



Nov 6, 2022 – Your Spiritual Gifting – Romans 12:1-8

OPEN

The activity of doing “random acts of kindness” has been an interesting phenomenon to observe in our society. In fact, according to the [Random Acts of Kindness Foundation](#), November 13 has been designated World Kindness Day. But when it comes to how God wishes to engage the Church in blessing our world, His work is not random. There is a divine design. Every follower of Jesus has been called and equipped to contribute to God’s Kingdom.

This is the first of three sermons in our series, **Your Place of Service**. And the vital assumption here is that you are designed, as a follower of Jesus, to make a contribution to His Kingdom. One way of assessing your contribution to the church is to consider your **S.H.A.P.E**. We could build our series around these elements: **spiritual gifts, heart, abilities, personality, and experience**.

For our study we are borrowing the framework of **Network** (Bruce Bugbee & Don Cousins, Zondervan, 2005) which offers three lenses through which we understand our place of service.

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| 1. <i>Your Spiritual Gifting – Romans 12:1-8</i> | <i>November 6</i> |
| 2. <i>Your Personal Style – I Corinthians 12:12-26</i> | <i>November 13</i> |
| 3. <i>Your God-given Passion – I Peter 4:7-11</i> | <i>November 20</i> |

DIG

This passage offers us three important considerations when it comes to putting our spiritual gifting to work.

A. Adoration – God’s grace to be changed – vv. 1-2

Our natural, human motivation is self-focused. We need to be transformed. The basis for Paul’s exhortation in these verses is the mercy of God (v.1a). Worship and adoration of God must become the focus of our living and serving. Paul urged believers to offer/present/yield their bodies to God as....

1. *A living sacrifice - we are to be involved devotedly - see I Peter 2:5*
2. *A holy sacrifice - constant consecration, being set aside for something*

Such a sacrifice brings God pleasure, considering His double claim upon our lives. Further, it is our “spiritual” or better, “reasonable” service to God in light of His grace to us. How does this work itself out in our experience? Verse 2 answers this question.

- **Negatively** expressed, this means actively resist being molded to the spirit of this age.
- **Positively** stated, Christians must consciously allow the core of their being – the mind – to be changed by the truth of God.

As a result, the believer discovers and delights in God’s will and purposes, through proving or testing. Oswald Chambers wrote in **My Utmost For His Highest** (Dodd Mead & Co, 1956, 171),

We count as service what we do in the way of Christian work; Jesus Christ calls service what we are to Him, not what we do for Him...so many are devoted to causes and so few devoted to Jesus Christ.

What is the ultimate goal of Christians serving within their gifting? It is for the building up of the Body to be like Christ (see Ephesians 4:11-13). It is about growth into fullness, not busyness, in Christ

B. Attitude – God’s grace to be real – vv. 3-5

Here is a call to authenticity and humility. This is a call to be “at home” in our “in Christ” identity. Our society is being engineered to accept many pseudo-identities...whether sexual, economic, or according to some kind of human performance! What is required for us to operate in our spiritual gift?

Rather than being “high minded” (uperfronein) Christians should see themselves with “sound judgement” (sofronein) according to the faith measured out to us. We are tempted to allow activity to eclipse maturity. Christian service does not revolve around ourself but around God! God wants to repair our **ego-system!** In **THE MESSAGE** verse 3 is expressed this way...

Living then, as every one of you does, in pure grace, it's important that you not misinterpret yourselves as people who are bringing this goodness to God. No, God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us, not by what we are and what we do for him.

So foundational is this truth that we dare not fail to restate it! We must have a godly, accurate, humble self-awareness. By God's grace, we can learn what the body metaphor teaches – wonderfully diverse members bound together interdependently as one – each gifted “for the common good” (I Cor 12:7).

C. Action – God’s grace to be effective – vv. 6-8

Correct adoration and attitude lead to effective action. Because of our human condition we need to be equipped by God to serve. This is the essence of spiritual gifts – they are gifts which are given and must be received!

The word “gifts” (*carismata*) and “grace” (*carin*) are from the same root. So...we have been “graced with gifts”. The NASB reads, “we have gifts that differ according to the grace give to us”. That being the case, fellow believer, you must **act** and play your part joyfully and effectively!

1. *Spiritual gifts are specifically listed – Rom 12; I Cor 12; I Peter 4*
2. *Spiritual gifts are gleaned from other texts and biblical characters*
3. *Spiritual gifts are debated and variously defined – eg. sign gifts*

The focus of Romans 12 is not to provide an exhaustive list of giftings. What Paul highlighted for us is the need to put our gift into action, in a meaningful and worshipful way. This will require intentionality and diligence, as the Holy Spirit empowers us.

In whatever it is that God has made you to be, you must express this gifting thus reveal the personalized grace that God has given to function interdependently as within a body. God has not gifted you to make the contribution of someone else!

REFLECT

When it comes to making a meaningful contribution to God’s Kingdom, we can be confident that God gives gifts to His followers, distributed by the will and purpose of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:11).

The question is whether Christians are receiving and releasing God’s grace gifts effectively. In an article “Conducting A Spiritual Audit” (*Leadership Weekly*, April 29, 2003) Fred Smith wrote,

Do I have a flow-through philosophy? Scripture says, "He that believeth in me, out of his innermost parts will flow rivers of living water." The freshness is in the flow. The mountain stream is fresh; the Everglades are stagnant. Some of us want to be a lake, not a river. We want to accumulate before we let too much flow through. However, as a Christian, I am to let the blessings flow through me. At a weekend retreat outside Fresno, I spent three days with a couple hundred laymen. To my surprise, they had not invited another speaker, so I had to hold forth from Friday noon until Sunday noon. (I accused them of running a cheap program with only one speaker who came free.) Late Sunday afternoon, I was flying back to Dallas when I realized, "I am totally relaxed." This didn't make sense. After that much effort, I should have been either high as a kite or lower

than a snake's belt buckle. It suddenly occurred to me: As I shared Christian leadership principles with these men, there had been a real presence of the Holy Spirit in the sessions. I had been the pipe, not the pump. The pipe never gets tired. God had been the pump. How tired I would have been had I tried to be both the pump and the pipe. Oswald Chambers warns that when we dam the blessings in our life, we become stagnant, cynical, mean-spirited. We must break the dam and let blessings flow like a river, for the freshness is in the flow.



Are you trying hard to serve Jesus, but in your own strength?

Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to equip and empower you?

Are you interested in discovering and developing your spiritual gifting?

Two workshops are available...contact [Pastor Brent](#) if you are interested.

S.H.A.P.E. can be done one-on-one in an evening

Network six sessions, ideally done with a group