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## Gifts Differing According to God's Grace

Romans, Part XLV

Romans 12:3-8

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### I. A Living Sacrifice

Romans 12:3-8

<sup>3</sup>For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of *himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think [unto] sober [thinking], as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. <sup>4</sup>For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, <sup>5</sup>so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. <sup>6</sup>Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them*: if prophecy, *let us prophesy* in proportion to our [in accordance with the] faith; <sup>7</sup>or [if] ministry, *let us use it* in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; <sup>8</sup>he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. [Italics indicate words supplied by the translators.]

### II. Gifts Differing According to God's Grace

#### A. Thinking Soberly about Gifts that Differ (3-5)

First, Paul urges us to think soberly about the gifts that each of us has been given by God. A key part of *renewing our minds* is to cut to the quick the selfish ambition that often motivates *this world*. Hence, Paul wants "*everyone who is among you*" to exercise "*the grace of God given to you*" in your gifts to bless the entire body.

If we are to do that then we must beware the twin dangers of *pride* and *false humility*. On the one hand, \_\_\_\_\_. If we recognize that the abilities we possess are *gifts of God's grace*, then we will shun pride. "*What do you have that you have not received? And if you have received it, why do you boast?*" (1 Cor 4:7) On the other hand, *false humility*: "*we are to think [unto] sober thinking, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.*" Our *faith* teaches us to *measure* ourselves soberly by reminding us that we are not *autonomous individuals* but *individually members of one another*. Like a human body, *the body of Christ* is composed of *individuals* that perform unique *functions* for the benefit of *the entire* \_\_\_\_\_.

#### B. Exercising Gifts that Differ (6-8 cf. Mt 12:37; 1 Cor 14:3, 31; 1 Pet 4:10-11)

Paul give examples of how we should exercise gifts that differ. He lists two categories of gifts and then identifies five specific types of people who exercise those gifts. This reflects a similar twofold division in Peter's first epistle:

<sup>10</sup>As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. <sup>11</sup>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 dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Pet 4:10-11)

Gifts Differing According to God's Grace	
Prophetic Gifts	Ministerial Gifts
He who teaches	He who gives
He who exhorts	He who leads
	He who shows mercy

### III. Exercising our Gifts

A. Wisdom for exercising all gifts (cf. Ex 35:31,34; 1 Chr 29:13-14; Rom 1:5; 15:15f)

*To think soberly* is to recognize that God has given you specific gifts and abilities that you are to use to bless and serve the people of God and to glorify His Name. Note that Paul writes “to \_\_\_\_\_ *who is among you*” (3). No one is left out. God has given graces to all of us. We each have “*gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us*” (6a). That means that you have gifts given to you by God for the benefit of the entire body. Paul wants you to use them to bless others and glorify His Name.

So we said that Paul warns against two dangers in regard to our gifts: *pride* and *false humility*. Manifestations of such dangers include:

- We can forget that our abilities and accomplishments are \_\_\_\_\_. The *pride* isn't in the possession of great abilities or in the achievement of great things; it is in the failure to acknowledge our abilities as God's gifts.
- We can believe that we have gifts and abilities that we don't really possess.
- We can \_\_\_\_\_ the skills or accomplishments of others.
- We can, in false humility, fail to recognize the gifts that God has given us. As a human being made in the image of God and redeemed by Jesus Christ, each of us has gifts and abilities to steward (1 Pet 4:10).

B. Wisdom for exercising prophetic gifts (cf. 1 Thes 2:3; Jas 3:1)

Prophetic gifts are speaking gifts (cf. 1 Cor 14:3, 31). If we speak, therefore, we should speak, as it were, the oracles of God. We are to strive to speak in any situation as God Himself would speak. Hence, we must speak \_\_\_\_\_. The responsibility of all who exercise prophetic gifts is to know and understand the faith so they can *teach* and *exhort* in harmony with the faith. So Paul defends his own ministry, “*For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor in deceit*” (1 Thes 2:3). Similarly, Paul exhorted Titus to be an example to the flock, “*in [teaching] showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech...*” (Tit 2:7) These are the marching orders for those with prophetic gifts.

C. Wisdom for exercising ministerial gifts

Ministerial gifts are gifts of service. Relying on God's empowering grace, those with ministerial gifts are to serve the body of Christ and others. How does this work?

- *He who gives... with liberality.* Don't dribble out your resources with a medicine dropper – give generously.
- *He who leads... with diligence.* The idea of *leader* includes those who rule or who administrate. “*Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might...*” (Eccl 9:10a)
- *He who shows mercy... with cheerfulness.* Don't make the recipient of your mercy feel guilty or foolish or ashamed; bring light into their day.

### IV. Conclusion