

GROWING in Gifts III

Jake Ferrari

Paul's focus is on being members of a body, joined together, and how within that metaphorical framework, our gifts demonstrate Christ's love for one another so that the body can be built up toward maturity in Christ.

Romans 12

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform 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.

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 faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but

be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," n says the Lord. On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

The New International Version. (2011). (Ro 12:1–21). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Everyone has gifts and can have confidence in that truth.

What your gifts are doesn't matter, what matters is that you use them.

Using our gifts doesn't matter, unless we used them with love.

A General Assumption

Paul starts off this movement assuming that you have gifts. If he assumes this by inspiration of the Spirit, then it is a good assumption for us as well.

There are no useless body parts, and the same is true for us. We each have gifts given to us by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Even if you don't know what they are, we are able to discern them.

Paul doesn't give a long explanation of how to use gifts, or ranking them by how or when we should use them, but simply lists them.

While Paul discusses the gifts a lot, he doesn't go into detail with specifics, perhaps showing us that the specifics don't matter. The same grace given to me is the same grace given to you.

Gifts Don't Matter Unless You Use Them

There is no middle ground between use and disuse, no sitting on the fence. You're either using them or not using them.

Grace As a Free Gift

While God meets you where you are, his expectation is that you don't stay there. In Paul's time, the expectation is the receiver reciprocates gifts by giving back and giving away to others.

They are expected to continue the cycle of gift giving in the church community. The Spirit pours out, and you worship.

This is what it looks like to offer your body as a living sacrifice. The Levitical sacrificial system was a high bar to fill, for the donor and for the sacrifice. As a living sacrifice, you are expected to use your gifts intentionally and with excellence. Your body is a living sacrifice — offered to others as you use your gifts to build up the body.



The sign of a Christian Disciple does not lie in a ceremony like baptism or a public declaration, but the love that we show one another. When we use our gifts for the love of the body, we are showing love to one another.

My Brother's Keeper

We are all our brother and sister's keepers. We do not live for ourselves.

No body part can act on its own behalf. A stomach doesn't fulfill its purpose as just a stomach, but requires an entire GI tract to perform its function.

In the same way, you can't fulfill your calling without the body. In doing this role together, we show the world who we are.

Truth in the Heart & Mind

How do we get there, how do we make this truth take effect with our hands?

It begins with the renewal of your mind.

Do we wait until we're in the right place to use our gifts?

- NO! Don't conform to the ways of the world.
 - Hypocritical religious legalism — Like many of the pharisees in Jesus' time.
 - Hypocritical self-centeredness — Put the whims of our heart first and "treat yo self."

Paul doesn't want us to get wrapped up in either of those mindsets. As children of God, we follow the way of God, not the world.

There is an opportunity to take the gifts we've been giving and use them to build each other up without boasting in it and show the world the love of Christ.

Normalize calling out the gifts in each other! We can do that based on what we see and what the Holy Spirit is calling!

If you don't know what your gift is, just start serving and find needs to fill. Then you'll begin to get a feeling for where your calling is.

- If you see a need in hospitality, sign up! That may be why you saw that need — for you to fill it and not for someone else.
- Try it out and see if you can do it!

Jake Calls Out Gifts

- Jason Fortman — Unfathomable heart of service.
- Monica Holverstot — Doesn't know how not to be hospitable. Hospitality is who she is.
- Noelle Ferrari — Gifted as a mother, administrator, and leader.

Your Assumptions

Do you assume that some gifts are for the cool kids and not you?

Do you have false assumption about God's gifts?

Are you withholding your gifts?

Take this calling and do not fear honor or recognition, and seek the honor of God's kingdom by honoring others and serving them with your gifts.