

Romans 12:3-8
God's Gift to the Church

1. The Only Way The Church Can Exist 3

A. By Grace

B. A Hedge Against High Thinking

"If a person constantly remembers that his spiritual abilities are gifts he has received from God, this is a major hedge against inflated thinking"

Ben Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*

"Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches."

1 Corinthians 7:17 ESV

"But we will not boast beyond limits, but will boast only with regard to the area of influence God assigned to us, to reach even to you."

2 Corinthians 10:13 ESV

"Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends." -2 Corinthians 10:17-18 ESV

C. Sober Judgement Instead

2. Where Does Membership Come From? 4, 5

A. Member 4

If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell. -Matthew 5:29-30 ESV

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. -Romans 6:12-14 ESV

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of

one member but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way." -1 Corinthians 12:12-31 ESV

B. A Much Deeper Connection 5

"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." Acts 2:42-47 ESV

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." -Romans 12:1 ESV

3. Gifts of Grace 6-8

A. By Grace 6

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified **by his grace as a gift**, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,”
Romans 3:23-24 ESV

B. Prophecy

“Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But all things should be done decently and in order.” -1 Corinthians 14:1, 39-40 ESV

“On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.” -1 Corinthians 14:3 ESV

C. Service-

Acts 7:1-7

D. Teachers

E. Exhorts-

“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.” -John 16:7-15 ESV

F. Givers- Generosity

“We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he

should complete among you this act of grace. But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.”

2 Corinthians 8:1-7 ESV

“Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” -2 Corinthians 9:7 ESV

G. Leaders- zeal

“I say this not as a command, but to prove by the **earnestness** of others that your love also is genuine.” -2 Corinthians 8:8 ESV

H. Acts of Mercy- cheerfulness

1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4.

Reflection: How do you view “membership” in the church? Does your view include the elements that Paul lays out here? Are you using the gifts of God’s grace in your life to serve Him and the church?

Follow UP in the Word through the Week...

Monday: 2 Corinthians 10:17-18. What have you “boasted” about in life? What do you have to boast about “in the Lord”?

Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31. How does Paul explain being a part of the church in this passage? How are you currently “fitting in” with this illustration in your own relationship to the Body of Christ?

Wednesday: Acts 2:42-47. What activities were “naturally” happening after the Holy Spirit was poured out? What have you witnessed happening in a natural way in the church when it is functioning well?

Thursday: 1 Corinthians 14:3. What is the function of prophecy according to this verse? Has that gift worked that way in your life?

Friday: 2 Corinthians 8:1-7. How would you describe the kind of generosity that Paul is speaking of in these verses? Can you identify people who have been generous around you?

Saturday: 1 Corinthians 13. Read this chapter. In its context, the love here deals directly with the exercise of spiritual gifts and the operation of the church in chapters 12 and 14.