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Class Notes

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God's Pleasing Will for You: Spiritual Gifts

Romans 12:1-8

Romans 12:1-8 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship. ² Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will.

³ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. ⁴ Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If one's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷ If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸ if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

I. What Are Spiritual Gifts?

A. Key Doctrine in the New Testament: Romans 12... Ephesians 4... 1 Corinthians 12-14... 1 Peter 4... Acts

B. Definition of Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual gifts are special abilities given differently to each one of us by the special grace of God through Christ and through the Holy Spirit that God uses to build up the Body of Christ.

Romans 12:6-8 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷ If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸ if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

Prophecy, service, teaching, encouragement, giving, leadership, mercy, evangelism, pastoring, hospitality, wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues

C. Grace from God

Ephesians 4:7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

D. Paul's Body Analogy

1. Used here in Romans 12

Romans 12:4-6 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.

2. More developed in 1 Corinthians 12: "eye, foot, hand, ear..."

3. Basic ideas

- a. One body
- b. Many members
- c. Members have different functions
- d. Members arranged as God wants them to be
- e. All members belong equally to the body
- f. All members belong to each other
- g. No member is more important than any other
- h. No member is useless
- i. As members do their function, they build the Body up to full maturity

E. Significance for Each of Us: We are stewards who will give an account

Three key steps: Discover, Develop, Use

II. How Do We Discover Our Spiritual Gifts?

A. What You Can Do For Yourself (Romans 12:1-8)

Romans 12:1-8 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship. ² Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will. ³ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. ⁴ Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so

in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷ If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸ if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

1. Step One: Understand God Has a Plan for Your Life

“In view of God’s mercy...”; “what God’s will is—His good pleasing and perfect will”

2. Step Two: Present Yourself as a Living Sacrifice

3. Step Three: Be Transformed by the Renewing of Your Mind

4. Step Four: Think About Yourself Properly

“Do not think of yourself too highly, but think of yourself with sober judgment”

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us”

5. Step Five: Serve God Constantly in Common Ways

“If your gift is teaching, then teach...”

6. Step Six: Look for the Validation of the Body of Christ

B. What You Can Do For Others

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works

1. Think about them: “What are their spiritual gifts?”

2. Pray about them: “What are their spiritual gifts?”

3. Spur them on: “Use your spiritual gifts”

4. Encourage them: “I am so blessed by your spiritual gifts!”

Hebrews 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

5. Tell them the truth: “Your spiritual gifts are in another place!”

III. How Should I Develop My Spiritual Gifts?

A. Spiritual Gifts Need to Be Developed

Perhaps the most overwhelmingly talented musical genius in history was Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. At the age of five he was already beginning to compose minuets. At the age of six, he was traveling all over Europe with his father giving concerts for kings and archbishops. But he was also fanatically serious about developing his God-given talent... he devoted himself to fourteen hours a day of practice on the piano

1. Spiritual gifts do not come fully developed
2. The lesson of Paul's advice to Timothy in several places is clear: you must develop your spiritual gifts to full maturity

2 Timothy 1:6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

1 Timothy 4:14-16 Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. ¹⁵ Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. ¹⁶ Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers

B. We Develop Them by Using Them

C. We Develop Them by Studying Them

2 Timothy 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

1. So also the gift of prophecy here in Romans 12

ESV Romans 12:6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith

- a. The "analogy of faith" is the understanding that everything a prophet said had to be consistent with the already revealed Christian faith called "the faith"
 - b. Thus all prophecies had to be weighed, assessed, balanced to be sure that they fit into the growing body of doctrine known as "the faith"
 - c. It was the job of the prophets and the pastor-teachers to filter all prophecies to be sure they were consistent with the faith
2. Other gifts also require careful study

- a. Those with the gift of administration still need to learn the best way to organize ministries and to lead people winsomely
- b. Those with the gift of giving still need to study the best way to earn money and the best way to give it away
- c. Those with the gift of hospitality would still need to study how to minister to people of different cultures, perhaps, or with different lavish display of welcome and greeting... they can learn from some women, perhaps, who have been making guests feel at home for decades

D. We Develop Them by Submitting to the Input of Others

- 1. We should submit our ministries to more skilled and more mature Christians who also have those same gifts
- 2. We should submit our ministries to the Body as a whole for help in discerning the best ways to grow

Bottom line: we must DEVELOP our spiritual gifts so we become even more skillful at them

IV. How Should I Use My Spiritual Gifts?

A. Use Them Consistently

Romans 12:6-8 If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷ If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸ if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

- 1. The central point Paul is making about spiritual gifts is that we MUST use them
- 2. We need to get out there are trade with the talents that have been given to us
- 3. Think about the parable of the talents

Matthew 25:15-18 To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶ The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. ¹⁷ So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. ¹⁸ But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

- 4. Gifts are a stewardship from God and He expects you to use them

5. There will come a time when He will ask for them back... WITH INTEREST
6. The extra is what you did with the gift while you had it

B. Use Them in a Focused Way

1. Spiritual gifts should dictate the way you spend much of your ministry time
2. If your gift is teaching, you should TEACH; if your gift is encouraging, you should ENCOURAGE

C. Use Them Skillfully

1. Paul uses many adverbs or descriptive phrase here to tell the Roman Christians HOW they are to use them

Romans 12:8 ... if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

2. As we already said in the developing section, IT MATTERS HOW YOU DO YOUR GIFT MINISTRY

D. Use Them Lovingly

Romans 12:9 Love must be sincere.

1. At the root of all this is the idea of LOVE
 - a. The gift of mercy is that of alleviating people's suffering by gentleness and kindness
 - b. BUT if its not done cheerfully, the gift of mercy can turn out to be a curse
 - c. There has to be a sense of the loving tender mercy of Christ flowing through this person
2. There should be a sense of lavish outpouring of these gifts, a sense that the Spirit is using you in a wonderful way to bless the Body of Christ
3. There should be a sense of unity in the Spiritual Gifts similar to that of the marital union between a husband and wife

Romans 12:5 in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

- a. "each member belongs to all the others" means that my gift of teaching/preaching really doesn't belong to me alone, but to the church as a whole

- b. Therefore, I can't withhold it from the church, because it belongs to the others... like marriage:

1 Corinthians 7:4-5 The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. ⁵ Do not deprive each other

- c. There is a common sharing of the spiritual gifts... YOUR GIFT BELONGS TO GOD WHO GAVE IT AND TO THE CHURCH FOR WHOM HE GAVE IT