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Unwrapping Your Spiritual Gift Part 2

Text: Romans 12:3-8

Let’s review.

Every person who is a believer has been given at least one spiritual gift. The gifts are not given for one’s own use, but for the building up of the body of Christ, the Church. The gifts are also to be used for the equipping, the tooling, of other believers. A statement made by Peter in 1 Peter 4:11 serves as a general statement of understanding for the use of our gifts and our ministries:

***11****If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the [b]dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

In the first part of this series, we looked at five gifts listed in Ephesians 4. I introduced the term *cessationist.* A cessationist is a person who believes that the need for apostles and prophets has *ceased*. A person who believes the opposite is called a continuationist. That person believes that the spiritual gifts, and our need for them, *continues* to this day.

Here is Romans 12, there are five more spiritual gifts I want to examine. Note that the presence of the gifts in us ought to humble us, not make us proud (Romans 12:3).

By the way, we don't all have the same gifts. The diversity of our gifts is what makes the Church exciting. We each bring something different to the mix. Paul advocates the Nike approach to the exercising of spiritual gifts: Just do it!

1. Service/ministry (v.7) Greek word is *diakonia.* It is used in Acts 6:4.
2. Exhortation/encouragement- *parakaleo.* Called alongside, to comfort. See this gift in Barnabas (Acts 4:36; 9:26-28
3. Giving- with liberality. This person must be both discrete (Matthew 6:1-4) and cheerful when they give (2 Corinthians 9:7). Cf. Ephesians 4:28; Luke 3:11. Ananias and Sapphira were examples of giving gone wrong (Acts 5:1-2).
4. Leadership- with diligence. That is, not passive. If you're going to lead, lead! This person is like a conductor of an orchestra, calling all the other instruments to play as an ensemble. This person coordinates, rallies the troops, motivates the players.
5. Mercy- with cheerfulness. Love in action. Deep concern, not mere sympathy. There is a danger of using this gift in a patronizing way. Note Paul’s caution: show mercy with cheerfulness.

Since the Holy Spirit gives gifts as the Holy Spirit determines, it is inappropriate of any of us, to highlight or emphasize or celebrate one gift over another. We need the diversity of gifts in order to do our best work. Over these next weeks, we will look at the diverse gifts God has given to the Church. We’ll explore the possibilities. What do these gifts look like when properly exercised?

**Illus.**

During Vacation Bible School, a woman teaching a primary class was interrupted about an hour before dismissal when a new boy, named Davey, was brought in. He only had only a right arm and the teacher did not know any details about why he was missing his left arm or how he may have adjusted to this handicap. She was nervous and afraid that one of the other kids would comment on it and embarrass him. But she had no opportunity to coach them on how to respond.

As the class came to a close without incident, she began to relax. She asked the class to join her in their usual closing ceremony. “Let’s make our churches,” she said. “Here’s the church and here’s the steeple, open the doors and see all the ….” Then the awful truth of her own actions hit her. The very thing she had feared the children would do, she had done.

But as she paused, speechless, the little girl sitting next to the new boy reached over with her left hand and placed it up to his right hand and said, “Davey, let’s make the church together.”

Saints of Crossroads, let’s unwrap and exercise our gifts in such a way that it is clear we need each other to accomplish that to which God has called us. Let’s make the church...together!

Amen