

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 3-27-11 PM NOTES
"SPIRITUAL GIFTS" (PART 1)
ROMANS 12-3-6a
#61 in Series, "Verse by Verse through Romans"

1 Thessalonians 4:13 (NKJV) "But I do not want you to be **ignorant**, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope."

2 Corinthians 2:11 (NKJV) "lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not **ignorant** of his devices."

1 Corinthians 12:1 (NKJV) "Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I do not want you to be **ignorant**".

Ephesians 4:11-12 (NKJV) "11 And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ".

Mark 10:45a (NKJV) "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve..."

I. The Design of Spiritual Gifts

Grace = "Charis"

Gifts = "Charismaton"

Spiritual Gifts – Holy Spirit empowered abilities given to individual members of the body of Christ (the church) for those members to use to bring growth, edification, and maturity to the church.

A. They Are Supernatural Gifts

B. They Are Service Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:7 (ESV) "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit **for the common good.**"

C. They Are Sovereign Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:11 (ESV) "All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually **as he wills.**"

"Because every believer is perfectly gifted, no gift that God has not given should be sought and no gift He has given should be neglected or denigrated."

- John MacArthur

D. They Are Salvation Gifts

Ephesians 2:10 (NKJV) "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

II. The Deployment of Spiritual Gifts (V3-5)

A. They Are Deployed with Humility (V3)

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 (HCSB) “²⁶ Brothers, consider your calling: not many are wise from a human perspective, not many powerful, not many of noble birth. ²⁷ Instead, God has chosen the world’s foolish things to shame the wise, and God has chosen the world’s weak things to shame the strong. ²⁸ God has chosen the world’s insignificant and despised things—the things viewed as nothing—so He might bring to nothing the things that are viewed as something, ²⁹ so that no one can boast in His presence.”

“We were earth, we are flesh, we will be worm’s meat.”

- Henry Smith

Philippians 4:13 (NKJV) “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

“Humility is perfect quietness of heart. It is to expect nothing, to wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing done against me. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me and when I am blamed or despised. It is to have a blessed home in the Lord, where I can go in and shut the door, and kneel to my Father in secret, and am at peace in a deep sea of calmness, when all around and above is trouble. The humble person is not one who thinks meanly of himself; he simply does not think of himself at all.”

- Andrew Murray

Psalms 27:1-5 (ESV) “¹ The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? ² When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. ³ Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident. ⁴ One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. ⁵ For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock.”

B. They Are Deployed with Diversity (V4)

1 Corinthians 12:14-19 (ESV) “¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be?”

C. They Are Deployed for Unity (V5)

“Everyone has some gift, therefore all should be encouraged. No one has all the gifts, therefore all should be humble. All gifts are for the one body, therefore all should be harmonious. All the gifts are from the Lord, therefore all should be contented. All of the gifts are mutually helpful and needful, therefore all should be studiously faithful.”

- A. T. Pierson

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Romans 12 marks the beginning of the application of the glorious truths of chapters 1-11 that Paul calls, "The mercies of God". A good outline I came across on this chapter is as follows:

- The Christian's Relationship to God (V1-2)
- The Christian's Relationship to the Church (V3-13)
- The Christian's Relationship to a Hostile World (V14-21)

There are three things in the New Testament that we are told that we must not be ignorant of. First, we are not to be ignorant concerning the future of those who have died knowing Christ. We are told in **1 Thessalonians 4:13 (NKJV)** "But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope." This passage then continues on to tell us about the resurrection of the bodies of those who died in Christ and the catching up of those alive at the Lord's coming. The second thing that we are told that we are not to be ignorant about is the devices or methods of the devil. **2 Corinthians 2:11 (NKJV)** "lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices." The third thing that we are told that we must not be ignorant of is spiritual gifts. **1 Corinthians 12:1 (NKJV)** "Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant". I am afraid that when it comes to spiritual gifts, the church by and large is ignorant. Most churches are like a spectator sport. The people set in the pew and pay the pastors and a few dedicated volunteers (typically less than 20% of the members) to do the work of the ministry. Most of the members waste their spiritual gifts, the pastors and the 20% of lay people that minister stay worn out and the church is handicapped. The role of the Pastors was never to do all the ministry. **Ephesians 4:11-12 (NKJV)** "¹¹ And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ".

When it comes to serving the Lord through the work of ministry, I approach the subject with some presuppositions. First, I assume that every person who has savingly believed on Jesus Christ has a desire to serve the Lord and minister to others. We are told in 2 Peter 1:4 that saved people have become partakers of the divine nature. The divine Son of God said in **Mark 10:45a (NKJV)** "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve..." I believe that the church member who has no desire to be in ministry is deceived about his salvation. Serving through ministering to others is a part of our spiritual DNA as a true child of God.

A second presupposition I make is that every person who has savingly believed in Christ and is not involved in serving the Lord through ministering to others has one of the following situations in their life:

1. They don't know what to do.
2. They tried and failed and are afraid to try again.
3. Their priorities are so out of order that they don't think they have time to be involved in ministry. This priority problem explains one of the reasons that their lives are so spiritually dry, miserable, and why there is so little fruit being bourn in their life. Here is my desire. I am praying that God will use this message and the one next week to bring conviction to some, hope to others and equipping to all so that every blood bought child of God who is a part of this body will become involved in a ministry they are equipped for and will serve the Lord with gladness.

I want to begin by giving you a short topical study on Spiritual gifts that will help you understand and apply our text in Romans.

I. The Design of Spiritual Gifts

The Greek word for “grace” is “charis”. The word in verse 6 for “gifts” is “charismaton”. Spiritual gifts are grace gifts. They are gifts given to us by God that we do not deserve to equip us to will and do His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). Spiritual gifts are given to equip us for a specific area of service. Let me give you a more formal definition of spiritual gifts. **Spiritual Gifts – Holy Spirit empowered desires abilities given to individual members of the body of Christ (the church) for those members to use to bring growth, edification, and maturity to the body of Christ.**

I want to give you a four-fold description of spiritual gifts that will help us understand God’s plan for them.

A. They Are Supernatural Gifts

By “supernatural”, I mean that they are from the Holy Spirit and are not the same as talents. Singing ability and the ability to play musical instruments are not spiritual gifts. They are talents. Talents also come from God and we should thank Him and give Him glory for them, but they are not spiritual gifts. A spiritual gift may flow through and be manifested through a talent, but spiritual gifts are from the Holy Spirit given at salvation and are not from our natural birth.

B. They Are Service Gifts

We read in **1 Corinthians 12:7 (ESV)** “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit **for the common good.**” Here is the point I want to emphasize: Spiritual gifts are designed for the growth, edification, and maturity of other believers in the body of Christ. They were not given for the enjoyable personal experiences of the possessors of the gift. They were not given to enhance one’s personal prayer life or as a sign of receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual gifts are not to be used selfishly but sacrificially; they are not for enjoyment but employment. Spiritual gifts are tools, not toys. Spiritual gifts equip us for service to our Lord and Master by ministering to other members of the body.

C. They Are Sovereign Gifts

The Bible says in **1 Corinthians 12:11 (ESV)** “All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions [spiritual gifts] to each one individually **as he wills.**” God the Holy Spirit sovereignly determines your spiritual gift. Every believer has a spiritual gift and since it was chosen for us by the Holy Spirit, we should be grateful for the gift we have and not seek one like someone else has or a more “flashy”, “showy” gift. John MacArthur summarizes this point well: “Because every believer is perfectly gifted, no gift that God has not given should be sought and no gift He has given should be neglected or denigrated” [John MacArthur, “Romans 9-16”, Page 162]. The gift that the Holy Spirit chose for you and gave you at salvation is the perfect gift for you. God the Holy Spirit does all things well and you can trust Him and rejoice in the gift that you have been given.

D. They Are Salvation Gifts

Spiritual gifts are given to each believer at salvation. The gift is to equip you for the ministry that God has prepared for you. **Ephesians 2:10 (NKJV)** “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” The spiritual gift is God’s equipping for the good works that He has “ordained” (KJV) for us. Lost people do not have spiritual gifts. They have God given talents, but not spiritual gifts.

With that background, let’s look at the text.

II. The Deployment of Spiritual Gifts (V3-5)

Remember that the foundation of verses 3-13 is Romans 12:1-2. We are not ready to employ our spiritual gifts until we have presented our lives as a living sacrifice as an act of worship and gratitude for God’s mercies detailed in Romans 1-11. We will be ineffective in the exercise of our spiritual gifts if we have not stopped being conformed to the world and if we are not being progressively transformed by the renewing of our minds.

A. They Are Deployed with Humility (V3)

Spiritual gifts are squelched and blocked by prideful lives. In preparation for explaining the gifts, Paul reminds us of the authority that is his by virtue of the grace of God given to him and gives a command

related to humility. The key to humility is in our thinking, specifically our thinking about ourselves. In the Greek, a form of the word for think is used 4 times. What is proper thinking about ourselves? Proper thinking will avoid two extremes. First, proper thinking about ourselves means that we refuse to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. This is the greatest danger because it comes most naturally. Pride is the Biblical word for thinking too highly of ourselves. Sometimes this thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think is obvious and sometimes it is not so obvious. When we think of someone who thinks more highly of himself than he ought to think, we often think of an arrogant person, a braggart. I'm talking about people who are legends in their own mind! Their favorite subject of conversation is themselves. I am told that in South America there is a bird called a "me-me bird". It gets its name because its call is "me, me, me, me". I've never seen any of the feathered variety, but I've seen plenty of the human variety! In any story they tell, "me" is the hero. If you talk about an experience, "me" has to tell about one that is greater. If you share a problem, "me" will tell you how he would have fixed it. The person who thinks more highly of himself than he ought will never be mightily used of God because if God did use Him, he would take all the glory. When we base our fitness for ministry upon our talents, our experience, our education, or our intelligence we are not looking to God's enabling grace and we will not give God all the glory. God tells us who is going to be used by Him in ministry in **1 Corinthians 1:26-29 (HCSB)** "²⁶ Brothers, consider your calling: not many are wise from a human perspective, not many powerful, not many of noble birth. ²⁷ Instead, God has chosen the world's foolish things to shame the wise, and God has chosen the world's weak things to shame the strong. ²⁸ God has chosen the world's insignificant and despised things—the things viewed as nothing—so He might bring to nothing the things that are viewed as something, ²⁹ so that no one can boast in His presence." The Puritan Henry Smith makes a statement that should take all of the strut out of us: "We were earth, we are flesh, we will be worm's meat" [Puritan Quotes, Page 149]. One man asked his friend, "Pray for me that I may be nothing". His friend said, "You are nothing; take it by faith".

A second extreme that is to be avoided is to think too lowly of ourselves. Beware of some deception here. Some people actually think too highly of themselves and seek compliments by saying degrading things about themselves to others. They are hoping others, will say, "Oh that's not true" and then stroke their oversized ego. For example, "I'm just not very smart at all". They are waiting for you to say, "Oh, don't tell me that; you are one of the smartest people I know". One way to reveal if they think too lowly of themselves or whether they are fishing for a compliment because they think too highly of themselves is to agree with them when they say something negative about themselves and then watch how they respond. Someone says, "I'm just so ugly". Respond with "Well, you know, you're not the best looking person I've ever seen. I'm going to agree with you there." How they respond will reveal what they really think of themselves! Some people really do think wrongly about themselves when they do not believe that God can use them. In a sense, the real problem with this person is that they are dishonoring God by failing to believe that He is all powerful and can use anyone He chooses to use. Anyone, however weak, however limited in natural IQ, however uneducated, however beaten down in their life can be used by this omnipotent God to accomplish His purposes through them. Remember: God even used Balaam's donkey!

We are not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought and we are not to think lowly of ourselves than we ought. We are to think "soberly" of ourselves. That word "soberly" is translated "sensibly" in the HCSB. It means to think with a sound mind. A good word in this context might be "accurately" or "biblically". A good example of thinking soberly about ourselves is the example of Paul himself in **Philippians 4:13 (NKJV)** "I can do all things [if Paul stopped here, this statement would be the essence of pride and thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought, but listen to the rest of what he said] through Christ who strengthens me." It is not your "IQ; it is your "I trust". Let me give you an example of thinking soberly of ourselves from church history. The Scottish reformer John Knox was approaching the court of Mary, Queen of Scots. He was warned that it might be better to postpone his visit in that she was in one of her angriest moods. Knox continued on his way and said, "Why should I be afraid of a queen when I have just spent four hours with God?" [From Donald Barnhouse, "Romans, Volume IV", Page

37]. That wasn't arrogance or pride; it was faith in the God who had called John Know to do His work in Scotland.

Though the word isn't used, what verse 3 is talking about is humility. I have read a lot of definitions of humility, but the best one is from Andrew Murray, the South African Dutch Reformed Pastor of more than 100 years ago. "Humility is perfect quietness of heart. It is to expect nothing, to wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing done against me. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me and when I am blamed or despised. It is to have a blessed home in the Lord, where I can go in and shut the door, and kneel to my Father in secret, and am at peace in a deep sea of calmness, when all around and above is trouble. The humble person is not one who thinks meanly of himself; he simply does not think of himself at all" [Andrew Murray, Source uncertain]. A humble person knows that they are totally dependent upon God and without Him, they can do nothing. A humble person also has no fear of man, of the devil, of suffering, of death or of an unknown future. A humble person is bold and fearless because he or she knows **Psalms 27:1-5 (ESV)** "¹The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? ²When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. ³Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident. ⁴One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. ⁵For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock." AMEN!

The last part of verse three ("as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith") is a little difficult to interpret. It seems to mean that God gives us the faith to look to Him and trust Him to empower the gift that He has given us for ministry in the body of Christ.

Spiritual gifts are effective in a humble life.

B. They Are Deployed with Diversity (V4)

Verse 4 is of course talking about the church. The true church is the body of Christ – all those who are united to Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit that was accomplished when they were saved. That one body of Christ has many local manifestations in local churches that meet in large cathedrals, in humble buildings, in mud huts, under trees, in rented buildings, and in homes. The local church is organized in the sense that it has Elders and Deacons. They study the Word, proclaim the gospel, baptize, take the Lord's Supper, practice church discipline as a part of loving one another. When I speak of the church in this section dealing with Romans, I am primarily referring to the local church, but recognizing that while the local church has wheat with tares mixed in (lost church members), there is a true church that only God numbers that includes all who are in Christ Jesus.

The Apostle Paul's favorite analogy of the church is the body of Christ. Christ is the head of the body and members make up the various parts of the body. Our physical bodies are amazing. Every part of the body has a function. No part is unnecessary and there is no rivalry. Some parts work in a public way that everyone sees and some work behind the scenes. We see this analogy of the body in more detail in **1 Corinthians 12:14-19 (ESV)** "¹⁴For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹If all were a single member, where would the body be?" That is the way it is in the church. There are so many needs. I don't believe that it is God's will that we hire people to do the ministry. There is a need for Pastors and teachers and evangelists (missionaries and church planters today) to equip the members of the body to do the work of the ministry, not to do the work for them. One of the reasons I believe that God has allowed this economic crisis and has allowed it to drastically affect the church is to force us to do the work of the ministry through members of the body who aren't paid. The paid people are just equipping the members and doing administration and facilitating the ministry.

We have so many needs that are not being met because parts of this body are not functioning. Next week, I am going to share some of those so that we can fill them just by people who are here and are willing to do this work of ministry. There is great diversity in the body of Christ.

C. They Are Deployed for Unity (V5)

What a fantastic verse. It doesn't need a lot of explanation. The church is diversity unified! Unity is not uniformity. When we understand the concept of the body and how gifts function, the result is greater unity because we realize that though we are so different, we need each other and it is God who gives us our place in the body.

CONCLUSION

Many years ago, Dr. A. T. Pierson said it better than I ever could: "Everyone has some gift, therefore all should be encouraged. No one has all the gifts, therefore all should be humble. All gifts are for the one body, therefore all should be harmonious. All the gifts are from the Lord, therefore all should be contented. All of the gifts are mutually helpful and needful, therefore all should be studiously faithful" [Quoted in Oswald Sanders, "The Holy Spirit and His Gifts", Page 115]. (3508)