



## Your Unique Ministry: Spiritual Gifts Part 4

March 16, 2025      Romans 12:1-8

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(video 45:47)

But for this morning, we wanna return to Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12 and take one probably last parting look at least at the first eight verses of Romans chapter 12. You've been with us now, most of you I know for many, many weeks and months, and certainly for the weeks that we've camped on this portion of scripture, you know that we've had 11 chapters of solid orthodoxy telling us about those mercies of God that are new every morning and constantly bestowed upon us. And with that, Paul transitions into Romans chapter 12 and starts telling us about some orthopraxy; what we are to do in light of and in response to that. The last time and the previous times, we've seen that it all starts with Romans 12:1&2. *Presenting our bodies*, which of course now we know is our spirit, our physical bodies with its passions and desires and wants and so forth, the thought processes of our mind and the actual decisions of the will that the mind feeds and directs, all of that is to be laid open and given palms up to Almighty God, humbly *present our bodies to Almighty God as a living sacrifice*, moment by moment, day by day for the days that we have, *holy and acceptable to God*, which in the word of God says is our *reasonable spiritual service of worship*. *And don't be conformed to this world*, verse two, *but what, be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you and I can live out and prove what is that good and that perfect and that acceptable will of God*, moment by moment as we live our life to the glory of God.

Now that sets the stage, we've seen, for the right attitude with which we approach everything. What's that attitude? Humility. You cannot present your body holy and acceptable to God. You can't give God your all and hold anything back. By definition, you give Him your all. Therefore, you've held nothing back. You're dead to self. You're alive to God and to the purposes of Jesus



Christ. And what did we learn in our last lesson? We exercise not an independence, not a maverick mentality, but a dependence and a loyalty. A dependence and a loyalty to God, which is expressed by we live our life giving glory to God in dependence and loyalty to those within the body of Christ. We saw that He has given a unique special gift to each one of us. And you remember that passage in 1 Corinthians 12:7. He has distributed these gifts individually. Don't forget that word 'individually'. I mentioned it to Jim Kelly and to Ralph out on the patio before the worship service about a half hour, hour ago. But that word, *idios*, actually it was to you, Scott. I mentioned it, *idios*. We get the word idiot from it. Everybody, we are spiritual snowflakes. There's not one of us in terms of our spiritual giftedness that is alike. That gives you incredible, unique purpose. You talk about a meaningful life. The God of the universe who gave you natural life gave you spiritual life and invested you with a unique gift that is to be used in community, blessing others, other focus to the glory of Almighty God.

Now, in order to do that, to live to the glory of God, in order to live out this presenting our body as a living sacrifice to God, we're to focus on the right use of our spiritual gifts. We saw last time, and I repeat it again in the pastor's letter, and I promised I would repeat the steps one more quick time as a quick review, the nine steps, if you will, that I sort of synthesized from scripture in helping us to discern what your particular spiritual giftedness is. And first we said it starts out with

1. Romans 12:1&2, **obeying** the principles of Romans 12:1&2.
2. Second of all, **know that you have a gift**. Believe the word of God when it tells you first Corinthians 12:4-7 that you have that unique, special gift, that the church is dependent upon your using and that you're to loyally use it.
3. Third, **pray for wisdom**, pray for discernment. God, what is my unique gift package?  
James 1:5.



4. Fourth, **do not ever seek any particular gift**. Wait for God to show you exactly what your gift is.
5. Fifth, **examine your heart's desire**. What do you sense God's good pleasure in? What do you enjoy? And ask God to show you deeper, deeper, deeper what that is.

(By the way, why did I say don't seek a particular gift? I wanted to reiterate 1 Corinthians 12:7, 11, 18, and 28. Why wouldn't you seek a particular gift? Because Almighty God's the one that distributes it. You can't go asking for it. He's already distributed it to you when you came to Him, when He brought you and adopted you into His family.)

6. Sixth, **seek confirmation from others within the body of Christ**. Do they confirm that you have a particular gift? Do they express their blessing by such a gift in your use of it?
7. Seventh, **see if God is blessing your ministry in a certain way**. See if God blesses you when you use that particular spiritual gift. Are people led to Christ if you have the gift of teaching or preaching? Are people encouraged and edified in their faith? Are they more enriched? Do they better understand the word of God because of your gift of teaching or whatever it might be? Look for God's blessing on that use of the gift.
8. Eighth, man, **give it your all**. Don't do anything half-heartedly. If you sense you have a gift in a certain area, you will really flesh it out and come to know it if you go full-tilt all in in the use of that gift or you'll find out it's not your gift.
9. And lastly, lastly, when it becomes obvious what your gift is, **cultivate it**. Look for opportunities to use it and sharpen it and expand it. I had no clue that God was going to open a world-class seminary at Scottsdale Bible Church in 1988 and bring seminary education to the local church. But sensing that I had a gift of preaching teaching, I



cultivated it by taking that opportunity of being able to stay right here in the valley and yet still attend seminary. Just a personal example of that.

And like I mentioned to Mike Foley before the service started, if you go through all those steps and you think you have a handle on what your spiritual gift package is and no two are alike. Yeah, he may have the gift of teaching and he may have the gift of teaching, but their gift of teaching was not alike. It's not the same. They're all different. They're different shades and so forth. Remember that artist palette example. The label that you put on your spiritual gift is you. Your spiritual gift is just you. That's who you are in terms of God's economy and what you do.

And we saw that the first thing that you have in approaching the right use of spiritual gifts is the right attitude. In verse three of Romans 12 gave us that attitude. ***For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.*** In other words, humility. We underscore, don't over exaggerate your giftedness. It's not you to begin with. It's God's gift to you. But by the same token, don't undervalue it. It is a precious gift of God and don't try to be something that you're not.

An article was published years ago in the Springfield, Oregon public school newsletter. I can show you how far we've come as a culture. You probably wouldn't see this anymore in a public school newsletter, but it said this. Once upon a time, the animals got together and decided that they wanted to do something meaningful to meet the problems of the new world. The animal kingdom all got together, and they decided we're gonna start a school. And our school is gonna have four areas in its curriculum, running, climbing, swimming, and flying. That's gonna be, and by the way, to make administration of the school curriculum easy, all



the animals had to take all four courses: running, swimming, climbing, and flying. Well, the duck started out and the duck was absolutely fantastic at swimming. Now, he only got average grades at flying. And when it came to running, he was a real, real failure. So, in order to improve his running, he had to quit swimming. And the running did nothing but damage the duck's webbed feet. So, after a period of time, he was not even a good swimmer. He became only an average swimmer, but average was okay to everybody except the duck. Well, then there was the rabbit, the rabbit. You talk about a runner. He was the best runner of all, but he wasn't real good at swimming. And he developed a charley horse in his leg because all of the time he had to practice at his swimming, which, of course, lessened his ability to be a good runner. Then there was the squirrel. You talk about somebody who has got A's at climbing. Nobody could climb like the squirrel, but guess what? When it came to flying, he had a real problem, real problem. Then, of course, there was the eagle. The eagle was the original, if you will, problem child. He could not be disciplined, and he excelled at climbing, but he did it his own way with his wings. What's the point of all of that? The point of all of that story is obviously every creature has his own set of capabilities, and if he tries to do something he's not designed to do, he not only will not be good at what he tries to do that he's not designed to do, but he'll lessen and denigrate and harm the thing that he has been designed to do, and the application to spiritual gifts in the body of Christ could not be clearer. You need to understand, know, cultivate, and use your spiritual gift, and not try to be something that you're not. God did not make all of us the same.

So, Paul starts out with, before he gets to any other steps were to take, anything that were to do in this life towards living for the glory of God, anything we're to do as far as living life as a living sacrifice to God, he says definitely understand and use your spiritual gift and come at it with the right attitude. Quit trying to be an eye when you're a finger. Quit trying to be a foot



when you're an arm, and so on and so forth. You get the analogy. So, verse three, he says humble yourself. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. Humble yourself is the right attitude.

In verses four and five of Romans 12, he tells us what the right relationship is, how we're to fit in, and we'll just read the verses again. ***For just as we have many members in one body, and all the members do not have the same function, there you are, so we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another.*** Now, he then goes and starts listing a category of gifts, and I started asking myself, why would he list these particular seven gifts? And just so you know, I do not believe that the lists of spiritual gifts are intended to be exclusive. You say, what do you mean the lists of spiritual gifts? Well, let me tell you the four places where spiritual gifts are listed in scripture:

- Right here in Romans 12:6-8, we have a list of a few.
- You'll also find some listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10.
- You'll find some listed in 1 Corinthians 12: 28-30,
- and you'll see a list of spiritual gifts over in Ephesians 4:11.

Now remember, don't get me wrong, spiritual gifts are mentioned many other places in the scriptures, but in terms of a list of three or four or more gifts, those are the four areas where lists are found. And so, when it comes to the spiritual gifts, he's gonna tell us now the proper service, verses 6-8, the proper service, if you will, of your spiritual gifts, meaning what? Each gift is unique and it's for the common good, we've underscored that, and therefore, you must be involved, you must use it, your gift is for the common good. If you're not using it, you're violating the word of God. Now in the New Testament, I've told you where the lists of spiritual gifts are, in the New Testament, you can break down spiritual gifts, and this is not intended



to be an exhaustive study on spiritual gifts, but Paul jumps into it here for a reason, and that's why I'm jumping into it. You can break down spiritual gifts into three categories:

1. There's the **sign** gifts,
2. there's the **speaking** gifts,
3. there's the **servicing** gifts

Three 'S's'; sign, speaking, and serving.

Okay, the sign gifts. The sign gifts were intended to be just what they are. What does a sign do? The sign isn't the thing, the sign points you to something else. The sign directs you to something else. The sign gifts were to authenticate the spokesperson as truly a speaker for the true God of the Scriptures. They, in our, in my personal belief, in our church's doctrinal statement and belief, they are unique to the New Testament age. They were designed towards the establishing of the New Covenant at a time when Israel rejected its Messiah and the Scriptures were just being written, when the apostles' teaching needed to be authenticated, and so they were unique to that time. You say, well, why do you say they're unique to that time? You wanna write down 2 Corinthians 12:12. Paul says this, *The signs of a true apostle*, he says, *were performed among you*, and then he goes on and says, *with all perseverance, signs, wonders, and miracles*. What's he talking about? He's talking about the ability to speak in a language that was not your native language. That was a sign gift. It was to spread the gospel and to authenticate the messenger. He talks, it's about healing, the miracles of healing, raising the dead and healing the sick. That was a sign gift. Another, by the way, sign gift is prophecy. We're gonna talk about prophesying in a minute, but prophecy is a little bit unique. It means to foretell the future, in some instances, or to forth tell, tell forth truth. Prophecy is a sign gift during the New Testament age because it authenticated the messenger



as being God's messenger of being able to foretell the truth, and also in the Old Testament times, but today it's a gift of speaking forth God's revealed truth.

Now, there's a phrase that you'll hear in church circles. Are you a cessationist? It's not talking about breaking away from the United States government. It's talking about, are you a cessationist? Do you believe that the sign gifts have ceased? Are you a cessationist? And there was a time back in the mid-70s when the charismatic movement was really in full force and swing, and maybe it still is for all I know, but was really taking hold around the world as well as in our country. Many people, professors at Dallas Seminary and other places, were being asked to sign a statement that they believed that the sign gifts had ceased. Do you know that if that statement had been presented to me, I would not have signed it. I personally believe that the gift of healing, the gift of miracles, speaking in languages that you had never, were not your native tongue to explain, I do believe that those are not operative today, but I would never sign that statement, and the reason why I wouldn't is because one of our very missionaries, John Cuts. When John Cuts was a 17-year-old boy, I didn't witness it, I didn't see it, but I would trust my life to John Cuts' word. John Cuts was a 17-year-old boy, and they had discovered, in Papua New Guinea at the time, an unknown tribe that they did not know existed, and they were trying to reach this tribe with the word of God, and a missionary had been sent to that tribe to learn their language and so forth, and he was opposed by a witch doctor who was calling on demonic forces and spirits and so forth. John Cuts, if he was standing here today, and maybe someday he'll be here on furlough or something, we'll have him tell you the story, as a 17-year-old kid, he saw an injured native with a, he said, a compound fractured leg, swollen up and in pain and running a fever and so forth. That missionary spent the night praying over that native. He says, the next day, John, that guy's leg was completely restored. He was walking around, and he says, I saw it with my own eyes.



Now, we're talking about the 1960s here, early 1960s. So what? That was a sign gift to authenticate the missionary had the true word of God, not the witch doctor. So, I couldn't sign such a statement, because I think there may still be, in that part of the world especially, a people group or two. They discovered another people group just about 15/18 years ago of about 250 natives in an area that they had no idea they even existed. But in any event, not to get off on that, the point is, other than in those circumstances, the gifts of, that in terms of someone performing a miracle of healing, I believe they've ceased. They're no longer, why? Because we have the canon of scripture written. We're in the New Testament age. The Holy Spirit has been poured out on believers, and we're told to go and to make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and teaching them to observe all these principles that have been given to us. So, they are resigned, if you will. Another passage of scripture you might wanna look at some time is Hebrews 2:3-4. It says, God bore witness of the authenticity of their word. It says, quote, ***by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.*** Another passage of scripture you might wanna write down is Mark 16:20. The gospel ends with this, ***And they***, meaning the apostles, the apostles, ***went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.***

Now, many of you, I know if you're familiar with the scriptures, you've been around churches a long period of time, you say, well, there's another argument, too. If you study the book of Acts, you see all sorts of miraculous healings and speaking in different languages and so forth and foretelling the future of things that would happen. And those over the progress of time as you work your way through the book of Acts, they gradually lessen and lessen and lessen and you see the sign gifts dying off. Well, that's true, but there's several other things as well. The list of where the sign gifts are mentioned are only listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. As a



matter of fact, just flip over to 1 Corinthians chapter 12, leave a finger in Romans 12. Look over at 1 Corinthians 12. We're talking about the gift of preaching. Sometimes preaching is preaching and sometimes preaching is teaching and sometimes, and right now I would say the gift of preaching is being used more in a teaching mode and more of a Bible study mode than a preaching mode, but maybe a little bit of both. But in 1 Corinthians chapter 12:8-10. ***For to one is given a word of wisdom*** (in another part of scripture that's referred to as the gift of discernment) ***through the Spirit, and to another, the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; and to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another, gifts*** (There's another passage of scripture refers to gifts as helps, H-E-L-P-S) ***of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles...*** (There's a sign gift. I say to thee arise, pick up thy bed and walk, okay? Peter and John healing the blind and raising the dead and healing the lame and so forth, all right?) ***...to another, the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues*** (which I take to mean speaking in a known language but it's not that individual's language) ***and to another, the interpretation of tongues*** (being able to stand up and also understand a language that you're not trained in and translate it to other people who might be standing around who don't speak the language that the individual is starting to speak in). In other words, you got people in the group who are trying to spread the gospel. I got Susan Winkler who speaks only Irish or only Italian we'll say and I got Bob Merwin who speaks only English and so I stand up and I can't speak either and I start speaking English so that Bob Merwin can understand the gospel which Susan Winkler who only speaks Italian can't but somebody else stands up and I have the gift of interpretation of tongues. I don't speak English either so I, but I understand English and I interpret and I can speak the Italian to Susan so that both groups that are receiving the gospel at that particular time are edified if you will. I



don't think that, now do I think God gives certain innate natural ability I should say, not innate but a giftedness to have a real ear for language. Quite frankly, I have an ear for language in terms of not being able to learn languages I don't know but I am, I do have an ear for language but there's some people who, man they can learn French at the drop of a hat. They can learn Chinese at the drop of a hat. Where you and I would just beat our brains out trying to get it, they get it quick and I do think there is a certain giftedness in that regard. But in terms of a spiritual gift to just start speaking Chinese, that has ceased, I believe, for this day and age because it's not necessary to spread the gospel any further. We have the written word of God. Why did I have you go to 1 Corinthians 12? Because this is the area in 1 Corinthians 12 where the signed gifts if you will, miracles and healings and discernment and tongues and so forth are listed. Now that was written in about 54 AD. By the time Paul writes the book of Romans, it's 58 AD and in this list over here in Romans 12, you don't have any of the signed gifts. You do have prophecy but we'll get there.

Then, if you will, there's another list of gifts I told you over in Ephesians 4:11-16 but by the time you get there, the book of Ephesians is written in 63 AD and you don't see any of the signed gifts listed there either. As a matter of fact, when you get over to 1 Peter, which is written about 66 AD, farther along the chronological line if you will, Peter says he only refers to two categories of gifts. He who speaks, let him speak the oracles of God and he who serves, let him serve thusly. He doesn't talk about any of the miraculous, so-called miraculous or 'sign' gifts, all right? So, what we're saying is that the signed gifts, which are healing, speaking in a language that's not your own, foretelling, foretelling the future, those sign gifts have ceased for the most part in the church age.

So, what is left? Well, I just told you what was left. 1 Peter 4:10-11, let me just read it for you:

***As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards***



**of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, let him speak as it were the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.** Peter says there's only two ways. There's only two groups of gifts, speaking and serving. The 'sign' gifts have ceased. And by the way, you don't own your gift. You and I, I don't own my gift of preaching, teaching, and you don't own yours either. It is a stewardship given to you and me by Almighty God, which we indeed are to steward. And I believe that Paul emphasizes in 1 Corinthians, he emphasizes tongues and he emphasizes prophecy because tongues was being abused, and he had to stop it. And prophecy, speaking the truth of God, was being neglected and he wanted to emphasize it. And so, I just wanted you to see why Paul leaves out the 'sign' gifts, if you will, when he comes to Romans chapter 12.

Now, okay, you made your case, hope I did, but why the gifts he lists? Let's look, verse 6. ~~But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise it's no longer grace.~~ And it would be great if I read Romans 12:6. **And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly** (Now, he lists them): **if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;** (I thought you said prophecy, telling forth the future had ceased. It has, different aspect of prophecy. Remember, it could mean telling the future. It can also mean just forth telling truth. And that's what he's referring to here.) **if service** (there's a second one), **in his serving; or he who teaches,** (there's another gift, teaching) **in his teaching; or he who exhorts,** (exhortation, there's another gift) **in his exhortation...** By the way, the speaking gifts are prophecy, teaching, and exhortation. The serving gifts are serving, giving, leading, and mercy, based on this list here. You'll see what I



mean. **...he who gives with liberality** (he who gives with liberality, giving is a gift), **he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy with cheerfulness.**

Why these seven gifts? I believe these are seven general categories of giftedness in which all the other gifts fall. Different shades, if you will. And you'll have different shades of different gifts combined in you that make up you, you and your service to the body of Christ. But the first one that he lists here, and it's listed in some of the other, and by the way, all of them are not repeated. The other lists list a couple of these, but don't list all of them. And some of them list some that Paul doesn't list here. I don't believe they're intended to be mutually exclusive; not fixed, rigid lists. They're exemplary, examples of the type of gifts. But these seven that he gives here are not by accident because as far as I can tell in the study that I have done, I think these list out the general seven overarching categories of which the gift of teaching or the gift of helps or the gift of mercy or the gift of prophecy or the gift of giving or the gift of prayer or the gift of faith or the gift of that or discerning spirits or whatever, they fall in to these general categories. And like I say, your particular giftedness may be like that artist's palette. It may be a blending of one or more of these to various different degrees, okay? I think it's just a comprehensive sampling. And he says basically what he's saying here in these last few verses is like the old Nike ad. You got prophecy, do it. You got the gift of giving, give. You got the gift of teaching, teach. Do it, get about doing it. Use your gift. Some people say, well, you know, really, I'm not really active in the church right now. Well, whether you're active in terms of holding an office or something like that is not the point, but you need to be active in terms of using your spiritual giftedness for the edification of the other members of the body of Christ. Whether it's in this building on a Sunday or out there where you live, which is really where most ministry takes place for most of us out there, you need to be doing that.



So, let's talk about these seven general areas of giftedness. The first one he lists here is prophecy, prophecy. Again, it's an important gift. And the word there is *prophēteia* (G4394), *prophēteia*. What does it mean? It means simply this: to speak publicly, to speak publicly. Actually, it means to speak before, and he's referring to speak before people. One of the best definitions of the gift of prophecy is in 1 Corinthians 14:3. He says, **he who prophesies speaks unto men**. And I think that is exactly what he's talking about here. He's one who speaks unto men. I had this conversation earlier this week with a dear brother in Christ. He said, you know, I think I have more the gift of teaching than I do preaching. Preaching, the gift of preaching or prophecy really, is the ability to stand up and publicly declare or proclaim God's truth. I think all preachers, all who have the gift of prophecy certainly exercise an element of teaching to one degree or another. Some more than others. But not all who are teachers, and have the gift of teaching, have the ability or the giftedness to feel God's pleasure and sense God's leading them to be necessarily preachers, proclaimers of that truth.

Go to, well, one fabulous example of this. Yeah, let's go there. Flip back to the book of Exodus. The book of Exodus. So you can really see the gift of prophecy in Old Testament times, not just foretelling what's gonna happen in the future, but seeing it how I think it's played out, if you will, today. Exodus 4, powerful passage of scripture starting at verse 10, Moses being called on by God to go and lead the children of Israel. And what's it say in Exodus 4:10? **Then Moses said to the Lord, "Please, Lord, I've never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since Thou hast spoken to thy servant; for I am, look at this, slow of speech and slow of tongue."** Moses did not have the gift of preaching, okay? **And the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes him dumb or deaf or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now then, go, and I, even I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to say."** **But** (which, by the way, shows you, it's got nothing to do with natural



giftedness. Yeah, God can give natural gifts of speaking, and you can hone your oratory skills and things like that, but the effectiveness and the power and the ministration and the fruitfulness of the gift is all a product of Almighty God working through the speaker, the preacher, the teacher, okay?) Verse 13, ***But he said, "Please, Lord, now send the message by whomever thou wilt. Then the anger of the Lord burned against Moses, and He said, "Is there not your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he speaks fluently. And moreover, behold, he's coming out to meet you; when he sees you... (by the way, look at this, it's Almighty God that gives you, and this is a whole, not even on the subject, the whole joy of personal relationships and friendships. It's all based on Almighty God. Look what he says) ...he is coming out to meet you; and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. He'll be glad in his heart. Okay, going on, the real point here. And you are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and even I will be with your mouth and his mouth, and I'll teach you what you are to do. Moreover, he shall speak for you. He will be your prophet, in other words. He's gonna be your spokesperson. In my particular vernacular, he's gonna be your attorney. He's gonna be your mouthpiece. He's gonna be your high-priced spokesperson, your attorney. He's gonna speak for you. ...he shall speak for you to the people; and it shall come about that he shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be as God to him".*** Aaron was going to proclaim truth that was going to be taught to him by Moses. Aaron was given the prophetic gift of declaring the truth. Moses, really, was going to be the teacher and was going to teach him that truth. But the point is, prophecy is really that preaching, if you will.

Even John Calvin in his commentary said: *By prophesying, I do not understand the gift of foretelling the future, but of interpreting scripture so that a prophet is an interpreter of God's will.* In 16th century Zurich, Switzerland, professors and theologians would get together on a weekly basis, and what would they do? They called it their 'prophesying meetings'. Well, did



they tell the future? No, they got together and they exegeted portions of scripture and extracted the truth from it, and they shared that truth with one another to equip them to go out and therefore proclaim that truth, and they called it a prophesying session. So that is the distinction, if you will.

Now, he says in Romans 12:3, and whether it's prophecy or whatever your gift is, I wanted to underscore one more time. In Romans chapter 12, he says in verse 3, at the end of verse 3, ***as God has allotted to each a measure of faith***, then at the end of verse 6, he says, ***if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith***. Well, the translation is accurate, but it's inaccurate. There's a definite article there before the word faith, and it can be translated in accordance to the proportion of *his* faith. It can also be translated in accordance to the measure or the proportion of *the* faith, and actually, it's not an either/or. I want you to know it's a both/and. What do you mean it's a both/and? It's like Jude. The Lord's half-brother writes in Jude three, he refers to the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. He's talking about the complete, unchanging, core, essential truths of the faith. He's talking about the word of God. He's talking about the scriptures. He's talking about the body of faith, and what he's saying is he who proclaims God's truth needs to do so in two ways. He needs to do so in accordance with the body of truth. In other words, he needs to speak truth, and it needs to be aligned with the whole counsel of the word of God. Otherwise, he's not speaking truth, so he needs to speak it in accordance with the faith once for all given, the holy scriptures, we would say, and he also needs to do it in proportion to his faith, and remember a couple of sermons ago, we expanded that concept in context of the meaning of faith. It isn't saving faith. It's that measure of discernment, that measure of grace, that measure of giftedness that God has given to you to be able to exercise your particular spiritual gift. The same God that gives you the gift and tells you to use the gift, gives you and I the ability to maximize our use of that gift in certain



ways, and that's what he's saying here at the end of verse 6. You're gonna proclaim God's truth. You're gonna preach and proclaim truth, then absolutely do so in accordance with the word of God, in accordance with the faith, and do so to the max with the grace and the ability and the wisdom and the insights from scripture and so forth, that I've given you.

Now again, I keep honing in on this gift of prophecy, meaning preaching. By the way, there's also a gift of teaching listed here. Well, how do those two differ? I could talk to you about Greek words and so forth all day long. One of the best examples I could give of the difference between preaching and teaching, and this is just for me, and you might disagree with me, but I think you'll at least get the point. I have two individual, I have several, but I have two individual theology textbooks sitting on my desk at home. One is MacArthur's, *Biblical Theology*. I call it the white book because it's got a white cover, the white book. The other one is Wayne Grudem's, *Systematic Theology*. And I look at those two, they have the exact content for the most part, if you will, theologically sound, scripture reference and so forth, but I see MacArthur as a preacher/teacher, and I see Wayne Grudem more of a teacher/teacher. It's just a difference in giftedness. There's one with a gift of teaching would teach a Sunday school class. He might teach a home fellowship. He might teach a Bible study. He might teach in different, and he might even stand up over a pulpit at times and teach, but one with a gift of prophecy, the gift of preaching, literally has a 'thus saith the Lord', a proclaiming ability, and a certain element of teaching to it, that the other one will not have that shade of giftedness. It's just the way God has chosen to gift people within the body of Christ. Do you sort of understand a little bit what I'm saying about the MacArthur? If you're not familiar with John MacArthur and if you're not familiar with Wayne Grudem, you won't get it, but they're both erudite. They're both scholarly. MacArthur, and all men, by the way, who are preachers are not necessarily teachers. MacArthur is one of those examples where those two gifts got



blended together in one individual. He's a 'thus saith the Lord', preach, preach, preach, but he's also a masterful, powerful teach, teach, teach, whereas other guys are fabulous teachers. They can take a passage and explain it and apply it and so forth, but they would not be necessarily fulfilled and used by God to proclaim to either a small audience or a massive audience God's truth in that way. It's just the way He's wired them up.

Go to 1 Thessalonians 5. We'll end with this. Go to 1 Thessalonians 5, because you see the importance of all this and you see your vital role. Even if you don't have the gift of preaching teaching, you're gonna see what your role is. You know, there's spiritual preaching and guess what? There's such a thing as spiritual listening and you need to come through the doors of the church on Sunday with a heart set to spiritually listen and receive what God has for you. Well, how would you do that? Well, let's pick it up at 1 Thessalonians 5. I said, let's go with verse 16. We'll start there. **Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not** (by the way, these build on one another.) **Do not quench the spirit;** Don't stifle the operation of the Holy Spirit in your life, believer. What? **do not despise prophetic utterances.** You know what that is? Don't despise the proclamation, the preaching/teaching of the word of God. Don't ignore it, don't despise it, don't treat it cheaply. Pay attention, come with ears ready to hear. But here's the balance to it. You don't wanna quench the Holy Spirit, so you wanna really give attention to somebody who's exercising the gift of preaching, teaching God's word. **But examine everything carefully;** Remember the Bereans in Acts 17? Everything they heard Paul and Barnabas say, they ran off to the scriptures to see if such was the case. **But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good;** In other words, you and I are to be attentive to the preaching, teaching of the word of God. We are to have our hearts open to it. But we are to be listening with discerning ears and taking what is said over this pulpit captive to the word of God and



seeing if it stands the test. How do you test it? Does it square with the whole body of truth as revealed in the word of God? Does it square with the faith? Jude 3, that core tenet of teaching. And by the way, all true biblical preaching, teaching must have two aspects to it. It must be in a line with the core body of truth, Jude 3. And you may wanna write down Revelation 19:10. ***For the testimony of Jesus***, it says, ***is the spirit of prophecy***, is the spirit of preaching, the testimony of Christ. In other words, all biblical preaching must square with the word of God and it must exalt the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And if it ever denigrates either of those, and if over a process of time, if it doesn't uphold all of those, then you are to mark it down. It does not stand the test. And at that point in time, you are to ignore it.

Well, real quickly, oh, no real quickly. I just looked at my watch. Lord willing, we'll have a quickly next week. But you're gonna see a gift of serving. And you're gonna say, well, shouldn't we all serve? Yeah, but it's probably multi-million ways of doing that. You're gonna see a gift of giving. Well, shouldn't we all give? And is it just talking about money? No, there's all kinds of giving. And we're gonna talk about that. What about the gift of mercy and so on? What, in order to capsulize for you, these categories in which your giftedness falls. And again, remember, as Brian comes to lead us in this closing hymn, just remember this. Regardless of what you believe your spiritual giftedness is, the label you put on it is simply 'you'. It's you. And you're indispensable to the body of Christ.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for this time we have in Your word. Time which I confess totally escaped me. But Lord, You're sovereign and You're in control even of such mistakes. And I pray, Lord, that everybody here would be more and more encouraged by these truths we've gleaned today to want to know exactly what their giftedness is and to be looking for ways to express it for Your glory more and more. There are no lone ranger Christians, Lord. We are dependent on one another. We need to be loyal to the family of God. We need to be loyal to



the calling You've given us in Christ. We ask You by Your grace to enable each one of us more and more to do so. We ask again in the matchless name of Jesus our Christ. Amen and amen.