

Use Your Spiritual Gifts

By Jim Pile

THE TRUTHS OF ROMANS 12 ARE THE SUM of the first eleven chapters of doctrine on justification and sanctification. These truths are not arbitrary thoughts or suggestions. Sacrificial worship and using our spiritual gifts are the natural responses for believers who realize all that God has done for them.

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. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness (Romans 12:1–8).

BODY, MIND & SPIRIT

Paul's approach in Romans 12 is an exhortation to present our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice to God, to renew our minds through Scripture, and then to use our spiritual gifts for the edification of the church. As brothers and sisters in the body of Christ, we depend on the exchange that occurs between us in using our gifts. As we continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, that involves using our gifts to serve one another for God's glory. In verses 6–8, Paul mentions these gifts: prophecy (preaching), serving, teaching, exhorting, giving, leading, and showing mercy (1 Corinthians 12:28–31).

CATEGORIES OF GIFTS

Spiritual gifts fall into three categories in the New Testament: sign gifts, speaking gifts, and serving gifts. The apostle Peter gives us the designation of the last two categories (1 Peter 4:10–11). These gifts can be grouped together as ongoing edifying gifts, in contrast to the temporary sign gifts. The purpose of the temporary sign gifts was unique to the time of the apostles as the early church was being established. They authenticated the teaching of the apostles and the subsequent writing of Scripture. (See 2 Corinthians 12:12 and Hebrews 2:4). The permanent or ongoing speaking gifts include prophecy (preaching), teaching, and exhortation. The serving gifts include serving, giving, leading, and showing mercy.

Since there are a variety of spiritual gifts listed by Paul in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12, we can interpret that these are not firm, all-inclusive lists. The general categories of gifts may be blended with other God-given talents to create a composite gift that is unique to each one of us — like your favorite ice cream flavors being blended together to give you the perfect combination of tastes for your palate!

You may be thinking that you're not a preacher or a teacher, but perhaps you are gifted in the areas of serving, giving, leading, or showing mercy. That's fine! Those gifts are just as important to the body of Christ as preaching and teaching. The key question is: Are we maximizing the gifts God has given us? He desires that we use our gifts to edify others for His glory! 🌿