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:15-31 One Body, Many Gifts- 2](#)
- [1 Corinthians 12:12-27 The Body of Christ](#)

**Ray Pritchard** (Includes discussion of seven spiritual gifts)

- [Romans 12:3-8: Blueprint for a Healthy Church](#)

**Grant Richison** (abstracts from devotionals on Spiritual Gifts - click link for full article)

[1 Peter 4:10](#) We exercise our (spiritual) gift in grace because we received our gift by grace. God does not want us to be ambivalent about the gifts He gives us. In fact, He warns us not to neglect our gifts...If someone were to give us a gift at Christmas and we threw it in the attic without opening it, it would be an insult to the giver. If Christians receive special supernatural endowments to do the work of God and leave them latent, this is an insult to God who gave the gift. God gave every Christian a special endowment to do His work without exception. Will you stand at the judgment seat of Christ empty-handed with no representation of using our gift responsibly? It will do no good to say, "Well, I'm not talented. I really do not have anything to offer the church. I am a speckled bird that does not fit in. I can't do anything. All I can do is sit. All I can do is be a religious spectator all my life. I watch others serve. All I can do is pity myself." Neglecting our gift indicates our lack of appreciation for the grace of God. Very few Christians seize their gifts and use them for God's glory to the benefit of the body of Christ. Never did so many owe so much to so few.

[1 Peter 4:10b](#) Spiritual Gifts serve no purpose except to serve. Each gift is a pipe that relays the blessing for which God designed the gift. We are a pipe, not a reservoir. We are a channel of God's blessing to others. We are the channel through which God's blessing flows to others.

[1 Peter 4:10c](#) Christians are managers of God's grace through their spiritual gift. God wants us to be faithful, not famous. He does not even want us to be successful but faithful....[Stewards](#) serve others by distributing their gift to meet the needs of others. A good [steward](#) manages God's provisions well. As a minister of Christ, God entrusts us with the treasures of the gospel. The first requirement is trustworthiness. What kind of [steward](#) have you been with God's gifts to you? Have you opened your gift? Have you neglected your gift? Do you use your gifts to serve others? There is room for everyone in the service of the King.

[1 Peter 4:10d](#) God's gifts of grace come in all sizes and shapes. The grace of God comes in all colors, shapes and sizes. It takes a great variety of gifts to produce a healthy, growing church. Our computer has outward functions but below the surface are many little parts that make it work. You may be one of those small parts. Without you there would be no effective church of God. That is the way God works. The church needs big parts and little parts, big roles and little roles without which the church would not be the church. Will you make yourself available to be used of God in the local church? Without you, the work of the Lord will suffer loss. We ultimately do not serve the church but we serve the Lord. Say to the Lord, "Here I am. Harness me. Put a saddle on me and I will do my best." All He expects is our best, nothing more. All He wants from us is to do what we can with what we have.

[1 Peter 4:11](#) God gives us the gift of dispensing revelation....The message is not our own. We are just messengers who deliver the telegraph of good news. We do not say a messenger is great because of the good news in the telegram. The glory is in the content of the telegram. Men are simply mouth-pieces for communicating God's truth. We do not trust in our own powers but live under a power not our own.

[1 Peter 4:11b](#) To speak as an oracle of God is to speak with authority....Do you speak God's Word or are you a purveyor of your own notions? In speaking gifts, God designs that we transmit His truth. We simply chime the truth and the Holy Spirit does the work of applying truth to experience.



[1 Peter 4:11c](#) A characteristic of Christianity is to serve others....Few of us minister to saints. Most of us cater to our own needs. We love to minister to ourselves.

[1 Peter 4:11d](#) God will give us the ability to minister. God will enlarge our capacity to serve Him. He first gives us the capability to minister by giving us a gift. Then as we cultivate the gift, He makes us more potent. If we are faithful to our gift, God will enlarge our area of responsibility. He will push back horizons for greater ministry. Are you dying of spiritual dry rot? If God opens an opportunity for you, seize the day no matter how insignificant it may seem. If you are faithful in the small thing He will give you something greater

[1 Peter 4:11e](#) God supplies any provision we need to minister for Him. We do not invent our gift. God both gives the gift and produces the ability to use the gift. God is both the source of our gift and the sustaining of it. We often act as if it is our great gift that produces the results. We forget that God both gave us the gift and gives us the ability to use the gift (1 Corinthians 4:7). There is no room for pride because from beginning to end it is God that supplies.

[1 Peter 4:11f](#) Our purpose in life is to manifest God's glory. Use of our gifts is a combination of self-possession and self-abandonment. We should exercise our gift with a sense of excellence and yet the gift should not call attention to ourselves. The focus should be upon the Lord Jesus...Do you live a life of doxology? All doxologies ascribe glory to God. Do you ascribe to God what God truly is? There is always the temptation to ascribe glory to ourselves

[1 Peter 4:11g](#) God's purpose for us is to be God-centered. What is your motive for ministry? Do you do what you do for self? Are you self-centered or God-centered? The message here is that God wants us to be God-centered. Everything we do we do to the glory of God.

[1 Peter 4:11h](#) God wants us to recognize His sovereign rule for our lives.

[1 Peter 4:11i](#) We need to put our gifts in the perspective of eternity. Our master motive should revolve around the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31). If we live for the glory of God, our gifts will be used for eternal purpose. What we do in time counts for eternity. The phrase "forever and ever" puts our ministry and gifts in eternal perspective. We need to keep eternal values in view. We look at time from the viewpoint of eternity.

#### **Ron Ritchie** (series on Spiritual Gifts)

- [Good Stewards Of God's Spiritual Gifts](#) 1 Peter 4: 1-10
- [The Benefits Of Spiritual Gifts](#) Romans 12: 1-8
- [The Joy Of Spiritual Growth](#) Ephesians 4: 7-13
- [The Proper Use Of Gifts](#) 1 Corinthians 12: 1-30
- [Expressing Our Spiritual Gifts With Love](#) 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
- [Order Out Of Chaos](#) 1 Corinthians 14
- [Ron R. Ritchie's List of the Spiritual Gifts](#)

#### **Ray Stedman** from his book "[Body Life](#)"

- [All God's Children Have Gifts](#)
- [Discovering and Using Your Gift](#)
- [According to the Power](#)
- [How the Body Works](#) (spiritual gifts)

#### **Ray Stedman** - other messages on Spiritual Gifts

- [Romans 12:3-8: The Body at Work](#)
- [Romans 12:3-8 Who Am I, Lord?](#)

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A "KEY" PLAYER FAILS TO FULFILL THEIR FUNCTION?

### Are You a Good Steward of the Spiritual Gift God has Entrusted to Your Care?

The following story by an unknown author gives an interesting illustration of how one believer not exercising their gift in the Body can

affect the message produced by the entire Body.

## A Brokxn Kxy

Evxn though my typxwritxr is an old modxl, it works quitx wxll xxxcpt for onx of the kxys.

I havx many timxs wishxd that is workxd pxrfxctly.

It is trux that thxrx arx forty-onx kxys that function wxll xnough, but just onx kxy not working makxs thx diffxrxncx.

Somxtimxs it sxxms to mx that our church is somxthing likx my typxwritxr -- not all thx kxy pxoplx arx working propxrly.

As onx of thxm, you may say to yoursxlf, "Wxll, I am only onx pxrson, I don't makx or brxak thx church."

But it doxs makx a big diffxrxncx, bxcasx a church, to bx xffxctivx, nxxds thx activx participation of xvxy pxrson.

So, thx nxxt timx your xfforts arx not nxxdxd vxry much, rxmxmbxr my typxwritxr and say to yoursxlf, "I am a kxy pxrson in thx congrxgation and I am nxxdxd vxry much."

This is what happxns to thx wholx church, and multiply this by many timxs -- thx whole thing just doxs not makx sxnsx!

*"Belovxd don't bx like a broken kxy."*

You must utilize your spiritual gift.

The local body of Christ where you worship needs you  
and cannot be the same without you!

Do you really believe that?

## MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ON SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Wayne Barber has an interesting illustration of **unity among diversity** in the realm of spiritual gifts - "Remember in chapter 2 (sermon series on Ephesians) we are told we are of God's household and also His Temple. We are living stones being fitted into His Temple, each one of us with different sizes, shapes, gifts, personalities and individualities, but every one of us under the control of the Spirit of God. If someone played a middle C on the piano for a while, it is a pretty note. If he played it for a long time, you would say, "Will you quit? You are driving me crazy!" Isn't it great that unity doesn't mean uniformity? It doesn't mean we are all alike. Wouldn't that make church the most boring place you have ever been in your life? If that fellow added an E and a G and a high C, all of a sudden you would say, "Whew, that sounds good! Now that blends." You've got more than just one. You've got other diversified notes. But when you put them together played by the same hand, you have **unity** amongst the **diversity**. That is what Paul wants you to see. This is the body. This is how it functions. When we are each functioning under the Spirit's power, letting His ability be ours, then our gifts begin to function. Even though our gifts are different, we are still preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We are different. Folks, **you need to grasp that and stop coveting somebody else's gift and somebody else's ministry and simply say, "God, anything short of hell is grace. I accept what you have given to me. I receive what you have given to me. Let me just be who I am in your power.** When you do that, the unity of the body is being preserved....The word for grace, **charis**, means that which you don't deserve. It is Christ who is the source of every bit of it. Again,**unity** is not **uniformity**. We are all diversified in our gifts as to the amount and as to the gifts themselves. " (bolding added)