

Romans 12:1-8 — “Your Duty To Use Your Spiritual Gifts” **罗马书 12:1-8 ---- “你有责任使用你的属灵恩赐”**

****READ THE TEXT****

INTRO-

Introductory Illustration

- **You could** curiously do a *Google* search for “a test to find my spiritual gift” and take various assessment tests (there are *plenty* out there!).
- The general format of online surveys may have between 25 to 100 multiple choice questions, most of which can be answered on a scale of 1 to 4 [*1 meaning the description does not fit me at all and 4 meaning it is exactly like me*].
 - ❖ ***But there’s a important (and often UNASKED question): Is there any Biblical model for searching for your spiritual gifts?***
- James Sundquist researched this and discovered the following:
 - ➡ I can’t find one single Scripture that says finding our gift was **EVER** a problem for the Church.
 - ➡ I can’t find one single Scripture that instructs us on ‘**how to find**’ our gift.
 - ➡ I can’t find any historical account that **finding our gift** was a problem for the Church.
 - ➡ I can’t find any historical account that finding our gift was a problem for **Church Fathers**.
 - ➡ Anything we do in Christ is not through our strengths, but is *perfected in weakness* [*so it’s NOT about my personality or my ability but about God’s POWER & my inability!*].
 - ➡ I can’t find one single Scripture which uses a **subjective** balance of weighing our strengths and weaknesses to determine our Gift(s) from the Holy Spirit.
 - ➡ I can’t find one single Scripture that uses personality or personality theory to determine our course in Christ or in the Church.
 - ➡ I can’t find one single Scripture that instructs us to come up with a **numerical value or rating system** for the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- And intriguingly, He also found that the vast majority of **spiritual surveys** are drawn from the teachings of Carl Jung [20th century Swiss psychiatrist & psychoanalyst] who was about as anti-Christian as a person can be [he affirmed that man’s task is to discover & fulfill our deep, innate potential!]. This in itself should be cause for concern. Combined with the lack of Biblical model, this should be sufficient to raise a warning flag about the quest to *survey & discover our giftedness*.
 - Now, we’re not here to have a knee-jerk reaction & trash these altogether. But let’s remember to look at this biblically **instead** of experientially, practically or thru the lens of my talents & personality.

A few initial observations as we look at the section (esp vv.4-8)

1. Spiritual gifts are given to **every** Christian.
2. Spiritual gifts are found & cultivated in the **context** of the **local church**.
3. Spiritual gifts are **supernaturally** & **graciously** given.
4. Spiritual gifts are for the purpose of **building up** Christ’s body **corporately**.
5. Spiritual gifts are to be **cultivated**, **excelled** at and **employed** by God’s power!

Note 1 Peter 4:10-11! *Wow!*

1. GOD **GIVES** the gifts (10-11)
2. GOD **ENABLES** us to use the gifts (10-11)
3. GOD **COMMANDS** us to use them (10 - employ...)
4. GOD **GLORIFIES HIMSELF** as we use them (v.11 - so that...)

THESIS — in seeking to understand **spiritual gifts**, we need to limit our thoughts to a few headings as we observe **Romans 12**:

I. DEDICATED SERVICE (1-2)

- A. This is all about the *Proper* **MOTIVATION!**
- B. “**Therefore**” - in light of Rom 1-11 - *SO THEN...*
- C. **Salvation >> then Service!** *Deliverance >> then devotion!*
- D. By the mercies of God, *present your body...*

II. SELF-EFFACING HUMILITY (3)

- A. This is all about the *Proper* **MINDSET!**
- B. Paul gives an exhortation to *every one*
- C. Don't be prideful! But sound, humble judgment/mindset!

III. GOD-GRACED GIFTS (4-8)

This is all about *Proper* **MINISTRY**

Definition of a Spiritual Gift:

- ◆ **Ji Packer** — a spiritual gift is an ability, divinely bestowed and sustained, to grasp and express the realities of the spiritual world, and the knowledge of God in Christ, for the edifying both of others and of oneself.
- ◆ **Dr Jim Stizinger** — A spiritual gift, then, is any ability and accompanying spiritual ministry and effect that God, through Christ, enables a believer to use, or motivates him to use, for His glory, in the body of Christ, through the energizing work of the Spirit.

2 main headings as we study the gifts:

- A. **The Plurality of Members (4-5)**
 1. v.4- A body with many members (diff functions!).
 2. V.5- we are **MANY** & members of one another & all in **ONE** Body of Christ!
 3. Quite simply: if the body is to function, *each member must actively do its part!*
- B. **The Upbuilding of Believers (6-8)**

>>The **SPIRITUAL GIFTS** in the NT are found primarily in Rom 12, 1 Cor 12, 1 Pet 4 and Eph 4 [no exhaustive list; these are samplings of grace-gifts from God to believers]--- **GIFTS** fall into 3 categories:

1. SIGN

2. SPEAKING

3. SERVING

- 1.V.6 - ἔχοντες δὲ χαρίσματα κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν διάφορα, εἴτε προφητείαν κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως,
2. we have **SPIRITUAL GIFTS** [χαρίσματα]

- a) all χαρίσματα means = divinely given, grace-bestowed GIFTS (=freely)
 - b) according to the grace (χάριτι) -- something freely given by God to us.
 - c) the grace-given gift comes by Grace & it **IS GIVEN** (passive) (δοθεῖσθαι)
 - d) **Thus: Gifts -- [χαρίσματα] grace-given gifts.** *They are given to us in SPITE of what we have done, NOT because of who we are or what we've done. These are NOT natural talents but SUPERNATURAL grace-gifts.*
 - e) *A helpful footnote at this point: We hear it often. “I have the gift of music.” “I have the gift of singing.” “I have the gift of media,” “I have the gift of organizing” and the list goes on but you get the idea. A spiritual gift is something that’s supernatural – you wouldn’t otherwise have it except that it was given to you by the Holy Spirit – hence why we call them “**spiritual**” gifts. They are also imparted solely by God’s grace – hence why we call them “gifts.”
- ▶ GOD is the SOURCE
 - ▶ GOD is the GIVER
 - ▶ GOD is the SUSTAINER
 - ▶ GOD is the ENERGIZER
 - ▶ GOD is the ORGANIZER/PLANNER/ORCHESTRATOR
- C. The Church is called a SPIRITUAL HOUSE -- a BUILDING (Eph 2)
- 1. a builder, a carpenter = knows how important measuring is. no good builder randomly throws wood together. NO! He measures. he cuts. He forms. He shapes. He puts it together.
 - 2. **The LORD has wisely measured out the gifts that he has given to the SPIRITUAL HOUSE -- the Church!
 - a) He knows what gifts are needed. He measures out the gifts. He gives them out & distributes them.
 - b) that means that EVERY SINGLE BELIEVER is to be integrally joined to a church and plays an important role in the PROGRESS and HEALTH of the church.
 - c) **Wayne Mack = you'll hurt yourself and the body of Christ and the reputation of Christ if you don't faithfully exercise your gift.**
- D. So a faithful church exercises gifts well out of *LOVE for Christ*: So, the power and presence of the Spirit in a local church will look like an army of servants doing the work of the ministry, unprovoked by people, but in light of Christ’s love. The Spirit-filled church is the church full of people serving in many ways for the common good.
- E. **V.7-8** - the gifts (not exhaustive) in Rom 12 [speaking & serving]:
- 1. Prophecy - in proportion to the faith.
 - 2. Service - in his serving
 - 3. Teaches - in his teaching
 - 4. Exhorts - in his exhortation
 - 5. Gives - with liberality
 - 6. Leads - with diligence
 - 7. Shows mercy - with cheerfulness
- F. **Jim Stitzinger in his thorough article on *Spiritual Gifts in The Master’s Seminary (academic) journal*: writes:**
- 1. Two positions on spiritual gifts exist today, **(1)** holding that all gifts are for today and (2) holding that some gifts were temporary and some permanent. The latter position

sees apostleship, prophecy, wisdom, knowledge, faith, miracles, healing, tongues, and interpretation of tongues among the temporary gifts. Apostleship & the other ‘sign gifts’ was a foundational gift for the NT church. Along with the temporary gifts, the latter position sees a number of permanent gifts: evangelism, pastors and teachers, and those with gifts of assistance, administration, exhortation, giving, and showing mercy. The primary goal of all the gifts is building up the body of Christ.

G. In doing some reading on ***Finding*** your spiritual gift & ***Using*** your spiritual gift, I wanna make a few comments on this:

1. **First, remember that every believer has the responsibility to be a faithful member of their local church, and that gifting is discovered, identified, and validated in that context. So if you are not a member of a church, fret about that before you fret about what you are supposed to do in that church.**
2. **Second, practice the commands that the New Testament gives all believers. It is through the practice of those commands that you discover the particular area in which you are gifted.** We are all called to evangelism, giving, and showing mercy, for example. There are times and situations where service is required, and we are the one at hand to serve. By prayer and obedience to God we serve to love and meet the needs of others regardless of our gift.
3. **Charles Ryrie provides a very helpful chart on spiritual gifts:**

Gifts given to SOME	Commands given to ALL
Serving (Romans 12.7)	Serve one another (Gal 5:13)
Exhortation (Rom 12.8)	Exhort one another (Heb 10.25)
Giving (Rom 12.8)	Everyone is to give (2 Cor 9.7; 1 Cor 16)
Teaching (Rom 12.7)	Teaching all that Christ commands (Matt 28.18-20)
Showing mercy (Rom 12.8)	Being kind to one another (Eph 4.32)
Faith (1 Cor 12.9)	Walk/live by faith (2 Cor 5.7; Heb 11:6)
Evangelism (Eph 4.11)	All must witness (Acts 1.8; Matt 28.18-20)

4. I appreciate this chart because it captures the force of the New Testament’s approach to spiritual gifts. All believers should be actively obeying the commands in the right column. *But as they do that over time and in the context of church membership, they will begin to see particular areas of obedience that the Lord is blessing in their life.* Those blessing cause joy in the believer, and that joy forms a desire to continue to excel in those particular areas & you find that others *in your church* are particularly blessed by your service to them! The result is that you have found & are employing your spiritual gift (likely a form of one of the gifts in the left column).

5. It really is as simple and straight forward as ...

- (1) being involved in & committed to your church,

- (2) being obedient to the commands of the Bible, and then
- (3) focusing your service in whatever areas bless your church & give you joy and blessing.

Some Conclusions:

1. Spiritual gifts are given to **every Christian**.
2. Spiritual gifts are found & cultivated **in the context of the local church**.
3. Spiritual gifts are **supernaturally & graciously** given.
4. Spiritual gifts are for the purpose of **building up** Christ's body corporately.
5. Spiritual gifts are to be **cultivated, excelled** at and **employed** by God's mercy!

So let us *reaffirm our commitment to Christ's church & our obedience to the one-another commands* -- and serve for the UPBUILDING & STRENGTHENING of Christ church, by the enabling power of the Spirit -- for the glory of God!

Robert Saucy -- [Church in God's Program] says:

“Edification must not be thought of only in terms of morality or emotional uplift. Rather it aims at a **fullness of growth** in the **total life of faith** through the **ministry of the Word** in its various applications of **exhortation, encouragement** and **comfort** (1 Th. 5:11; 1 Co. 14:3), and especially in the practice of **love** (1 Co. 8:1; cf. 12:31–13:3).”

May God help us to use our spiritual gifts for His glory!