

Romans – Let's Do This!

“God Gave You Gifts, Part 2”

Romans 12:3-8

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / March 13, 2016

Romans 12:1-8 reminds us that God doesn't expect us to impact the people around us in our own strength or with our own limited, human resources. When God saves you, His Holy Spirit begins to live in you and He brings supernatural spiritual gifts that are now yours.

God is concerned with our motives, hearts, and our love for Christ. When those things are right, the use of spiritual gifts tend to work themselves out in healthy, helpful way in a local church.

I. Don't Waste Your Energy and Opportunities Wishing You had Somebody Else's Life or Somebody Else's Giftedness

Doing this is dishonoring to God, because, in a sense, you're telling the Lord you don't want what He gave you or like what He designed you to do. God's the One in charge of distributing spiritual gifts and He never gets it wrong.

Until your eyes off other people and what you see God doing through them, it's not likely you'll begin serving and discover your own gifts.

- **Rom. 12:3** "... as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith"
- **Rom. 12:6** "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us"
- **I Cor. 12:11** "... distributing to each one as He wills"
- **I Cor. 12:18** "But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased."

He's not just the God of your salvation. He's also the God who sovereignly designed you to serve Him in specific ways. It's not random or some kind of after-thought.

Ephesians 2:8-10 ⁸ "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

II. Don't Ever Let Your Ability Squeeze Out Your Pursuit of Humility – for a Lifetime

When you use your gifts for others, do it with deep humility, knowing that you are an object of God's mercy and are dependent on God's mercy, moment by moment to do anything.

Paul comes back to the whole issue of humility in **v. 6-8** when he starts laying out some of the spiritual gifts. He wrote these three verses with no main verb running through them. The phrase "let us use them" is being supplied by the translator, because it's absent in the original language. That's why the verses read the way they do and can sound a little redundant or awkward.

John Piper suggests that Paul expected us to keep referring back to mercy and humility of **v. 1** and **3** as to how we use our gifts. Piper paraphrases **v. 6-8** this way...

Romans 12:6-8 “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them humbly, if *prophecy*, in proportion to our faith; ⁷ if *service*, let us use it with mercy-dependent humility in our serving; the one who *teaches*, let him use his teaching gift with mercy-dependent humility in his teaching; ⁸ the one who *exhorts*, let him exhort with mercy-dependent humility in his exhortation; the one who *contributes*, let him contribute with mercy-dependent humility and thus with generosity; the one who *leads*, let him lead with mercy-dependent humility and thus with zeal; the one who does *acts of mercy*, let him show mercy with mercy-dependent humility and thus with cheerfulness.”

In the absence of humility, God starts resisting you rather than assisting you as you try to serve Him because you're really serving yourself.

I Peter 5:5-7 “... be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that at the proper time, He may exalt you, casting all your cares on Him because He cares for you.”

III. Focus on Cultivating General Obedience More than Trying to Pin-Point Your Specific Gifts

If you start living the Christian life, obeying everything He tells you to do, you're more likely to run into a couple areas where you'll discover that you're especially gifted in ways that are beyond general obedience.

- All Christians are supposed to be involved in serving, but He's gifted some to effectively lead us in a special way.

Ephesians 4:11-12 “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ”

- The Bible commands every Christians to be merciful.

Matthew 18:32-33 “... You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged Me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?”

- Pauls says every Christian should excel at the grace of giving.

2 Corinthians 8:7 “But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.”

- **Hebrews 3:13** commands all of us to be exhorting one another, regardless of whether or not we have the spiritual gift of exhortation.

IV. Keep On Delighting in Christ More than Pursuing Your Spiritual Gifts

Take a look at **I Peter 2:1-10** to see why. Peter highlights an emotion that should characterize those of us who know Him and have been rescued by Him.

I Peter 2:7 “Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious...”

The reason so many Christians struggle to serve and to love others is because Jesus is NOT precious to them! When Jesus is precious to you, you want to love Him, follow Him, obey Him, give your life for Him, and you'll be unshakeable.

Thinking that God could never use you is believing a lie. The bigger a failure the more you'll experience the radical transformation of the Gospel, the more you're going to be able to help people change, the more sensitive you're going to be, the kinder you'll be, and the more you'll be able to speak the truth in love.

4 Action Steps:

- (1) Go back to **v.1** and let the mercy of God overwhelm you in a fresh way. Let that be the motive for why you serve Him
- (2) Then go to **v. 3** and surrender all your HIGH or LOW thoughts of yourself. Say, 'God, I am exhausted and finally willing to lay aside my own opinions and assessment of my life and to adopt Your accurate, grace-filled assessment of who I am now Christ ,regardless of my feelings, my past and my enemy, Satan, who still tries to render me useless with accusations of guilt and condemnation and unworthiness.
- (3) Then plug into your local church and start serving anywhere and loving other people any way you can.
- (4) When you've got all that going on in the midst of all your serving, loving, and delight in Christ as your treasure, you're going to discover your gifts because you're going to step into certain opportunities where you feel turbo-charged with additional joy and effectiveness.