

Individual Participation

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Date: 27 May 2012

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[0:00] Well, Romans chapter 12.

And I'm going to read once again, starting with verse 1. I had my little marker on Philippians and I thought, well, maybe I said Philippians.

You know, you never know what's going to come out of my mouth. I never know either sometimes. Anyway, I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. For I say through the grace given to me to everyone who is among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ and individually members of one another.

[1:28] Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them. If prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith. Or ministry, let us use it in our ministering.

He who teaches in teaching. He who exhorts in exhortation. He who gives with liberality. He who leads with diligence.

He who shows mercy with cheerfulness. Alright? Now, these few verses, as I mentioned, I guess it's been a couple of weeks because we weren't here last week at the Awana program.

So it's been a couple of weeks. But as I mentioned, you will remember a couple of weeks ago that what we have here in these verses, starting with verse 3, really, and really all the way to the end of the book of Romans.

I can't. Still in Philippians. All we have here revealed to us is this. Just what presenting your body as a living sacrifice ought to look like.

[2:34] Ought to look like. So everything Paul is going to teach us from here, chapter 12 on to the end of the book, is very practical. Very practical. Very doctrinal from chapters 1 through 11.

Extremely doctrinal. But from here on out, though Paul is not going to avoid teaching or mentioning doctrine, he's certainly not going to do that.

But here on out, the emphasis is practical. Practical. Very practical. Or, again, as I said, what presenting your body as a living sacrifice looks like. What it ought to look like.

And the first place he takes us is the fellowship of the church. What it ought to look like in the church. In the body of Christ.

The local assembly of the body of Christ. That's us. What does it look like here? And that's what we have here in verses 3 through 8.

[3:30] And we get into the issue of spiritual gifts. And we'll get to that by and by. Now, last time I asked this question. What makes a healthy church?

A healthy church. And I listed a number of things that it seems in our day people put a high premium on. I'm not going to go back over that list.

But simply again ask the question. What makes a healthy church? And the answer, the short answer is healthy Christians. They make a healthy church. Healthy Christian. I'm not talking about physically healthy.

Because you can be a total wreck physically. And still be a healthy believer. Sure. And I don't need any amens on that. But that's what makes a healthy church.

Healthy Christians. And what are the qualities of a healthy Christian? This is what we've been looking at here. We've seen two of them. The first one is a humble evaluation of self.

[4:31] That's what makes a healthy Christian. And we could all learn this. Because we all fail in this area. That is, we often times, and to some degree or another, have a little higher estimation of ourselves than we ought to.

Than what would be right before God. What is right, period. And so we all need to learn this. To have a humble evaluation of self. An honest, humble evaluation of self. And so what did Paul say in verse 3?

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, I'm saying this to all of you, not to think of himself. And I could add herself also there.

Paul didn't add that. But that's included. Not to think of herself or himself more highly than he ought to think. Don't think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. More highly than what is true. But to think soberly, he said. Soberly. As God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. And again, it's the difference between super thinking concerning yourself and sober thinking.

[5:41] Super thinking and sober thinking. And we usually will find ourselves somewhere in between there. Maybe we favor more to the super thinking.

We can't help ourselves. But that's the difference here. And Paul is saying don't have super thinking about yourself. But sober thinking. Now, pride, of course, comes from super thinking in regard to self.

That is, over appraising yourself. And praising. Appraising and praising. Humility, on the other hand, is the result of sober thinking.

Humility. Sober thinking. Knowing who you are. Before God. That's all important. Not who you think you are. Or who others think you are.

And maybe have led you to believe is true about yourself. Not even thinking about who you want to be necessarily. And having that such a predominant, guiding, dominating force in your life.

[6:43] But rather thinking about yourself. Knowing what God knows about yourself. An honest evaluation. And so I said that we all should exercise that ancient maxim.

Know thyself. And we need to do that. And that's what Paul is getting at here. You need, we need a humble, honest evaluation of self. And to do this according to what guideline?

Well, he gives us a guideline. Paul says think soberly. Honest appraisal. As God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. A little complicated phrase there.

But basically it means that your appraisal of your value, your role in the body of Christ should match your spiritual giftedness. Your spiritual giftedness that God has graced you with.

And we're going to get into the spiritual gifts here in just a minute. So discover your spiritual giftedness. Ultimately is where Paul is leading us here in his thought process.

[7:43] And so discover your spiritual gift and don't evaluate yourself apart from them. Or beyond them. Or in contradiction to them.

Now, where then does a healthy church begin? It begins with its individual members. Born again believers. And with a humble evaluation of self.

Second, we saw it also begins with a faithful cooperation with others. Not only is there a humble and honest evaluation of self.

But also a faithful cooperation with one another in the local body of believers. The church. The local church. The church, again, is like a body.

A physical body. And like a physical body, the body of Christ has many parts. Many members. Not one more important than another.

[8:42] From the pulpit to the pew. Not one more important than the other. We have many parts. And every single part, every single member is vitally important to the whole.

Don't ever forget that. Alright? Don't ever forget that. Every member, every part of the local body is vitally important to the whole.

And to state it a little differently, but a little different nuance of that. Every single part depends on every other part. And so every part is important.

And every part depends on every other part. So that's basically what Paul is saying. We can put it together this way. A healthy church is one that is made up of all kinds of people from many different backgrounds.

With differing spiritual gifts, which we're going to get to here in a minute. Who have been joined together by God based upon a common faith in Jesus Christ. Now that's a big statement.

[9:43] But that is a healthy church. So the qualities of a healthy Christian include a humble evaluation, a faithful cooperation, and then one more.

And this is what we'll focus on the rest of our time. It depends upon an individual participation. I know we seem to be going back and forth.

You know, we have cooperation, then individual participation. All of it comes together for the whole. But each of us have spiritual gifts. Each of us do. And we are to use them.

So there's an individual participation. Look at what Paul said again in verse 6. Excuse me. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them.

Now let's stop right there. Though we're going to go on to the end of verse 8. But I want to stop right there. And if we will take this part of verse 6 and pick it apart.

[10:53] Pick apart its various parts. We're going to learn, I think, a great deal about what the Bible calls spiritual giftedness. Or spiritual gifts. We're just going to pick it apart.

And believe it or not, though not just in the part I read, but really continuing on, there are at least 8 points of interest. 8 points of interest.

I was just looking at my watch. Is that funny? 8 points of interest. And we're going to make it through these 8, I assure you, one way or the other. Number one, there is the definition.

There's a definition here. Now not a long, drawn out definition that you might find in a dictionary. But there's a definition.

That is, Paul's going to define, he's defining something. And what is he defining? Gifts. That one word is the definition of what Paul is talking about.

[11:57] Paul speaks of gifts that are given to us. That's what you do with gifts. You give them. That sounds a little redundant, but that's it.

Gifts. He's talking about gifts here. That are given to us. This is Paul defining what he's talking about here. Did you know?

By the way, that we are charismatic Christians. Pretty quiet in here.

Did you know that? I'm talking about how we worship or, you know, the level of our emotion in worship and so forth. And I'm talking about being charismatic in that sense.

But we're all charismatic Christians. We are all members of a charismatic church. You say, no, pastor. I'm not a charismatic Christian.

[12:56] This is not a charismatic church. We're not charismatics. Oh, yes, we are. We are. That is, according to the correct use of that word.

We are. We're charismatic Christians. We're a charismatic church. See, the word translated gift is the word from which we get this whole idea of charismatic.

It is the word charismata. Charismata. And it's a compound word. And it has within it the word charis, which is the word grace.

We're charismata. Christians. See, the root of this is grace. And so the meaning is grace gifts.

Grace. Not just gifts. We just simply translated in our English versions, gifts.

[14:01] We lose the broader meaning, the full meaning of the word. It literally means grace gifts. You see, when you were saved, when you were born again, you received the gift.

Do you know what that gift was? Or is? The Holy Spirit. Every single one of us, when we were saved, regardless of when that was for you, no matter how young you were or old you were, no matter what, no matter how much you knew and understood about the fullness of salvation, we're still learning that.

But every one of us who are born again received, when we were saved, we received the gift. At the very moment of conversion, you received the Holy Spirit.

You did. If you did not, you're not saved. That's clear from Scripture. And with the Holy Spirit, you received divine gifts.

Whether or not you realized it, felt it, knew it, understood it, discovered what they were at the time, every one of you received the Holy Spirit. Every one of you received the Holy Spirit and with Him divine gifts or enablements, divine enablements for use in the body of Christ.

[15:25] Every single one of us. Every one of us. I can say that about every one of you. You say, well, you don't know me very well. I don't have to know you. I know the Word of God.

And the Word of God says that at conversion, we receive the Holy Spirit. And with the Holy Spirit, we receive gifts. This is what Paul is saying. Now, Paul's emphasis here, in this passage anyway, though he emphasizes spiritual gifts in some other places in Scripture, and the emphasis is a little

bit different there.

The use of gifts, the authority of gifts. But here, the emphasis is the source. And that's what we need to get by way of definition. The source of these charismata.

That is, you don't ask for them. At no place in Scripture are we commanded to ask for spiritual gifts. We don't ask for them. We don't choose them for ourselves. You can't get tired of the one you have and say, well, I'll just pick a different one. You don't choose them.

[16 : 33] You don't learn them in the sense of learning them to the point of having them. Now, you do learn, of course, about them. And we need to learn about the spiritual gifts, studying God's Word.

But you don't learn them into your life. They are divinely given, these spiritual gifts. Paul says here, according to the grace that is given to us, to each one of us.

According to His grace. J. Ligon Duncan said this. He said, Your ability to edify one another does not derive from native powers.

In plain English, that means it doesn't come from inside of you. That is, naturally. It derives, rather, from spiritually gifted graces.

That's what it means for the church to be charismatic. See, he agrees. We're a charismatic church. I like to agree with J. Ligon Duncan. Not speaking in tongues.

[17 : 35] You're not talking about speaking in tongues or prophesying. Being charismatic means being indwelt by and gifted through the Holy Spirit for ministry to one another. Number two.

Alright. Moving right along. I said we'd make it. I assure you, we will. Number three. Or, excuse me. Two. There is the assumption. Yeah, I just skipped number two.

Go on to number three. No, I want you to get this. Because don't miss this. There is first a definition. He's talking about gifts. That defines the whole subject. Gifts. Spiritual gifts.

Grace gifts. But there is an assumption here. Do you see an assumption? That Paul is making an assumption that we ought not miss? Paul said, having been gifts.

That's an assumption. That's an authoritative assumption. Sometimes we assume things that are wrong. But Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is assuming something that is true.

[18 : 41] And so he begins this whole sentence with a participle. Having then gifts. The assumption is we all have spiritual gifts. I've already said that.

But now I have the backing of Scripture for that. Paul's assuming it. He's assuming his readers know that. And he's assuming we know that. He's assuming something that is true.

That maybe some believers have not quite gotten or embraced. First, the assumption is we have a gift. Or gifts.

And so spiritual giftedness is not just reserved for special Christians within the body of Christ. We have too narrow a view of what spiritual giftedness is.

And so we can kind of remember two or three of them. And so we identify people who really shine in a sense or excel within the body of Christ. And so we might find ourselves thinking that spiritual giftedness is isolated to a certain few within the body of Christ.

[19 : 47] That's not true. We all have at least one gift. And the fact that you don't know what your gift is doesn't change that.

I'm convinced that a number of God's people, possibly even in this church, possibly even some here tonight, have never considered the whole issue of spiritual giftedness and you don't really know what yours is.

Though, by the way, you might be using them just naturally, but you don't know in a definitive way what your spiritual gift is. But the fact that you don't know what your gift is does not change the fact that you have one.

You do have one. Every born-given believer has at least one spiritual gift. This is assumed by Paul. Having that gift. Number three, there is the limitation.

There is a limitation given here. Paul limits something here. How does he limit and what is the limitation? Well, Paul said, having then gifts differing.

[21 : 03] Differing according to the grace that is given to us. Differing. Alright, so, though every believer has at least one spiritual gift, no one believer has all the spiritual gifts.

That's clear by what Paul is saying here. There isn't any believer who has all the spiritual gifts. I know there are those who profess to have all the spiritual gifts.

Kenneth Copeland is one of them. And there are others. But Paul says, having then gifts that differ from person to person, differ according to the grace that is given to us.

So, no believer has all the spiritual gifts. And I would also add at the same time that the same spiritual gift is not granted to all the believers in the church. And that brings up, I think, the issue of our Pentecostal friends.

Those who believe that every true born-again believer must have the gift of tongues. Speak in tongues. Now, putting aside the fact that I take issue with their whole belief in the spiritual gift of tongues as something that is used today.

[22 : 26] And that's another subject. But even if I were to agree that there is today still a vital gift of spiritual tongues. You cannot, at the same time, believe that every believer must have it.

Because the same spiritual gift is not granted to all believers in the church. That would make no sense to God.

Because we understand that spiritual gifts are differing among the members. So that when we put it all together, the church is complete. It's whole. It has everything that is needed for it to grow.

And for it to be successful in the ministry God has called them to. So Paul said, spiritual giftedness in the church is diverse.

He said, diverse spiritual giftedness is God's, by the way, God's perfect plan for the church, which is to make the church complete. He said, the gifts differ according to what?

[23 : 29] According to the grace that is given to us. See, this takes it away from us. We don't go out and look for people to come be a part of our church who we think have certain gifts that we need.

God brings all that to the church. It's according to His grace. It's God's grand plan for a healthy church. A vital church.

A church that is accomplishing His ministry. According to the grace that is given to us. Number four. When will I get it all back?

Number four. There is edification. There's the word. Edification. Paul said, these gifts were given to us.

To us. It's plural. Meaning, the gifts, though given to individuals. Because each one has a gift.

[24 : 29] And they all differ according to His grace. According to His plan. But these gifts, collectively, were given to us. That is the church. For the benefit of the church body.

And so spiritual gifts were not given so that you might make a name for yourself. Among your peers. There are some of God's people who need to be reminded of that.

Spiritual gifts were not given so that we might be successful in ministry. And, you know, be promoted to bigger and better things.

You know, there are a lot of pastors that need to learn that. Spiritual gifts were not given so that you might be raised to a place of honor in the church. Or in a denomination.

Or even in Christendom as a whole. They weren't given for that purpose. Spiritual gifts were not given so that we might feel fulfilled and satisfied.

[25 : 34] Though God does grant that blessing. But we don't use them because we crave fulfillment or satisfaction. There are a number of times. In fact, I would venture to say that many times.

When God's child is exercising his or her gift. There is very little immediate reward and satisfaction. In fact, sometimes a great deal of heartache comes with exercising your gifts. God didn't give the gifts so that you would be rewarded and satisfied in this life.

Spiritual gifts were not given so that others would praise and admire you. We need to remember that. They are given to the church.

For the benefit of the church. The spiritual gifts given by God are meant for the edification of the saints of Christ. And for the building up of the body of Christ.

[26 : 38] That is why God gave the differing gifts to every member of the local body. So not for edification of self. But for edification of the church.

For building up of the church. 1 Corinthians chapter 12. By the way, is another place in Scripture where Paul gets into the subject of gifts. Spiritual gifts. But in verse 7.

1 Corinthians 12.7. This is what Paul said. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.

Not for the profit of the one. But for the profit of all. As each one uses his or her gift. Number five. There is participation.

The participation. Paul said in the New King James it's translated this way. And by the way, the words don't appear in the Greek text. It's implied by the context.

[27 : 38] But it's rightfully translated this way. Let us use them. There's the participation. Paul says this, this, this.

And he says, well let's use them. Let's use them. The New American Standard. I like the way it renders this implied phrase.

It says, each of us is to exercise them accordingly. This is important. And ultimately this is the mark of a healthy church.

It's not enough just to know your spiritual gift. What's important is, are you using it? Or using them? That's the mark of a healthy church.

Where every believing member is using his or her spiritual gift for the good of the whole. Well, for the glory of God. But that's for the good of the whole.

[28 : 36] Let me add quickly, number six. There is an implication here. I mentioned an assumption a while ago. You know, sometimes you have to read between the lines.

And we read exactly what the writer intends to say. And then we understand that when he writes what he intends to say, there's an implication of something else he is saying.

What's the implication here? I'm confusing you. The implication, when he says, let us use them, he is implying that some are not using them.

You see? Why would Paul say, let's use them, if it were not true that some are not?

And the truth is, many are not using their gifts. Some are not using their spiritual gifts because of ignorance. They simply don't know what they are.

[29 : 47] And that's an honest thing and very common. And we'll deal with that here in just a moment. Some are not using their spiritual gifts because of laziness. Just laziness.

Some are not using their gifts because of self-centeredness. There are too many other interests that are more important than their church and their service to the church according to God's giftedness.

Self-centeredness. Some are not using their gifts, quite frankly, because of sinfulness. Sinfulness. Living in sin. Disobeyed God and have not repented. And thus, this believer has placed himself or herself in a position where God cannot use them.

At least for now. And so the answer is repentance. Number seven. There is the identification.

[31 : 02] And this is where we get on into the rest of chapter, verse 6 and further. In verses 6 through 8, Paul identifies seven gifts. Seven spiritual gifts.

I mentioned another list given to us in 1 Corinthians chapter 12. And then there is another shorter list given in Ephesians chapter 4. We are not going to look at those tonight.

But in all, if you put those all together, including Romans chapter 12, there are 19 different gifts, spiritual gifts mentioned in the Bible. But there may be many, many more.

Or many, many more offshoots of some of these primary or broad categories of spiritual giftedness. So let's run through these very quickly here in Romans chapter 12.

There are seven of them. The first one is prophecy. And that's the gift a lot of people would like to have. Because it is viewed as being, you know, one of the bigger gifts, the greater gifts, the more admirable gifts.

[32 : 12] Now remember, Paul's point is that we're not to think of ourselves highly, more highly than we ought to. You know, that we're all on the same plane here.

So prophecy is not a greater gift than, say, service, which we're going to get to in just a moment.

But the first one is prophecy. And this is the ability to convey revelation, the revelation of God.

To convey, to give the meaning of, to proclaim the revelation of God. And Paul gives no qualification here. And so it can mean both new revelation.

Now hold on a minute. I'll explain here in just a minute. It could mean, and does mean, include the conveying of new revelation from God. And or the conveying of the meaning of existing revelation.

Now, again, there's no qualification given by Paul. He just doesn't qualify it. He does in a sense.

And we'll get to that in just a minute. But just in the bare use of the word prophecy is not qualifying.

[33 : 24] Both are meant. Whether it's foretelling or forth telling. Both are included in the word prophecy. And both, by the way, were in operation in Paul's day.

Because Paul was still alive. That is, the apostles conveyed new revelation as God, the Holy Spirit, gave them inspiration.

Imparted this new revelation. And we have the result of it right here in this book. And when Paul was writing the canon, the New Testament canon, the New Testament had not been completed. And so, in a sense, we could say that Paul meant that this gift of prophecy included the divine ability, enablement, to convey new revelation given directly from God.

So, both were in operation in Paul's day. But only one is still in operation today. Because the New Testament is finished. There's no more new revelation given.

[34 : 34] It's complete. It's perfect. It's right here in our Bibles. And so, the only one still in operation today is the spiritual gift to convey, to proclaim, to give the sense, the meaning of existing revelation.

The existing revelation of God. This would be a gift given to preachers. Not just preachers. It's the gift of prophecy.

Now, Paul, again, does include a qualification here. But the qualification would apply to both those who are proclaiming new revelation, as well as those who are conveying the truth of existing revelation.

And the qualification is, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith. In proportion to our faith. What does that mean? Well, the word proportion, a little difficult, but it means to have a right relationship with faith.

Or, in agreement. I think this is probably more correct. In agreement with the faith. And so, the idea is, the meaning here is, the revelation or the preaching of God's word, God's revelation, must always be in agreement with the whole of Scripture.

[35 : 52] It can't be contradictory. It can't contradict any part of Scripture. This is certainly a qualification for those who have the gift of prophecy.

If a man gets behind this pulpit or behind this podium and says, here's what God says, and it's not in agreement with Scripture, then he has violated this gift.

It's not prophecy in that sense. The second gift is ministry.

That's how it's translated in the New King James and maybe even in the King James. I didn't go back and check. But the word is diakonia. We get our word diakonos, deacon, from this.

And so, the word means service or the ministry of service. So, here's a spiritual gift. The ministry of service. Service. And it's very broad and I think includes all forms, any and all forms of service in the church.

[36 : 53] Service to others in the body of Christ. Again, I mentioned deacons. Deacons should be identified, I think, by the church. And chosen based upon their personal demonstration of the spiritual gift.

Gift of service. Now, Paul does not include any qualification or instruction here as he did with the gift of prophecy.

What does he say? He just simply says, let us use them in our ministry or in our serving. And the idea there is, use them often. You've got the gift of service, use it.

And use it often. And use the gift of service in this way to strive for excellence. No half measures in your service in the church.

And you're to use this gift. We're to use this gift willfully and devotedly. Not because you have to. Or that you're somehow constrained to and just forced to.

[37 : 52] And no one else is going to do it. I've got to do it. You know. Never heard that before, have you? Number three, the gift of teaching. The gift of teaching.

See how Paul kind of mixes this up. You know, there's no hierarchy of gifts here. There's prophecy. Then service. Then teaching. But even in the inflection of my voice, I'm suggesting there's some hierarchy.

That one's better than another. There's not one better than another. They all work together. They're all important. And so thirdly, he says, teaching. And this, of course, is very simple.

This is the spiritual gift of understanding correctly the Word of God. Explaining clearly the Word of God. And applying appropriately the Word of God.

This too is a gift for preachers. And not exclusively for preachers. For other members in the body of Christ. And used in many different contexts.

[38 : 53] Many different venues within the body of Christ. From Sunday school to other occasions. And, of course, the pulpit. And to be used whether it's to the youngest of our children or the oldest of our adults.

Paul says here, he who teaches in teaching. Now, what does he mean? Well, it just means do it. Just do it.

And do it with all deliberation. And do it with all devotion. Number four. Exhortation. Now, the Greek word here is very interesting. And we've run across this word a number of times.

It's periklesis. Periklesis, compound word. There's a preposition. Para means alongside. And the root word is kaleo.

And it means to call. To call. To call someone alongside. That's what an exhorter does. Or we might use the word encourager. That would be a proper translation.

[39:55] Some translations use that word. Exhortation. Encouragement. It's to call someone alongside. And there are those gifted in the church.

who have this gift of encouragement. Who say, come on. Join me in this devotion to Christ. Come on. Join with me.

Come alongside with me. In our love for Jesus. In our worship of Jesus. In our obedience to Jesus. In our serving of the Lord. Here in the church.

It's an encourager. Come on. You can do it. You can get involved. You can find great fulfillment. In your devotion to Christ.

Here. Number five. By the way. That paraklesis. Is very closely related to. Parakletos. Which Jesus. [40:47] Used to identify. The Holy Spirit. The one called alongside. Inside of us. Number five.

Giving. Now.

Need to quickly say. That all believers. Are commanded. To give willfully. And generously. We're all commanded to give. But that's not the same. As a spiritual gift. There are those.

Within the body of Christ. And I assure you. There are those. Right here. In this body. Who have the gift of giving. Doesn't mean. That they're wealthy. Necessarily.

Though the one. With the gift of giving. Might also be. A person of means. But it's not. Not necessary. It just means. They have this spiritual gift. To give. They see a need.

And they give. And they do it. Willfully. And lovingly. And. And they're gifted. To do this. And Paul says. They are to give. With liberality.

[41:43] That's how it's translated here. In the New King James. Where the word actually means. With singleness of mind. Where. Those who have the gift of giving. Are to give. With a mental honesty.

Not giving. For self praise. Or. Because they. Might get something. Out of it. Or any such thing. They give. Most of the time. Many times. Anonymously.

Because they do not want any praise. And so. They give. With this singleness of mind. Because. They see a need. And God has said. You give. And they give. Number six.

Leadership. Paul says. He who leads. With diligence. To lead with diligence. Word. Lead. Literally means.

Something that. Gives most people. The heebie-jeebies. Is that a word? It means. To stand. Before.

[42:39] Others. To stand. Before them. Just like I'm. Doing here. But it's not. Talking about. Or. Or just. Simply. Specifying. A leader. Who stands up. In front of people.

It's talking about. Someone who's able. To lead. And to. To rally. People. And to. It includes. Also. I think. Gifts of administration. And other things. Like that.

But it means. To stand before the people. A spiritual gift. Of leadership. Is the ability. To lead a group of people. In a very positive way. In a very productive way. In a way. That's scriptural.

Of course. In a way. That edifies. And builds up. And does not tear down. The body. Of Christ. And so. Those who have this gift. Should exercise it. With the desire.

For excellence. Effectiveness. Finally. Number seven. Mercy. Mercy. A lot of people want the gift of prophecy.

[43:33] But they do not want the gift of mercy. Mercy. But if you have it. You want it. See the gift of mercy. Includes. Those.

Or. Or. It's given to those. Who have the gift. The ability. To reach out. To others. In the body of Christ.

Who are hurting. Whether it's physical. Or emotional. Or spiritual. Hurting. Or whatever it may be. Just. Simply a gift of mercy.

To show. Mercy. Whether it's. Inside the church. Or. At the homes. Of. Of. The members of the church. In the hospital. Or wherever it may be.

The person with this gift. Is compelled. To do this. I mean. They. They just love it. To show mercy. To those who are hurting. And.

[44 : 28] Paul adds. This kind of qualification. Do this cheerfully. Cheerfully. The word. Cheerfully. Uh. Cheerfully. Literally means. With a smile on your face.

Now. Don't make too much of that. There are times. When you are. Going. To. Show mercy. To someone who's hurting. Where a smile on the face. Is maybe not appropriate.

Where you go and connect with them. And you weep. With those who weep. And grieve. With those who grieve. And you. Identify with them. And you. You just surround them. With your love.

Maybe sometimes. Just simply a. Hug. Just to hold on to them. Say I'm with you. And. You know. To suggest to them. You have it. In you.

To do this. And to make it. To show mercy. Now. I am. Out of time. But I do need to mention.

[45 : 25] One more thing. And that is. The examination. There needs to be. An examination. What is your gift?

I don't know. I know about some. Because I think. The spiritual gifts. True spiritual gifts. Are observable. And. Confirmed. By the body of Christ. But ask yourself.

Examine yourself. What is your gift? What is it? Your spiritual gift. How do you discover. Your spiritual gift? Well. Let me give you. Five steps.

Very quickly. And I'm not going to. Elaborate on these. Just to give them to you. And they all start. With the letter E. First. Explore. If you don't know.

What your spiritual gift is. Explore. The possibility. How do you do that? God's word. Study. God's word.

[46 : 25] On the subject. That's where you need to go first. And with that. Of course. Prayer is involved in that. As you study. And search. The scriptures.

Examine. All the possibilities. Given to you. In the Bible. I think it's also good. To read some. Good books. Biblically based books. On the subject. Of spiritual.

Gifts. So. Explore. Number two. Experiment. Experiment. Experiment. Really? Yeah. Experiment with some of the gifts.

If you don't know what yours is. Try some of them out. I think you might find out real quickly. Those that are not your gift. Those that are not.

But don't say on the front of you. That's just not my gift. You never tried it. And usually those who say. That's not my gift. Don't really know what their gift is. Experiment with it.

[47 : 22] Number three, examine. Examine how you feel when you do them. God grants confirmation in our emotions, our feelings, our thoughts.

You know, we don't just operate according to cold facts. We're emotional people. God has mates like that. And so when you are using your gift or exercising a gift, you're trying this one out or that one, then examine what kind of confirmation you have in your heart about it.

I think you ought to examine it in prayer first and foremost. God, what about this? I've been asked to be a worker, to be an assistant to one of our Sunday school teachers.

And I said yes because they really don't know what my spiritual gift is. I thought I might just say yes to that. And so now, what about that God? What kind of confirmation does God give you in your heart?

Number four, evaluate. Evaluate your effectiveness using that gift. What were the results?

[48 : 41] Was it a disaster? I don't think that would be the case, surely. But you can evaluate the results. They are observable. And then last, expect.

Expect. That's the last word. Expect confirmation. Not only from the Lord. First and foremost from Him. He will confirm. I mean, He gave you the gift in the first place.

And He will confirm that. But also, confirmation from the body of Christ. Sometimes you have to be careful.

Make sure you get God's confirmation first. Because the confirmation from the body of Christ may or may not be true. You know, somebody will come up and say, you know, that was really. You just. You're just a teacher.

You're a gifted teacher. And maybe you're not. You know, they're just being kind. You know. Or whatever area of service or gift you may exercise. But there is confirmation.

[49 : 43] God does use the church to confirm the spiritual gift. So what is your spiritual gift?

Examine. Discover it. And use it. And that's the next question.

Last question. What are you doing with your spiritual gift? What are you doing with it? Are you using it? Are you? You know, suppose everyone in the church was just like you. What kind of church would we have? I'm not trying to be mean. But I think that's a good self-examination kind of question. What kind of church would we have? What would be the health of our church? If every member was just like you in this matter of spiritual giftedness. A healthy church is one that is made up of healthy Christians. Plain and simple. Who honestly and humbly evaluate their spiritual giftedness. Who faithfully cooperate with others in the body of Christ. [50 : 51] And who individually, for the benefit of all, participate with their spiritual giftedness. That's a healthy church.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.