

104. The Book of Romans 12:7-8

Paul's Epistle to the Romans

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier

(10-8-25)

Find this week's Study Audio & Video [Here](#)

We have entered into the “**Application**” section of the Book of Romans—which covers Chapter 12:1-15:13.

We are currently looking at verses 3-8 which falls under the category of “*Serving through Spiritual Gifts*.”

Romans 12:3–6 (NKJV)

³ 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 soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. ⁴ For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, *being many*, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. ⁶ 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 faith;*

Last week we started looking at the ‘**gift of prophecy**.’ And at that time we clarified the difference between the **gift of prophecy** and the **office of a prophet**. A prophet (like Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah etc.) was someone who was a spokesman for God—unless of course the person was a *false* prophet.

Once again, we make the mistake of thinking that prophesy is only *foretelling* or predicting the future—that was part of what a prophet did when God sent them to speak on His behalf.

But most of what the prophets did when they spoke for God was simply to *declare* His words to His people. In other words, most of their ministry consisted not in ‘*foretelling*’ (future things) but in ‘*forth-telling*’—as in ‘*speaking forth the Word of God*’ (“*Turn from your idols and serve the true and living God!*”, etc.).

Under the Old Testament economy, any person who claimed to be a prophet of God and said anything that didn’t come to pass—was to be stoned as a false prophet. Now in the New Testament the office of a prophet continued on—we see Agabus mentioned as a prophet in the Book of Acts as well as the four daughters of Phillip (Acts 21:9), etc.

Now again, I believe the New Testament teaches that, while the office of a prophet has passed off the scene—the gift of prophecy is still with us.

Paul describes what this gift is all about in 1 Corinthians 14:3—

1 Corinthians 14:3 (NKJV)

³ But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.

Again, in its broadest sense—to prophesy is to speak forth the words of God, therefore, anytime a teacher teaches the Bible or a Christian shares a verse with someone—they are acting as a ‘*prophet*’ (a spokesman) for God.

One pastor said,

The main difference between being a prophet and a Christian exercising the gift of prophecy is: *One is an office or divine appointment from Jesus; while the other is a gift of the Holy Spirit.*

A prophet spoke the inspired and infallible word of God—which in the Old Testament resulted in death if anything didn't come to pass; Whereas a Christian who exercises the gift of prophecy isn't inspired in the sense that their words are infallible and if they say something that doesn't work out to be from God we don't stone them."

But that doesn't mean we don't hold them accountable for what they say either. Paul goes on to instruct Christians in the proper way this gift should be used in church:

1 Corinthians 14:29-33 (NKJV)

²⁹ Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. ³⁰ But if *anything* is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. ³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. ³² And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

³³ For God is not *the author* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

Notice that Paul says in verse 32, *"...the spirits (human spirit—the will) of the prophets are subject to the prophets."* In other words, God doesn't take you over and speak through you against your will—your voice doesn't change and you don't go into some kind of trance—you are still in control!

God simply places the words in your mind and you, by faith, simply speak the words that God has laid on your heart—that is exercising the New Testament gift of prophecy. And what is the purpose?—

1 Corinthians 14:3 (NKJV)

³ But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.

- **"Edification"** — *"to build up and encourage".*
- **"Exhortation"** — *"to instruct, correct, or rebuke with the intent to move you to action".*
- **"Comfort"** — *"to sooth, to remind that God is still on the throne and that He loves you and hasn't deserted you".*

Most of what is said when Christians are exercising the gift of prophecy in the local church will be encouraging in nature—but not everything.

Pastor Chuck Smith—

"If an earthly father never corrected his children—it would be harmful and unloving causing them to grow up to be rebellious, unproductive and lawless.

On the other hand, if the father was always on their backs quick to tell them when they were wrong but never told them how much he loved them or never praised them for doing what was right—there wouldn't be much closeness in the relationship.

In that regard, God has given us a healthy ratio—one-third exhortation and two-thirds encouragement.

In other words, in a gathering of believers when the gift of prophecy is being exercised you can expect to hear more comforting and loving words from the Father and fewer "get with it" prophecies."

When the gift of prophecy is truly being exercised by the Holy Spirit it will never be condemning—*"I'm tired of you and your sin, if you don't start measuring up I will disown you..."*— NO.

Valid prophecy will never be harsh and condemning of believers—although it may be firm and even take the form of a mild rebuke if necessary.

“Can it ever be futuristic or predictive in nature?”—Absolutely, although that is not what its main purpose is.

➔ Listen for Chuck Smith’s story of coming to take over Calvary Chapel (“Living Water” p.155-6)

One more thing—when the gift of prophecy is being exercised it never deals with *“new revelation”* in the sense of new doctrine. The Bible teaches that with the close of the *‘Apostolic Period’* (end of the first century) the New Testament canon of Scripture was completed.

Now let me show you one of the ways this gift was used in the early Church—

1 Timothy 4:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.

The early church had a practice of praying over someone, laying hands on them to receive the gifts of the Spirit—then the word of prophecy would come forth and declare from God what gifts God had given them and what He was calling them to in the way of ministry.

Now this brings up an important point—don’t ever go out and do something just because someone, who claims to be speaking on behalf of God, tells you to.

**God will never speak to you through someone else
about His will for your life
without confirming it to you directly.**

Often God will use someone to *confirm* something He has been speaking to your heart about, or He may use them to get you thinking and praying about a certain course of action—but He will never *direct* your life solely through someone else without speaking clearly to you about it.

Once again, we are told in 1 Corinthians 14:29—

1 Corinthians 14:29 (NKJV)

²⁹ Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.

Many Christians in Word of Faith movement tell us that we should never *challenge* or *judge* someone’s words when they are prophesying.

They say that to do so is *“touching the Lord’s anointed”* and we must never do that.

However, that is unbiblical and has led to a lot of false doctrine coming into the church.

- We are commanded in Scripture to judge what is being said on behalf of God whether it’s coming from the pulpit or the pews.
- We are commanded to be *‘Bereans’* and to *“test all things and to hold firm to what is good (from God).”*
- We test or judge whether a prophecy is from God by holding it up next to what God has already revealed in His Word.

Another way to test if someone is really speaking on behalf of God is to wait and see if it comes to pass. As we have already seen, not everyone who says, “*Thus says the Lord*” is really speaking on behalf of God. Many people will try to get their weird ideas and doctrines accepted in churches by attaching God’s name to it—so be discerning!

Alright, Paul goes on to mention several other gifts of the Spirit—

Romans 12:7 (NKJV)

⁷ or ministry, *let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching;*

The word “**ministry**” is a very broad term meaning ‘*service for the Lord*.’ It does not mean the office, duties, or functions of a professional *clergyman* (‘Minister’ or Pastor) as commonly used today.

The person who has the gift of ministry has a servant-heart given to them by God and as such—he or she sees opportunities to be of service and seizes them.

A “**teacher**” is one who is able to explain and expound doctrine from the word of God and apply it to the hearts of his hearers. Whatever our gift is, we should give ourselves to it wholeheartedly.

Romans 12:8 (NKJV)

⁸ he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Exhortation is the gift of verbally being able to motivate Christians to ‘*retreat*’ from sin and ‘*advance*’ toward holiness to and service for the Lord.

Giving is the divine endowment which inclines and empowers a person to be aware of needs and to help meet them whenever possible—he or she should do so with “**liberality**.”

Liberality translates a Greek word that has the root meaning of, “*singlemindedness, openheartedness, and generosity*.”

It carries the idea of sincere, heartfelt giving that is untainted by a desire for recognition or personal glory or gain.

One pastor explained it this way—

“The Christian who gives with *liberality* gives *of* himself, not *for* himself. He does not give for thanks or recognition, but for the sake of the one who receives his help and for the glory of the Lord.

Those who give with *liberality* are the opposite of those who “*sound a trumpet before [themselves], as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men*” (Matthew 6:2).”

Romans 12:8 (NKJV)

⁸ he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; **he who leads, with diligence...**

In Ephesians 4:11 Paul gives us 4 offices of leadership that Jesus has given to His Church—

Ephesians 4:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers (‘pastor-teacher’)...

Just to clarify one more time—these are not individual gifts they are offices or divine appointments—“And He Himself gave...” is emphatic in the Greek.

1) Apostles

Apostles were men who were directly commissioned by the Lord Jesus to preach the Word, to plant churches and to receive direct revelation from God—passing it along to the Church as New Testament doctrine.

Acts 2:42 (NKJV)

⁴² And they [the early church] continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine...

The basic meaning of the word *apostle* (*apostolos*) is “*one who has been sent out by commission*”. In its primary and most technical sense *apostle* is used in the New Testament only of The Twelve (including Paul).

The qualifications for apostleship were twofold:

1. *They had to be eye witnesses of the resurrection (Acts 1:22); and*
2. *They had to have power to perform miracles as a way of confirming the message they preached (2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:4).*

Paul’s apostleship was constantly being challenged by his enemies to which he responded, “*Have I not seen the risen Christ? Are not the works of an apostle done through me?*”.

Paul was the last to meet those qualifications (Romans 1:1; etc.). It is not possible therefore, as some claim, for there to be apostles in the church today. However, the term **apostle** is used in a more general sense of other men in the early church, such as Barnabas (Acts 14:4), Silas and Timothy (1 Thessalonians 2:6), and a few other outstanding leaders (Romans 16:7; 2 Corinthians 8:23; Philippians 2:25).

The false apostles spoken of in 2 Corinthians 11:13 no doubt counterfeited this class of apostleship, since The Twelve were well known. (Revelations 2:2)

The true apostles in the second group were called “*messengers (apostoloi) of the churches*” (2 Corinthians 8:23), whereas The Twelve were called “*the apostles of Jesus Christ*” (Galatians 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1, etc.).

Apostles in both groups were authenticated “*by signs and wonders—miracles*” (2 Corinthians 12:12), but neither group was *self-perpetuating*—in other words they didn’t appoint successors.

In neither sense is the term *apostle* used in the book of Acts after 16:4. Nor is there any New Testament record of an apostle in either group being replaced when he died (after Judas) as when James was killed by Herod in Acts 12.

2) Prophets

The second office of leadership that Jesus gave to His Church was that of a prophet. The prophets, unlike the Apostles who were sent out, remained in the local churches to minister and to teach doctrine.

The prophets sometimes spoke revelation from God (Acts 11:21–28) and sometimes simply expounded revelation already given (as implied in Acts 13:1, where they are connected with teachers). They always spoke for God but did not always give a newly revealed message from God.

The prophets were second to the apostles in authority. Another distinction between the two offices may have been that the apostolic message was more general and doctrinal, whereas that of the prophets was more personal and practical.

The primary work of leadership in the Church today is being carried out by the remaining three offices—

3) **Evangelists**

The third office of leadership that Paul lists is that of an evangelist.

The word ‘evangelist’ comes from the Greek word we get the word “gospel” from and refers to someone who is called to preach the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. All Christians are called to *evangelize* but not all Christians are called to be an evangelist like a Billy Graham or a Greg Laurie.

Unlike the modern ‘*crusade evangelists*’ of today, New Testament evangelists were missionaries and church planters (much like the apostles, but without the title and miraculous gifts).

A New Testament evangelist, like Philip, would go into an area, preach the gospel and stay to start a church with those new converts remaining long enough until leadership could be raised up or brought in before moving on to a new area to preach the gospel.

4) **Teaching Pastors**

“...and some pastors and teachers...”

Here it seems that Paul is talking about two separate offices (‘*pastors*’ and ‘*teachers*’)—but actually in the Greek they are one in the same office—‘*pastor-teacher*’ or ‘*teaching pastors*’.

The Greek word for ‘*pastors*’ here is the word *poimēn*, which is a word most often translated ‘*shepherd*’ in the New Testament. A spiritual shepherd is one who faithfully cares for, leads; feeds; and protects the flock of God in the local church setting.

Since one of the main responsibilities of a pastor is to feed the flock he must therefore be a teacher. (Jesus said, “*Feed My sheep; Tend My sheep; Feed My lambs*”)

1 Timothy 4:11-13 (NLT)

¹¹Teach these things and insist that everyone learn them. ¹²Don’t let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity. ¹³Until I get there, focus on reading the Scriptures to the church, encouraging the believers, and teaching them.

Jeremiah 3:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

Ezekiel 34:1-5 (NKJV)

¹And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ²“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel,

prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God to the shepherds: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? ³ You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, *but* you do not feed the flock.

⁴ The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them.

⁵ So they were scattered because *there was* no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered.

Romans 12:8 (NKJV)

⁸ he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; **he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.**

The gift of **mercy** is the supernatural capacity and heart of aiding those who are in distress. Those who have this gift should exercise it with cheerfulness.

Of course, we should all show mercy and do it cheerfully—

A Christian lady once said,

"When my mother became old and needed someone to care for her, my husband and I invited her to come and live with us. I did all I could to make her comfortable. I cooked for her, did her washing, took her out in the car, and generally cared for all her needs. But while I was going through the motions outwardly, I was unhappy inside. Subconsciously I resented the interruption of our usual schedule. Sometimes my mother would say to me, 'You never smile anymore. Why don't you ever smile?' You see, I was showing mercy, but I wasn't doing it with cheerfulness."

The same goes for our giving to God—He wants it done cheerfully and not begrudgingly.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Want to know more? Click [here](#).

Catch this week's audio, video, study and sermon notes [HERE](#).