

Romans 12:7b-8 Answers
Spiritual Gifts: Teaching, Exhortation, Giving, Leading, Mercy

Review: The last section of Romans is generally about Service (Ro 12-16). In Romans 12-13, Paul detailed our service in relation to God (12:1-2), other believers (12:3-16), our enemies (12:17-21) and the government (13:1-14). Romans 1 -11 is the “what”. Romans 12-16 is the “so what”. If you really believe Romans 1 – 11, then *this* (Ro 12-16) will be true in your life. Romans 1-11 is the foundation and Romans 12-16 the superstructure.

Introduction: In Old Testament days, God gave those who built the tabernacle supernatural abilities for its construction: masonry, metal-working, carpentry, tailoring, engravers, weaving, etc. (Ex 35:30-36:1). He also stirred up people to give silver, gold, special woods, linen and leather (Ex 35:29). According to the New Testament, we ourselves are living stones built together into a spiritual temple with Jesus as the cornerstone. Along with being born-again comes a spiritual gift for service to help other people, building up God’s spiritual house. This gift is a supernatural ability for service. Do you know what your gift(s) are? If not, imagine a gift for you under the Christmas tree left over from last year that you never opened. Wouldn’t you like to know what is in it?

We are to use our gifts to serve others. If we fail to do so, we will be spiritually like the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea has not outlets. Toxicity builds up and it kills everything in it. If all you do is sit and soak, soon you will sour.

ESV 1 Peter 4:10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another . . .

ESV 1 Corinthians 14:12 . . . since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.

Word Study: “Gifts” (12:6) is from *charisma* basis for charismatic, so-named for their emphasis on the more spectacular gifts (tongues, healing, prophecy).

Review: In 12:3-5, Paul gave a very important caution we are to remember as we use our spiritual gifts (*read aloud*). No one should think more highly of himself than he ought to think. We are to be realistic. Don’t be a prima donna! Just as one body has many parts with different functions, so too all Christians, with many different grace gifts, make up the one body of Christ.

ESV 1 Corinthians 12:12 . . . 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.

****** Last session we studied the gifts of prophecy and service. Let’s read through the list of gifts in 12:6-8.**

Teaching

What is the gift of teaching (6:7)? It would appear to refer to someone supernaturally gifted at communicating God's Word. It is from *didasko* (basis for didactic).

Stereotype: A teacher will be able to effectively communicate truth and able to cause other people to learn. His presentations are organized and systematic. Presumably, his teachings will be interesting.

Based on 12:6, how is someone with the gift of teaching supposed to use this gift? He is to use it in teaching! Maybe you are thinking, "Well, duh". This presupposes there is a venue for teachers to teach. One problem is some people do not want to be subjected to teaching. Others like emotional worship through song, or focus on prayer meetings, or great fellowship over a meal, but they resist teaching. They can't stand too much of it. Paul is here authorizing those with the gift of teaching to teach!

ESV 2 Timothy 4:3-4 . . . the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

1. Why is teaching important in the life of a healthy church (12:6)? See *Matthew 28:18-20*, *Acts 2:41-42*, *1 Corinthians 14:26*.

a. Teaching plays an integral role in fulfilling the Great Commission:

ESV Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus . . . said . . . "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

b. The early church was characterized by a devotion to being taught:

ESV Acts 2:41-42 . . . those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching . . .

House Church Weakness: One great weakness of Western house churches is the dismal lack of in depth, systematic teaching. They are so small that typically no one is present with the gift of teaching, nor even anyone qualified to be elder and thus able to teach.

c. The gift of teaching is to be allowed to function in participatory gatherings:

NAS 1 Corinthians 14:26 When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

2. The text does not state that a teacher has to be an elder. Can you think of someone in the New Testament who was an effective teacher but not necessarily an elder? Apollos, an itinerant evangelist and teacher, seems to fit the bill:

ESV **Acts 18:24-28** . . . Apollos . . . was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures . . . instructed in the way of the Lord . . . fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus . . . he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

3. All elders must be *able* to teach (1Ti 3:2); some elders have the spiritual *gift* of teaching. Ephesians 4:11 refers to the gift of pastor-teachers. According to 1 Timothy 5:17-18, what is the church's obligation toward such men? They are worthy of double honor (financial support) so as to free them up to serve the church. It takes long hours to prepare a teaching and of course it takes time to teach it. There is a vast difference between paying a man to do a job and freeing a man to do a ministry.

ESV **1 Timothy 5:17-18** Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages."

Balance: Many people have been disgusted by exorbitant salaries paid to super-star preachers and over-react by opposing the support of any full time ministers. However, the abuse of something does not bar its use. The baby must not be thrown out with bath water.

4. What is the overlap is there between prophecy and teaching (12:6-7)? See Acts 15:32, 1 Corinthians 14:31. One aspect of the gift of prophecy is the ability to give a Spirit prompted message of encouragement and strengthening. A teacher might do the same thing through his teaching. A difference between the two is that the teacher will come by his message through careful study of the Written Word. A prophet's message is more by direct revelation and the prompting of the Spirit; his is an immediacy of inspiration directed toward a particular situation (Cranfield, p. 630).

Exhortation

5. How would you describe the grace gift of exhortation (12:8)? Exhorts is from *parakaleo*, the same word translated appeal in 12:1. It means to entreat, comfort, instruct, admonish, beseech, encourage, cheer up or strengthen. *Para* means alongside (paramedic, paralegal, paratrooper) and *kaleo* means to call. It refers to someone called to come alongside you to help you. Jesus used the noun form (*paraklétos*) to refer to the Holy Spirit as our Comforter, our Helper, our Counselor.

Stereotype: People with this gift are good at motivating others to see and live out the practical application of truth. They uplift the depressed and inspire the discouraged. They challenge people to greater heights of faith and achievement. Barnabas seems to have had this gift; his name means son of encouragement and he certainly lived up to his name!

6. What overlap is there between prophecy, teaching and exhortation? Some Christian speakers are really prophets and operate out of that gift. Others are gifted as teachers (like John McArthur). Some are really operating as exhorters (Charles Stanley) and others are gifted as evangelists (Charles Spurgeon).

Giving

7. According to 12:8, what should be true of someone with the gift of contributing? He will give generously. He has a God-given capacity to give. A person with this gift will probably be sensitive to the needs of others.

J. C. Penney and R. G. LeTourneau (Caterpillar; CMA) were both fervent Christians who had the gift of giving. Another giving Christian was Sam Walton (Walmart; Presbyterian). James L. Kraft (Kraft Cheese) was a strong believer (Baptist) who was known for his generosity. Said Kraft, "The only investment I ever made which has paid consistently increasing dividends is the money I have given to the Lord."

However, a person with the gift of giving does not have to be rich:

ESV Mark 12:41-44 [Jesus] sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

Application: Thanks be to God for Christians who do not suffer from financial constipation! God asked the Hebrews under the Old Covenant to give 10% of their income to Him. A recent report indicated church members only give about 2.38% of their income. Although we are under no compulsion to tithe as were the Jews, surely Jesus did not die on the cross so we could give less than 10%. That should be merely the starting point of our giving. Love should motivate us to give a lot more than the 10% required by law. Here is the greatest New Testament passage on giving:

ESV John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave . . .

How much do you love God and others? It will be reflected in your giving.

If the percentage of your income you give to God's kingdom were posted publically, would you be embarrassed?

Examples: Things don't just happen in church by magic. Someone had to pay for the blessings we enjoy. Jesus paid for our salvation. Teachers pay the price of long hours in study preparation. People buy the food we eat at the weekly love feast. Someone gives to support our missionaries. It costs money to pay the rent on our meeting place. Our keyboard did not magically appear; someone bought it.

8. What if your boss paid your salary according to the same measure you give to kingdom work; would you be living below the poverty line, middle class or rich?

ESV **Matthew 6:33** . . . seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

ESV **Acts 20:35** . . . remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' [*Do you really believe this? Does your check book prove it?*].

ESV **Luke 6:38** . . . give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.

ESV **2 Corinthians 9:7** . . . God loves a cheerful giver. [Don't let a past bad experience sour you to giving.]

Leading

*******According to 12:8, how should gifted leaders lead?** They should lead with zeal! Other versions say to lead with diligence (KJV, NASV, NIV).

What is zeal (12:8)? Zeal is from *spoudé*, which means eagerness, earnestness, diligence or attentiveness (BAGD, p. 763).

9. Why might even a gifted leader lose his zeal (12:8)? It is easy for a leader to be discouraged by those whose attitude is "Get Your Laws Off My Body" or who suspiciously accuse him of a would-be pope. The leader has to press through such unbiblical, immature negativity.

Stereotype: A leader is a big picture kind of guy and can cast a vision for others to see.

Word Study: "Leads" (12:8) is from *proistéme*; *pro* means before and *stéme* means to stand, thus, **1)** to stand in front of in the sense of leading or directing, or being at the head of a column to direct, manage or conduct. However, it can also mean **2)** to be concerned about, to care for, to give aid to (BAGD, p. 707); thus the ESV footnote for "leads" offers "gives aid" as an alternative. At the very least this shows what ought to be the servant nature of church leadership.

10. What is the difference between a manager and a leader (12:8)? See *1 Corinthians 12:28*. A person with this gift of leading would be good at casting a vision or giving direction. A leader decides which direction to go; a manager figures out how to get there. A parallel passage refers to a similar gift: administrating or government (1Co 12:28). The Greek word for administration has to do with being the helmsman of a ship; someone who guides the ship (Swindoll, *Spiritual Gifts Bible Study Guide*, p. 10). Perhaps a leader casts the vision and an administrator figures out how to get there.

11. Why would a person not have to be an elder or husband to use the gift of leadership? Certainly it would help an elder or husband to have this gift, but many have it who are not qualified to be an elder (such as women) or single men who are not married. They can use this gift in a myriad of church ministries.

Mercy

******12. What is the grace gift of mercy (12:8)?** Mercy means pity or compassion. The gift of mercy is the supernatural inclination to feel and exhibit help for the afflicted. People who have the gift of mercy rush to give aid to those who are hurting, wounded, lonely or outcast.

Stereotype: A person with this gift is attracted to and understands those in distress. He has a strong desire to remove hurt and restore healing. He is sensitive to words and actions that may hurt others.

ESV **James 2:13** [Prophets thunder judgment, but James says] Mercy triumphs over judgment.

What disposition should characterize those with the gift of mercy (12:8)? Those with the gift of mercy should exercise their gift with cheerfulness. The Greek word is *hilarotés* (basis for hilarious).

13. Why is it important for those with the gift of mercy to be cheerful (12:8)? If you approach an afflicted person with a dour face, as if grudgingly helping, the hurting person will be greatly discouraged!

So What?

14. No matter what your grace gift, what caution must we heed from 12:3?

15. What spiritual gifts are listed in 1 Corinthians 12:7-10, 28 and Ephesians 4:11 that are not listed here in Romans 12? Other gifts include apostle, evangelist, the ability to distinguish spirits, words of wisdom, miracles, healing, tongues and faith.

16. Which, if any, of the gifts listed do you think you have? (*Remember this list is not exhaustive*).

ESV **Proverbs 18:16** A man's gift makes room for him and brings him before the great.

Maturity: Which spiritual gift did Jesus have? All of them! It has been said that the more we are like Jesus, the less obvious our spiritual gift will be since we will learn to practice the others gifts.

What are you doing to serve/build up the church?

ESV **1 Corinthians 12:4-6** Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

Note: All stereotypes were taken from material given out at a Basic Youth Conflicts Advanced Seminar in the 1970s.

**** = ask this question before reading the text aloud. Doing so will cause focus.

- These lessons are designed for a 45 minute session and are based on the text of the ESV.
- You can hear this lesson being taught at www.SermonAudio.Com/NTRF.

Stephen E. Atkerson

www.NTRF.org

01/04/15