

Romans 12:3-8

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Preacher: Clay Naylor

[0:00] Good morning, everybody. Take out your Bibles and turn to the book of Romans, chapter 12. I just want to express briefly my gratitude for all your prayers and encouragement.

! As we were gone up at Duke Hospital, kind of fighting through some infection that I have, and still kind of doing it. I have my stuff going this morning.

I have a little medicine ball, and it pushes medicine through it, which is pretty cool. But it's also too big to fit in my pocket of these cowboy-cut Wranglers, so I have it in a fanny pack, which is really embarrassing. So, returning to the 80s slowly.

But I really want to just thank you for your prayers and encouragement. That said, I still am a little short of breath, so it might take me longer to kind of get out everything.

But I will be watching the time. I promise not to keep you here longer. At least at this point, Lord willing, I'm supposed to preach the next passage next Sunday. So if I have to, I may wrap up some of this and just put it in with next week.

[1:11] So, we'll see how it goes. But it's times like this that it's good for the Lord to remind me to not rely on any kind of gifting or ability I have, but on His strength and His power.

So just join me in a word of prayer. Father, we offer this time to you. Please just work in and through me to accomplish your purpose. And may your word be applied to our hearts through your Holy Spirit.

And may it have the desired effect that you meant for it to have on our souls and our lives as we go from here. So may you be pleased, Lord, during this time and this preaching and the hearing of your word.

In Christ's name, amen. Amen. All right. Romans 12. Nathan did a wonderful job last week on Romans 1 and 2, kind of the focus on renewing our minds.

And so, the book of Romans can be really hard to reconnect and just to make sure you don't lose the overall picture of it. But in short, God's saving grace leads to a new life in Christ.

[2:24] And in chapter 12 through 15, 13, Paul begins to work out the practical gospel implications of his saving mercy.

So, in light of all that God has done for us, in light of all that the book of Romans has unpacked, the idea that we were chosen by his grace, we've had our sins forgiven, we've been made right with God, justified in his sight, that Christ's righteousness has been given to us, that we are reconciled to him.

We've been adopted into this family, we've been given the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our inheritance. So, in light of all that stuff that Romans has just talked about, now he's saying, therefore, live this way.

That's what starts in chapter 12 and kind of goes forward through the rest of the book. And today, looking at, that's kind of where we've been, and now where we're going, starting in verses 3 through 8, Paul begins expounding on what the new life in Christ actually looks like.

As in most of his letters, he begins talking with teaching about doctrine, theology. He does that in Ephesians very clearly. Maybe the first three chapters are about our great salvation and what God has done for us, and the other three chapters are about working that out in response to that, how godly living, what it looks like.

[3:56] Very similar at this point. He concludes this letter with a practical outworking and application of what he's already expounded on. And so, don't fall off on either side of this cliff, okay?

Truth and knowledge and sound doctrine are vital. And without it, you will not be saved, all right? But it is also insufficient without the Holy Spirit's empowerment and application to the inward man. So, your learning must translate into living.

It must, your theology must transform into doxology. Doxology. It's not meant just to be head knowledge. It must impact your heart. It must impact your soul.

It must impact the way you think. Or else it's just dead knowledge in your head. Both are important, right? Your head knowledge and your heart response to that truth are vital.

[4:59] And so, the following verses, just to give you a simple outline, Paul begins with an exhortation in verse 3, an illustration in verses 4 through 5, and then an application in verses 6 through 8.

So, let's read together Romans 12. We'll start. You know what? I'm just going to start with verse 1 just for fun.

To kind of not lose if you weren't here last week or whatever. But, Paul says, And he goes on in verse 3.

Let's read together Romans 12.

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Let's read Romans 12. Let's read Romans 12. Let's read Romans 12. Let's read Romans 12.

Let's read Romans 12. The one who leads with zeal. The one who does acts of mercy with cheerfulness. All right.

So, for you people out there that are particularly looking at the second part of verse 6, that's not where we're going today. So, just hang tight. We're going to have a walk through this outline.

But three points today. Number one, and this is the exhortation, number one is right attitude. That's the exhortation in verse 3.

He says, For by grace given to me, I say to everyone among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

[7:44] So, Paul begins this whole part by recognizing that what he has is a result of God's grace, his apostleship, his ministry, all stems not because of any greatness that's in him, but completely by God's grace.

He was set apart for the service of Christ. So, then he's connecting that truth to what we just read, verses 1 and 2, the idea of renewing our minds.

In light of that, Paul calls all believers to think humbly and rightly about themselves and their role in the church. So, very clearly at the heart of our sin and our rebellion against God is wrong thinking, temptations to boast about ourselves and to demean others.

Every single good thing we have is from God. Everything, including our gifts and our rules that are in the body. And Paul makes that crystal clear.

Everything that we have that is good is from God. Every passage that mentions gifts, okay, which there's four, really.

[8:58] It says in 1 Corinthians 12, to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. So, given, God has appointed in the church and that he gave, Ephesians 4.11.

So, anytime gifts are mentioned, Paul wants you to see it clearly that it was given to you by God. And so, if you understand that, it excludes boasting. So, he goes hard at that.

So, he's saying, don't come at this with an approach of pride. So, the right response to this, what is the right attitude? The right attitude is humility and not pride.

Richard Baxter, one of my favorite Puritan writers, said, humility is not a mere ornament of a Christian, but an essential part of the new creature.

It is a contradiction in terms to be a Christian and not be humble. So, humility is our only right response to God because it recognizes that we live the Christian life in the same manner in which we first became believers, completely by his grace.

[10:13] So, humility isn't just pretending, faking that we're unworthy, right, that, to sound spiritual, but it's acknowledging the true reality that we are unworthy, that everything we have is from God, and that excludes boasting.

So, in light of that, Paul is calling them to think, and he says, in this verse, I say to you, right, I say, exhort, warn everyone among you.

Not, there's this idea of don't do this, but do this. So, here's the negative part. Not to think, which means to estimate, to evaluate himself more highly than he ought to think, or to have an overblown, exaggerated opinion of your own importance.

Okay? A man that I respect a lot said this, that a desire for preeminence is the death of spiritual usefulness.

Pride is cancerous to the body, and few things can cause more harm in a local church than a person who overrates himself and tries to perform a ministry that he really isn't gifted to do, and he boasts about those gifts that he doesn't possess.

[11:37] We've all seen that in the church. We've seen people overrating themselves, overrating their importance and their role in the church and what great harm that does.

We've seen people who don't have gifts destroy things because they think they have them, and that we haven't been bold enough and honest enough to say, hey, you really don't have that, brother or sister.

So, that's okay because you've been gifted in other ways. So, let's find out what that is. Don't do that. We also have seen people boast about gifts that God has given and use them for their own glory to exalt themselves.

And both are expressions of pride. God wrote, or James wrote, God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. In the writer of Proverbs, pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before the fall.

So, Paul's really just saying, hey, look, everything we have is from God, so what's so special about you? And that was the sickness that had infected the Corinthian church and why Paul gives them so many loving rebukes about them boasting in their spiritual gifts and saying, well, you're neglecting the biggest mark of a true believer and that mark is Christ-like love.

[13:01] You don't have it. So, I don't really care about what other gifts you have. And so, that means that godly character counts more than our gifting, right?

Our hearts, what God has done in us. So, Paul is warning, do not have a over-inflated, arrogant opinion of yourself, right?

We've seen people abuse these gifts. I have a friend who is a campus pastor of a larger megachurch.

We disagree on ecclesiology a lot, but he's a brother. And he was in a large staff meeting of all the different campuses that represent this church.

church, and the guy who, he helped start this church many years ago, he just kind of dominates the meetings. And most people are afraid to speak up.

[14:05] You ever been in a meeting like that where everybody's just like, okay, okay, just sort of nodding along? Well, my friend noticed that he just thought he would speak up and just say, hey, how about instead of doing this, we maybe think about doing this.

You know, fair assessment. The guy who is the head guy, the guy who telecasts himself, broadcasts himself over all these campuses, his remark back to my friend was, well, one day when you start a church, you can do things the way you see fit.

And that is dangerous. This man has an over-exaggerated view of himself and an arrogant view that if he pulled out, this whole thing would just fall apart, right?

We have to be careful that there could be something there just besides boasting. It could be someone who thinks they're a believer and is not because they lack the humility that believers are supposed to be characterized by.

This is why Paul wrote in verse Corinthians 4, 7, for who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive from God?

[15:24] If then you received it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? So a gift can never be the source of spiritual pride because it's a gift. Pride is deception because, again, everything we have, this good, comes from God, including our gifts from His hand.

So therefore we have no grounds to boast. But look at the next part of this verse. He says, rather, right, but to think or rate your own ability with sober, sound, clear-headed judgment, which leads us to recognize in ourselves we are nothing.

but in Christ we can be used to glorify God with the gifts that the Spirit has bestowed on us. So a quick question.

I mean, I guess you could say it's a real question for the elders of our church, including me, but just a question to all of us. Do you think that this church would fall apart if you left?

Do you think that if you weren't here to get things done that things would just become unraveled?

Do you cherish an overly exaggerated idea of your own importance?

[16:39] Paul responds to such people in Galatians 6, For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Think about this.

Do you use the gifts that God has given you to exalt yourself and make a name for yourself? Jesus would respond, whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Matthew 23, 12. Or do you recognize that any gift, any ability you have, has been graciously given by God, and that he intends to use those gifts for you not to make a name for yourself, but to use it for his glory and the strengthening of the church?

Another scary prospect, do you recognize that he could take that gift from you? Because he gave it to you. Those are all things that stem from God. Have you asked God to help you evaluate yourself realistically with sober judgment about your role in the body, a single member of the body of Christ? All right, and he goes on and he uses this phrase in our text in verse 3, this idea of the measure of faith. Now, real quickly, it doesn't mean saving faith, it doesn't mean quantity or amount of faith given to individuals, rather, each according to the degree of faith apportioned or allocated by God for each believer to properly exercise their gifts.

[18:21] This kind of faith is a spiritual endowment, an ability given by the Holy Spirit to empower them to use their particular gift. Another way to read this verse, each according to the degree of faith that God has assigned or apportioned, allotted, allocated, it seems to refer right to the correct measure of a spiritual gift in its operating features that God has given to every believer.

So, if you ever sat in a hospital room, it gets long days. There's not always cool stuff to watch on TV, and you don't really feel like reading because you're about to fall asleep because you feel sick. So, what do you do? You talk about kids, and you talk about your kids, and you look at pictures. But at the time, we were, my mother-in-law sent us a picture of our two Labradors, and I was like, wait a minute, and I had an apostrophe epiphany.

But, some of you got that reference. All right. An example, it's just an example. All right, we're going to use an example of dogs.

So, you either love dogs or you hate them, so I don't know which one you are today. But, there are different categories of dogs. Right? Whether you knew that or not.

[19:47] There are sporting dogs like mine, Labradors, Spaniels, Setters, really good at just going out and having fun with and swimming and chasing balls.

There are hounds, bloodhounds, blue ticks, basset hounds. My brother used to coon hunt, so he had walker hounds and blue ticks.

There's herding dogs like German shepherds, collies. Healers. And then there's toy dogs, the most worthless category. I'm just kidding. I'm going to get mean emails later.

Pomeranians, Yorkies, just lap dogs, right? Each kind of dog, listen, each kind of dog is given a specific but limited set of capabilities and functions to do what God intended it to do.

it's amazing to watch each breed, each type of dog function in the way they're supposed to. Like, I'm amazed to watch my Labradors, like, the younger one, he'll swim down in the bottom of the lake

and get something that we threw down there and he'll bring it back up.

[20:59] It's like, he'll find things in the dark. He'll do a zigzag pattern to find it. I've seen my brother's hounds, you know, like, track down things. I've seen toy dogs just sit and be fed and petted.

I've seen German shepherds being protective of their family members. So, given specific but limited set of capabilities, so, awesome to watch them function.

However, you would not want a St. Bernard to function as a lazy indoor toy dog. Anybody seen Beethoven? He would just, without a job to do, he would go crazy and he would just chew up your furniture.

Likewise, he wouldn't want a Pomeranian swimming out in the middle of a freezing cold lake to retrieve a duck on a hunt. It would just not make it. It would just sink and drown.

So, you wouldn't want a Yorkie to herd and protect your sheep from coyotes. It just wouldn't work. So, I know this is silly, but I'm telling you this for a reason.

[22:05] So, like dogs, every believer has his own special but limited set of capabilities. Trying to operate outside those capabilities only produces frustration, mediocrity, anger, discouragement, and ultimately defeat.

But when we joyfully fulfill what God has given us, we function according to what He has designed to us. It's a beautiful thing, right? And Paul says in Corinthians 12-11, all these are empowered by the one and the same Spirit who appoints to each, each one individually as He will.

So, He's given us individually gifting. As God has given different gifts to different people, He also provides everything we need to serve in that capacity, to serve one another.

So, that's what that means. So, that's the right attitude. It's humility, not pride. It's to serve others, not yourself. It's to exalt God and not to make a name for yourself.

This goes to point two, which is right relationship. Alright? Right relationships. And this is the illustration part, verses four and five.

[23:26] Verse four, for as in one body we have many members, and many members do not all have the same function. So, we, though we are many, are one body in Christ and individually members of one another.

Alright? So, this is this faithful cooperation we see. Paul uses, again, this very endearing, familial language. If you want to remember the beginning of the book of Romans, which was a long time ago at this point, he said, in chapter one, verse seven, to all those in Rome who are loved by God, called to be saints, grace to you and peace from our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, emphasizing this familial language, he points out the reality that each individual Christian is a part of a larger, greater whole, the church.

church. So, to show the diversity and unity of the church, when Paul is speaking about diversity, he doesn't mean skin color, gender, he's talking about giftedness, people that, the ways that we as individuals serve the body and the variety that that brings.

He uses it by an analogy to the human body to teach believers humility and interdependence. Paul gives you a larger illustration of the body in 1 Corinthians 12, 12 through 27.

[24:59] You can go and check that out. He just goes on and on about the function of the body. All right? But just as Paul wrote here, just as one human body is one with many members.

So, the Greek word for members means body parts, limbs. All right? So, if the church is united, though it is composed of many, different members.

So, on the theme as the body of Christ, just as the body has different things to do, different functions, different needs, so the church has and needs people with different gifts and different abilities to function properly.

It says here, look, it says, individually members of one another, which means that we are connected connected and bound to one another. Just as an arm, a leg, an eye, an ear, a foot, a hand, has a role in the way your body functions.

We need all those things. They're there for the benefit of the entire body. So, furthermore, these gifts do not, this is important, these gifts do not belong to you.

[26:15] They belong to the body. See that? It's not, this is my gift, my ministry, me, me, me. It's like, no, this is a gift that God has given to

you for the benefit of the entire body.

It's really important to hear that. And so, as we understand this, we won't think too highly of ourselves, like you just mentioned.

And we give ourselves fully to God, we will give ourselves fully to one another. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 12, if one member suffers, all suffer together.

Think about this, think about your life inside the body of Christ. If one member suffers, all suffer together. If one member is honored, all rejoice together.

together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. Beautiful illustration, 1 Corinthians 12, 26. So, it's important for you to hear this.

[27:24] So, Paul's goal when he wrote this 2,000 years ago was not to spark a fight or a debate over what prophecy means. He wasn't thinking, you know, in the future they're just going to have fun with this one.

That's not what's on his mind. His emphasis here in this passage is on our interdependence, our love, and our responsibility, our faithful cooperation towards each other.

God has given different gifts by his spirit to different people by his grace, and we should use them in a manner appropriate to that gift in order to build up or to edify the rest of the body.

So, just think about your own life inside this local church. Do you have a spiritual sense that you belong to one another, that when someone suffers in this church, you suffer with them?

When they rejoice, you rejoice with them because we are members of one another. We belong to one another.

[28:32] And any harm that's done to the body is a harm done to you, and any good done to the body is a good done to you because we are all one. So, very important then that we learn to cherish one another, and to cherish our brothers and sisters in Christ and to see them as a critical part to the body functioning.

Alright? Let's see what we got here. The third one and just see how far we can get. Alright? We may have to park it before I run out of time. But, this is point number three.

So, we've had right attitude, right relationships, and this is right service. Alright? And this is the application. Verse six, having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them if prophecy in proportion to our faith, if service in our serving, and one who teaches in his teaching, the one who exhorts in his exhortation, the one who contributes in his generosity, the one who leads with his zeal, and the one who does acts of mercy with cheerfulness, all right?

Excuse me. Alright, so Paul mentions these gifts we possess to show that they don't come from us, they come from God and to be used for his glory.

Rather, these gifts, as he says right here, grace given to us in that passage. Therefore, because we've received these gifts by God, grace, let us use them, alright?

[30:22] In light of all that, Peter says it in a wonderful way about gifts in 1 Peter 4.10, as each has received a gift, use it or employ it.

You know, you've got this amazing tool, use it. Use it for the function that God has ordained for it, to serve one another as good stewards of God's very grace.

gifts. So, I think it's pretty well accepted on any side of the aisle. There's just a definition for you. A spiritual gift is an ability that is given and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be used in any ministry of the church for its equipping and strengthening until Christ returns.

The most familiar list of these are in 1 Peter 4, Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4.

So, all kind of coming together. But, you know, just to pose the question though, like, why are spiritual gifts so controversial? you know, again, we preach verse by verse, and this is one of the passages that some people will be like, I just don't want to touch that one, because I'm afraid of what might happen, how people will respond.

[31:56] But we have a tendency to wrap up too much of our worth and our identity and our giftedness, and I think that's one reason that we tend to quarrel over these things. It gives us a chance to become tribal and pick a camp, and so we're not going to do that.

But the most controversial gifts of the Spirit are healing, miracles, prophecy, tongues, and their interpretation, all found in 1 Corinthians 12, 9 and 10.

So, I will go ahead and just say that there are two main views of the gifts, of these controversial gifts.

things. And to the best of my knowledge, our congregation is almost split down the middle, okay? I think. That's just my observation.

And these don't define us. They're not first-tier issues at all. They're not something to fight and divide over. Wouldn't that be a shame?

[33:01] Like, everything is supposed to make us stronger and tearing us apart. But, there are two main views. There's cessationism, which is the view that some of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as tongues, prophecy, have ceased being practiced since the early church, especially following the compiling of the canon of Scripture.

All right? Like, so those gifts have stopped. They served a purpose for a time, and now they've ceased. And now, it's just that ceased with the coming of the Scripture particularly. And there are many faithful brothers in this church, and men that I do respect.

John MacArthur is probably the most noted guy in this camp, but there are others. And this is a misconception about cessationists, okay?

About them. That would be they don't believe that God heals people, or that God doesn't do miraculous things anymore. They don't really believe the Holy Spirit is active in the life of the church.

That's not true. Like, the cessationists that I know don't believe that at all. That's a misconception from the other side. And then there's continuationism.

[34:22] There's so many different ways to frame this, but in short, that the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as tongues, prophecy, healing, are still in operation today, as they were in the early part of the church, and they will continue until Christ returns.

So here are some misconceptions about continuationists. They all believe in health, wealth, and prosperity. Like, unfortunately, there are many people on TV and other places that really abuse this stuff, and that we would not ever associate with, right?

Name it and claim it. Or they think that God still speaks through prophets, thus saying the Bible is not sufficient. That's not true.

I, myself, am a continuationist, and like you, so a big example would be cessation was to say, hey, the Bible is sufficient, so why do we need all this stuff?

As we would say, it is because the Bible is sufficient. that we practice these things. It says to practice them in the Bible. So that's, yeah, we agree, it's sufficient. So, the goal today is not to unpack all the different differences and issues that each camp has with the other.

[35:45] That's not really the goal. I don't think that's what Paul meant by writing any of this. But, as we move forward as a church, I hope we can find ways to cooperate and move forward in a way that's glorifying to God and loving to the rest of the body.

So, just a few things, and then we'll see what we can do to get here with these gifts. Just trying to watch the time a little bit. It's important to understand why we have spiritual gifts.

Why do we have them? I have at least four reasons why we have them, okay? and they're not exhausted but there's just a few. But the ultimate one is to bring glory to Christ through his church. Peter wrote that God gives us gifts. He says this, as each has received a gift, use it to serve one another in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. So, first and foremost, the gifts are given to us not to make a name for ourselves, which we've covered. It's also not to make a name for our church.

[36:56] And how many churches do you know that boast about their preacher or their ministry? And that's like their boast. And that's not the goal. The goal is to point to Christ and to glorify him in all things.

We are stewards of the gifts that he's given to us. And not to depend on our own strength, but depend on the strength that God supplies so that he alone gets the glory.

That's the most important one. Underneath that, secondly, to equip and build up the church with both our words and our deeds inside the body. Our words and our deeds either serve to tear down

or to build up.

Right? And when we cherish over-exaggerated ideas of our own importance, it only tears down the local body. Gifts are tools to build with, not toys to play with or weapons to beat each other in the head with.

We focus on honoring Christ with our gifts with humility and love towards fellow believers. This is everywhere in these passages about gifts. 1 Corinthians 14, 26, let all things be done for the building up.

[38:16] It means constructive, edifying, good for all people. 1 Corinthians 12, 7, but to each is given a manifestation of the Holy Spirit for the common good of the body.

Ephesians 4, the gifts help us to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up of the body of Christ. John Piper wrote this.

I really appreciated it. He said, the handling of spiritual gifts is like handling dynamite. I knew a demo guy in the army many years ago and had classes with him talking about how you're holding so much stuff in your hand when you're putting all this stuff together and just the weight of that. The handling of spiritual gifts is like handling dynamite. Dynamis, the Greek word for power, is often used when referring to the Holy Spirit. When used rightly, the gifts are explosively loving. When used wrongly, they are explosively destructive. It is tempting to not use them at all. So that's another reason we tend to just not want to go down this road.

[39:28] But again, they're in the Scripture. We need to talk about them. Thirdly, while we have spiritual gifts, to strengthen unity. Not to create unity, but to strengthen unity.

Paul wrote in Ephesians, Be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace. So we already possess unity in Christ. We are united to one another.

So we are called to maintain that unity that already exists in the Spirit. So gifts are given to us to build upon, to strengthen, to toughen, to fortify, the already existing unity we have.

And serving one another with our gifts is a way to prevent division. So again, the irony, what many people in the church want to fight over and divide over is the very thing that's supposed to be a strengthening, a fortifying of our unity.

1 Corinthians 12, 25, Paul wrote that there be no division in the body, but that the members may have mutual interest in and care for one another.

[40:40] So, and then lastly, to include all believers in the work of the Lord. So, in other words, the work of the church, the work of the ministry is not for a few highly gifted, talented, educated, elite.

Right? They're for all of us. If you're a part of the church, you are born again. You are given gifts to help in the Lord's work. Every member has a role in the body.

Now, you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 1 Corinthians 12, 27. So, it's important to understand the why first.

Just looking at our time. So, here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to work my way maybe through two of these. You know, may have to stop. And I'll pick them up for next week.

So, don't worry, I say prophecy for next week. So, you'll be tempted to come back. So, anyway, even though it says prophecy first, and there may be some inspired reason that it is first, we're going to start with service.

[41:49] Alright? So, remember, these are the gifts that are mentioned. They're not meant to be exhaustive lists of gifts, but the variety in the body is evident through our various gifting in proportion to our faith.

Alright? So, let's talk about service first. This is one that's clearly mentioned right here in our passage. The gift of service, or it's also called the gift of helps. A spirit-given capacity and desire to serve God by rendering practical help, both in physical and spiritual matters.

It recognizes the practical needs in the body and joyfully goes to meet those needs of people. I know many of you that have this gift, and man, I'm so thankful for you. Christians that have that gift typically don't mind being behind the scenes.

They don't like the attention. They don't like for you to point out what they're doing. They're just humbly doing it behind the scenes to honor God. And it's mentioned in 1 Corinthians, Romans, and in 1 Peter.

Some biblical examples of that gift are Rebekah in Genesis 24, and then Tabitha in Acts 9. So some characteristics of that gift of serving, as again, like I said, they prefer to be behind the scenes, especially when it frees up other people to serve in a different role.

[43:13] Like, let me take that so you don't have to, and you can go and do that instead. People who tend to have that gift, and they enjoy helping without being asked, they take initiative, they see the practical needs of people in the church, and they usually are characterized by humility, quiet, and they're active.

All right? Some of the misuses, though, of this gift is people who have this gift sometimes can become very weary in doing good, stressed, frustrated.

They tend to take on more work than they should sometimes, and the admonishment to them is to not grow weary, but to continue serving with gladness.

So that's service. Within teaching is mentioned. This may be an obvious one, but really clearly, the spirit of giving ability to instruct believers in the truths and doctrines of God's Word, to help explain it, clarify it, unpack it, and then help people apply it in their lives for the building up and unifying and maturing of the body.

All right? So some people have that gift. Obviously, Paul had it, but also Apollos had it, Acts 18, 24. Some characteristics about this person is they have a desire, a commitment, and ability to communicate God's Word clearly and to help people apply it.

[44:44] They enjoy learning and diving into the Scripture, learning biblical truth, and the ability to help people understand hard passages and why they're there. Misuses of this gift, very true.

As someone who at least I think has this gift, you expect others to completely tune in to you when you're talking. Like, just listen to me. I'm saying something important.

And tend to get frustrated when people can't understand what you're teaching. That's some of the misuses. Alright, exhortation.

Also in our passage. Those who have this gift encourage members to be involved joyfully, enthusiastically about the work of the Lord in the body.

Members that have that gift usually are good counselors, they're people who motivate, they're people that when you're going through a hard time, they're usually the people you want to go talk to sometimes to help you get pushed on.

[45:42] the word actually means like coming alongside somebody that's not doing well and helping them go the right direction when they're wanting to just quit. Right? Biblical examples of this you see is Barnabas, Acts 4, 36.

Characteristics of it is they see problems in people's lives and they see those presents with struggling people. They're the people who always have a word of encouragement for you.

The people who just somehow just know exactly what to say. God has given them the ability to say things to you that are like, wow, how did you know that's what I was going through?

Right? And so that's the it could be words or deed. Some of the misuses of the gift can be sometimes these people can come across as insensitive just trying to get their point across.

They can sometimes treat people as projects not really meaning to but like, hey, I'm trying to help you get better, bro. Come on. What are you doing? And they sometimes can be too quick to talk before fully understanding the situation.

[46:52] Just some observations about that gift. And let's just do one more and then we will pause and let it go into next week. Paul mentions here in Romans 12 the gift of generosity.

All right, members with this gift give freely and joyfully to the work and mission of the body. And they do it with cheerfulness and their characteristics of those individuals with those gifts are in Romans 12.

8. I guess one good example of this might be Zacchaeus in Luke 19 or the Macedonian church in 2 Corinthians 8. Important to point out here that automatically when you hear the word generosity you think the people who have a lot of money don't you?

That's like what naturally comes to your mind. They have a lot of money. No. Not necessarily. You don't have to be wealthy to have the gift of generosity at all.

But these people are motivated to help others with their resources. What little or how much they have. And they're careful to invest the money into Christ's kingdom. I know people who have this gift.

[48:06] They have a strong sense of stewardship. Like look everything I have has been given to me by God and he wants me to use it for the advancement of his kingdom. And I have to use it wisely.

And they know how to usually manage money and resources that help serve the body to surround them and to help others. Some of the misuses of this gift. You've seen this before.

Some of you have, I have. They may think that because they give so much that they have the right to control how that money is used. You ever seen that in the church?

They could neglect leaving the results in God's hands once they give over something. And can sometimes overgive, do too much, like bankrupt themselves in the process.

I knew a guy that biggest heart in the world but a tiny wallet. And he would just like, dude, you need to save some of that for your family, okay?

[49:06] So he was just always wanting to help people. But again, people who have that gift don't have to be wealthy. So next week, we'll talk about leadership, mercy, and prophecy, and then we'll jump into the next passage.

But thank you for bearing with me. I appreciate it. But yeah, we need to have these conversations about our gifting and functioning in the body. We're all members of one another.

Each one of you has been given gifts, and it should be an honor to employ that in the work of the church. It's not just the people up here. It's you. It's all of us serving Christ together.

So pray with me.