

Prayer:

Slide # 1

Romans

Theme: The Righteousness of God – The Gospel of God

Outline:

- **Prologue:** 1:1-17
- **Doctrinal:** 1:18-8:39
God’s holiness – man’s sinfulness – 1:18-3:20
Justification by grace through faith – 3:21-5:21
Sanctification of the believer – 6:1-8:39
- **Dispensational:** 9:1-11:36 (The place of Israel and the church)
- **Practical: 12:1-15:33** (Duties and privileges of the believer)
- **Epilogue:** 16:1-27

In Roman Paul presents the truth that we are made righteous before God on the basis of faith alone. But he also emphasizes that a saving faith is a life changing faith. The great challenge for us as Christians is to live consistently with who we now are in Christ.

Paul after laying the doctrinal foundation in Romans 1-11, then in chapters 12-15 makes practical application.

Slide # 2

all to disobedience (Factually) – Rom. 11:32
mercy on all (Provisionally) – Rom. 11:32
stand by faith (Differentially) – Rom. 11:20

How shall we then live?

a living sacrifice – Rom. 12:1-2

Because of the mercies (kindnesses) of God resulting in our salvation it is now our reasonable spiritual service to lay down our lives in devotion to God as a living sacrifice. This is our calling as believers. This is how we should then live.

But how do we actually do this? Paul now answers this question at length as seen in Romans 12-15. And where he begins is with body life and gift use. To truly live out your life as a living sacrifice means you are living consistently for God's purposes and not your own. And what God is doing in the world today is building His church.

What this means is that to really live the life of being a living sacrifice means we sacrificially give ourselves to the building up of the body of Christ and that involves using the gift or gifts that God has given to us.

Make this connection:

Slide # 3

A living sacrifice → body life/gift use

“One cannot be Christlike alone.” – Alan Johnson

God designed us to function in concert with other believers. That is the whole idea of the church. We are not called to be lone rangers Christians. We can't function properly that way. We certainly do not fulfill God's intended purpose for us in isolation.

In a healthy body all the parts function harmoniously and interdependently for the good of the whole body. So should it be in the church, which is the body of Christ. **-F.F. Bruce**

We saw last week in conjunction with being a living sacrifice that we are to be transformed by the renewing of our mind (Rom. 12:2). The mind is the control center of the body. We commit our bodies to being a living sacrifice to God but that flows out of a renewed mind.

Christianity is a “thinking” faith. It vitally involves the mind starting with the knowledge of the truth. But then it is vitally involved in Christian living. In Romans 12:3 (in the Greek) four times Paul refers to “thinking” which is to govern how we live and serve. This flows out of what he has just said regarding having our minds renewed in verse 2. So between verses 2 and 3 there is a tremendous emphasis on the mind/thinking.

Slide # 4

v. 2 – “renewing of your **mind**”

- v. 3 – not to **think** of himself more highly
- v. 3 – than he ought to **think**
- v. 3 – but to **think** soberly

This idea of thinking controls the whole section we are studying today.

Slide # 5

Right Thinking – Romans 12:3-8

Right thinking about ourselves – v. 3

Right thinking about our relationship to fellow believers – vv. 4-5

Right thinking about gift use – vv. 6-8

So as a living sacrifice who is being transformed by the renewing of your mind, how should you now think in terms of body life and gift use? That is where Paul now goes.

Romans 12:3–8 (NKJV)

3 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.

The word “For” builds on what he has just said regarding being a living sacrifice. And the instruction he gives is through the grace given to him as an apostle. For Paul all is of GRACE. Salvation is by grace. Service is by grace. The message given to us is of grace.

Grace means unmerited favor – the unmerited favor of God. Paul was graced by God to be an apostle and to give forth New Covenant revelation – not only in terms of how to be saved, but then also in terms of how we should live after we are saved (cf. Rom. 1:5; 15:15). And this is what he is now dealing with.

As those who have known the mercies of God in salvation Paul now shares how we should then THINK and SERVE.

Note this exhortation is addressed “to everyone who is among you” – in other words to all the believers in the fellowship. And the very FIRST thing he addresses is the issue of PRIDE saying to “everyone” - “not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think”.

Pride is the besetting sin of mankind!

Once we are saved, we do have a different relationship with sin as it now has no controlling authority over us, but we also still have the flesh and therefore we still battle with sin including the issue of PRIDE.

Being a living sacrifice and serving God go together. But in the context of serving PRIDE often rears its ugly head. Pride thinks too much of self. It puts self too high. It runs ahead of God and actually thinks independently of God. Pride thinks independent of God in that it thinks too highly of self, whereas humility is completely dependent upon God. Pride gives credit to self- humility gives glory to God. Pride has self at center – humility focuses on God and others.

There is such a great danger with pride that Paul is very clear that a new believer should not be put into a position of leadership because of it.

Slide # 6

1 Timothy 3:6 (NKJV)

6 not a novice, lest being **puffed up with pride** he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.

Paul is here making an application. As the devil fell from his exalted position because of pride so also this can happen if a believer is put into the exalted position of leadership before they are ready for it. I have seen leaders fall because of PRIDE and it isn't pretty.

But this is a struggle for everyone, including mature leaders. Even the apostle Paul (as spiritual as he was) needed to have a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble.

Slide # 7

2 Corinthians 12:7 (NKJV)

7 And **lest I should be exalted above measure** by the abundance of the revelations, **a thorn in the flesh was given to me**, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, **lest I be exalted above measure**.

Think about being humble in the context of having your mind constantly renewed. This happens through the Word. Way back in Deuteronomy before Israel ever had a king, Moses gave this prescription to keep the king humble.

Slide # 8**Deuteronomy 17:18–20 (NKJV)**

18 “Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself **a copy of this law in a book**, from the one before the priests, the Levites.

19 And it shall be with him, and he shall **read it all the days of his life**, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes,

20 **that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren**, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.

Even as mature Christians we constantly need the humbling we find in the Word of God. We constantly fight the battle of PRIDE in one form or another. Even people that think they are humble can be proud of it and it often expresses itself in the form of a “humble brag” which is contradiction.

Three times in Romans 11 Paul warned against pride (Rom. 11:18, 20, 25). He mentions it again here in 12:3, implies it in 12:10, and then directly addresses it in 12:16. Pride is an underlying concern in Romans 14 (cf. v. 4 & 10). So, Paul repeatedly addresses this issue of PRIDE because it so easily comes to the surface in our lives and it is so destructive. It is a KILLER in the context of body life.

Nothing causes more damage in a local church than a believer who overrates himself and tries to perform a ministry that he cannot do.

– **Warren Wiersbe**

There is no less important person than the self-important person.

And it can be very serious. Remember Korah in the OT. He got to thinking so highly of himself that he wanted to take over the role of Moses. Well, God buried that self-important person alive as a proverbial warning to all (cf. Num. 16).

Instead of thinking too highly of self, Paul says we should think “soberly”. To think “soberly” is to exercise “sound judgment”. It is to think sensibly in terms of making a realistic assessment of my place in the body in keeping with my giftedness.

And this starts with the realization that I am a God-made person. “**God has dealt to each one a measure of faith**”. Whatever giftedness we have – whatever our position in the body, it is nothing for SELF to brag about. We are simply where we are because God has put us here. There are no self-made people in the great work that God is doing. As Paul told the Corinthians, “What do you have that you didn’t receive?” (1 Cor. 4:7). We have not earned our place – but rather by GRACE we have been placed where we are.

As Paul Washer put it at a conference I attended in 2021, “There is no such thing as a great man of God, only weak, pitiful, faithless men of a great and merciful God.” I was so deeply convicted as he preached about Christ that night. I walked away with a deep stirring in my heart to think of my role in the body of Christ in a renewed way. We are not that impressive. God is. He does great things not because of us but in spite of us. – **Costi Hinn**

Yes, it’s not about us – it’s all about HIM! This is thinking soberly. And sound thinking realizes I am not the only gifted person around – rather God has gifted every one of His children – He has “dealt to each one a measure of faith”.

There are two great errors a person can make. We can exaggerate our importance or we can deprecate ourselves. Both are serious errors. On the one hand we are not to think too highly of ourselves but proper spiritual thinking also realizes God has gifted every person – He has given to every person a measure of faith. Therefore, all are important. All have a God-ordained role to play.

In context the “measure of faith” is not talking about saving faith. Every believer has the same saving faith (cf. Eph. 4:5) and so there is no difference of proportion in that reality. In context here Paul is talking about what we might call “serving faith”. If God gifts you for a certain role He also equips you with the faith to do it.

So “measure of faith” here in context relates to degree of giftedness. God has gifted every believer and proportionally He has given to each one a measure of faith for serving Him in that role.

To think soberly is to think humbly – it’s not about us. To think soberly is to think in terms of the whole body in which all are gifted by God. To think soberly is to think properly about my role in relation to the whole body.

Paul further explains...

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

Note the analogy. In our physical bodies we have many members and yet one single body. And as being a part of the one body the various members of the body have differing functions. My teeth do not serve the same function as my fingers. I taste with my mouth but I hear with my ears but I am glad I have both! They all contribute to the body but in different ways.

When I was in college I broke my leg, and the rest of my body felt so bad that it stayed up all night to keep my leg company.

– **R. Kent Hughes**

And so it is in the body of Christ.

Note the emphasis:

Slide # 9

many members in one body
being many, are one body in Christ
individually members of one another

What Paul is emphasizing is that proper sound spiritual thinking – thinks in terms of WE and not just ME! We are all in this thing together! God designed us to function as a team.

Yes, a good quarterback can make a great difference, but he is nothing without blockers. He is nothing without guys who can catch the ball. It is a team effort that makes a winner. And so it is in the body of Christ. It's all about functioning together as a team!

There is one body with many members and each one of those members has a different function. Each part is important. Each role serves a vital purpose in the overall scheme of things.

Slide # 10

The point is that each member functions to serve the body, not the body to serve the members. – ***The Bible Knowledge Commentary***

How true that is! Sometimes people think the body is here for them. They have the mentality, “What have you done for me lately?” Such people are always critical and never happy because they think everyone is here to serve them. Our great purpose in life is THEM! In truth we are all here to serve each other and we should have the mentality of “It’s not about me. What can I do to serve the good of the body?” That is humble/sober thinking!

We should also bear in mind that “members” has no meaning apart from the body; one cannot be a “member” of nothing. – ***Leon Morris***

Amazingly there are MANY professing Christians who practically want very little if anything to do with the BODY of Christ and yet they claim to be Christian. They claim to love Jesus but want nothing to do with His people. That kind of profession is very suspect! Here is what the Bible says...

Slide # 11

1 John 3:14 (NKJV)

14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.

Love of the brethren? Many professing Christians don’t even know the brethren – let alone love them. Instead of asking professing Christians who want nothing to do with the Church, instead of asking them, “***Do you believe in Jesus?***” – I like to ask them, “***Do you love the brethren?***” I have found that to be a stumper. They seem to not even realize what I am asking! The Bible says that faith works through love (Gal. 5:6).

In coming to put our faith in Jesus we find instantly that we have a whole new family – the family of God called the Church. And we don’t have to read very far and we find that our new calling is to be vitally involved in the building up of this forever family of God. This is what it means to practically live out being a living sacrifice for God – we live to further what He is doing in the world – which is building His Church.

Now I know there are many Christians who are too busy and they are doing more important things (sarcasm), but may I be so bold as to say they are not living out being a living sacrifice. They are wasting the one life God has given them. They are wasting it on SELF!

I don't think you can be a living sacrifice without being very committed to serving the body of Christ.

Okay, so you are a professing believer. Have you presented yourself to God as a living sacrifice? Are you vitally involved in serving the body? That is the connection Paul makes! That is the connection here in the context of Romans 12. Being a living sacrifice (which is our reasonable service) expresses itself in the service of body life. Living for self in isolation to the body is not being a living sacrifice. DO NOT BE DECEIVED!

Slide # 12

Hebrews 10:24–25 (NKJV)

24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,

25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Do you see the Day approaching? What should we as God's people be doing? Be vitally involved in body life! As the days grow darker and darker, as the Bible says they will become, we need each other all the more.

6 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;

Paul here assumes all believers are gifted as seen earlier in verse 3 where he said God has "dealt to each one a measure of faith". We don't all have the same gift. We are all gifted differently. Even those who have some of the same category of giftedness are still different. For example, no two teachers are exactly alike. They both teach. They both are gifted. And yet there are distinctions between them.

We are like fingerprints. Fingerprints are all fingerprints but no two sets are exactly alike. The same with snowflakes – no two are exactly alike.

The point is we are all gifted but in differing ways in accordance with the grace that has been given to us.

Some count as many as 19 or 20 spiritual gifts that Paul lists in the New Testament. However, none of the lists are exactly alike leading us to believe that what Paul gives are representative lists and not an exhaustive list (cf. Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:28-30; Eph. 4:11; 1 Pet. 4:10-11).

Slide # 13

**Biblical Lists of Spiritual Gifts
(sorted by type)**

	Rom 12:6-8	1 Cor 12:8-10	1 Cor 12:28	1 Cor 12: 29-30	Eph 4:11	1 Pet 4:11
Speaking	prophecy teaching exhortation	word of wisdom word of knowledge prophecy	prophets teachers	prophets teachers	prophets pastor-teachers evangelists	speaking
Serving	ministry giving ruling Mercy	discerning of spirits faith	governments helps			ministry
Sign		healing miracles tongues interpretation	apostles gifts of healing miracles tongues	apostles healing miracles tongues interpretation	apostles	

The word “gift” is a translation of the Greek word charisma which has as its root word the word “charis” which means “grace”. Therefore, a spiritual gift is really a grace gift as it is bestowed by the grace of God.

Slide # 14

Gift = (Gk. *charisma*) from the word “*charis*” (grace).

Hence spiritual **gifts** are “**grace-gifts**” bestowed by God.

And what are spiritual gifts for – they are for USING! Paul says, “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them”. That is the point – they are to be used. In fact, Peter emphasizes that we are accountable for using them.

Slide # 15**1 Peter 4:10–11 (NKJV)**

10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Peter also emphasizes that each one is gifted in one form or another. There are no exceptions. And gifts are given for ministering to “one another”. They are given for the building up of the body. They are not given for the building up of SELF but of the BODY.

And Peter points out that we are stewards of these grace-gifts. He exhorts us to be good stewards whether it be in relation to speaking or serving – whatever our giftedness may be.

The idea of a stewardship is that we are responsible to the One Who gave us this stewardship responsibility and will one day have to give an account to Him for what we did with this giftedness. The exhortation is to be good stewards of the grace-gifts that He has given to us.

Paul then in verses 6-8 mentions seven specific gifts beginning with the gift of prophecy. The gift of prophecy was operative in the early church prior to the completion of the New Testament canon.

Realize that in the early days of the church New Testament revelation was just being given out. The Church needs New Covenant truth to function properly but if they did not have the NT Scriptures they were at a loss. To make up for this God gave to the churches New Testament prophets who gave forth New Testament truth.

Today, I say, “Let us turn in our Bibles to New Testament truth” and it is all there – the whole counsel of God. All that God has given us is there. The Bible is complete. But in the early church they could not do that. They did not have the New Testament. Instead, they had gifted prophets who gave forth New Testament truth in the form of prophecy.

Prophets in the Bible gave forth inspired truth from God. It was not their own ideas – but rather a direct inspired message from God.

Slide # 16**2 Peter 1:20–21 (NKJV)**

20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,

21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but **holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.**

Prophecy in the Bible is always a direct revelation from God. Prophecy is different from preaching or teaching. It was “***Thus saith Lord***” – a message directly from God. It could involve either foretelling or forthtelling. The NT prophets for the most part had a ministry of “forthtelling” the giving forth of NT truth.

Note Paul did not start out here in Romans 12:6 by listing apostles even though he started the letter by emphasizing his calling as an apostle (Rom. 1:1, 5). In 1 Cor. 12:28 Paul lists apostles FIRST as having the highest rank of giftedness in the church and prophets as secondary.

The reason for Paul starting out with prophecy in Romans 12:6 is probably because they had no apostolic ministry on the scene in Rome (cf. Rom. 15:20), but they did have the gift of prophecy represented. The apostles and prophets are both named as having a foundational ministry in the church as seen in the fact that they gave forth New Testament revelation which the church then builds on going forward.

Slide # 17**Ephesians 3:5 (NKJV)**

5 which in **other ages was not made known** to the sons of men, as it has **now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:**

The apostles had more of an abiding and universal ministry. As Christ indicated in John 16:13 when the Spirit came He would guide the apostles into ALL THE TRUTH. In one form or another, all NT truth was channeled through the apostles including in some cases through their close associates called prophets. The NT apostles and prophets were contemporaries serving alongside each other.

There was a distinction between the apostles and prophets. As already mentioned, the apostles were primary and the prophets were secondary.

The apostles were personally appointed by Christ and they spoke as His authoritative representatives as an established reality. In contrast the prophets were to be tested and their words weighed (cf. 1 Cor. 14:29; 1 Thess. 5:21; 1 Jn. 4:1).

Slide # 18

1 John 4:1 (NKJV)

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, **but test the spirits**, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

1 John 4:6 (NKJV)

6 **We [apostles] are of God.** He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. **By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.**

The words of the prophets were measured by the authoritative message of the apostles. The apostles had a universal ministry while the prophets had a localized (local church) ministry.

But note the gift of prophecy was still operative when Paul wrote to the church in Rome in about AD 57. And so he adds this qualifier: ***“let us prophesy in proportion to our faith”***. This translation is not the best. You see the Greek has the definite article in front of faith so it more literally reads “the faith”.

Slide # 19

Romans 12:6 (LSB)

6 but having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: whether prophecy, **in agreement with the faith;**

One’s “prophesying” is to be done **in proportion to his faith**; a better translation would be “in agreement to the (not ‘his’) faith.”

– ***The Bible Knowledge Commentary***

Those who prophesy are to do so in proportion to the faith. They are not to go beyond the standard of revealed truth as given through the apostles. So even though they did not have NT bibles they did have the apostles on the scene. Everything was to line up with “the apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42).

Even in the early church there was not a “free for all” of all kinds of new revelation going every direction. No even then there was a standard and prophecy being given was to conform with previous revelation as confirmed by the apostles.

This was understood even in the early church.

Slide # 20

Jude 3 (NKJV)

3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for **the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.**

Jude 17 (NKJV)

17 But you, beloved, **remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles** of our Lord Jesus Christ:

If you study the writings of Paul, you will find that he constantly grounded all that he was saying in already established revelation that was previously given. For example, here the book of Romans Paul at least 15 times says, “***as it is written***” or a similar statement. The Bible does this all the way through. Revelation was progressive and new revelation built on what was already given to show that it lined up with already established truth.

Slide # 21

Acts 26:22 (NKJV)

22 Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, **saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come—**

Even in establishing the new truth of the Church Paul constantly goes back to the OT to show that it is consistent with what God says regarding the inclusion of the Gentiles. We see this extensively in Romans 15.

Note that although the gift of prophecy was operative in the early days of the church – that is during the apostolic age, the Bible is now completed. There is no more prophecy being given forth. Only false prophets claim to have a prophetic message from God (cf. Rev. 2:2).

I have heard far too many self-proclaimed prophets stand on stages or at the altar and tell people things like this: *“I feel like God told me that there is something going on in your life that is very difficult, and I am here to tell you that a breakthrough is coming.”* This is not prophecy. Prophecy is specific, providing details and instructions that come directly from God.

When I was younger I had numerous prophetic words spoken over me that were wildly inaccurate but sounded amazing at the time. One man who claimed to be a prophet spoke as though he were speaking the words of God, saying, *“I, the Lord, declare over you, Costi, that you will take over your father’s church in Vancouver, Canada, and take it to heights never seen before.”* He was weeping uncontrollably while several others laid their hands on me. In another event, a well-known person whom at the time I’d held to be equally as prophetic prophesied that I was next in line for what was often called the “anointed mantle” of my uncle Benny Hinn....

I have been prayed over and prophesied over by countless men and women, including Oral Roberts, Paul Crouch, Benny Hinn, Kim Clement, and a host of others, yet no one ever mentioned in their prophesies my becoming a pastor in Phoenix, Arizona or gave even the slightest hint about desert sand. ...

“Fallible” prophecy has become popularized in today’s world because so many people are starting online ministries and claiming to be prophets. Furthermore, schools like the Bethel Supernatural School of Ministry in Redding California, offer training for people to become prophets.

There is no need to train to be a prophet or learn how to use your prophetic gift, if you have it, because prophecy, according to Scripture, is simple: God speaks directly to someone with undeniable clarity and power, then the prophet declares the undeniable truth that God revealed with pinpoint accuracy and calls God’s people to heed the word of the Lord. The true prophet is never wrong, never misses, and never sees a prophecy not come to pass. – **Costi Hinn** in his book ***Knowing the Spirit*** – pp. 143-144.

Slide # 22

With the completion of the last book of the New Testament, the gift of prophecy became obsolete. A severe penalty is pronounced on anyone who attempts to add to the prophecies of the Apocalypse (Rev. 22:18). Since the Book of Revelation covers events occurring from the time John wrote it until the eternal state, any alleged prophecy subsequent to the Book of Revelation is counterfeit.

The canon of the New Testament is God's completed revelation for the body of Christ. – **Robert Thomas**

7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching;

Ministry here is often translated as “service”. It is the same Greek word from which we get the word “deacon” which means “servant”. It is a general word referring to all manner of service (cf. 1 Cor. 12:5).

The ability to do lowly service well is a gift. Many quite brilliant people seem constitutionally unable to perform lowly service well. There is a lot of lowly service to be done, and anyone who has the gift of doing it should rejoice at the wonder of divine grace. – **Leon Morris**

Those gifted in teaching have the ability to communicate clearly and help others to see what is being taught in the Word. Wanting to teach is not to be confused with being gifted in teaching. Some who put themselves forth as teachers are too “smart” to be effective. They talk over everyone's head. That is not profitable. I have seen this consistently. When commentators aren't clear on things they throw words – lots of words at the subject. This generally is not helpful. Give me a teacher who can plainly and succinctly make the issue clear! This is the gifted teacher!

8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

The gift of “exhortation” (Gk. *paraklesis*) is the gift of encouragement! It can have the nuance of comforting or exhortation. Some people are gifted in the area of encouragement and some people are not. If people are down and out, weak and discouraged - the need is for encouragement. Some are especially gifted here and consistently refresh and encourage the soul.

There was a man named “Joseph” in the book of Acts whom the apostles nicknamed “Barnabas”. The name Barnabas means “son of encouragement” (cf. Acts 4:36). What a blessing are the gifted Barnabas's in the body of Christ. Their gift is invaluable!

As a young man I heard Howard Hendricks (the beloved prof from Dallas Seminary) say that when you are down and out there are some people you wouldn't walk across the street to see, but there are others you would drive across the country to see. How true!

Praise God for Barnabas' who have the gift of encouragement! We all need encouragement! Thank God for this special gift!

The gift of giving focuses on the needs of others. There are some people who are "givers". They give of their resources, their time, their attention. They are other centered and not self-centered. They want to help and do what they can in almost any given situation.

Paul says those with the gift of giving should do so with "liberality". The Greek word behind this can actually have two different nuances.

Slide # 23

Greek (haplotes) – NKJV "liberality"

Generously (2 Cor. 8:2; 9:11-13)

or

Simplicity (singleness of heart – 2 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22)

The idea of simplicity is to give free of ulterior motives (cf. 2 Cor. 8:2; 9:11, 13; 11:3; Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22). This person is not looking for recognition or payback. They simply want to give out of sincerity.

The gift of leadership. The word "lead" means "to stand before". It is to take the lead and provide guidance (cf. 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:4, 5; 5:17). But it can also have the sense of "to care for".

Slide # 24

Greek (proistemi) – NKJV "leads"

To lead

or

To care for

This combination of leading and caring for is seen in the idea of shepherding people. The shepherd leads but he also cares for those he is leading. The emphasis in this word is on pastoral care. In the NT this word is used in reference to leadership in the home (1 Tim. 3:4-5, 12) and in the church (1 Cor. 12:28; 1 Tim. 5:17).

Those gifted to serve in this way are to do so with diligence meaning that they should not be slack in it. They should be eager and responsible in ministering this gift.

Mercy is the idea of ministering compassion to those who are hurting. It administers sympathy to those in misery whether it be orphans, widows, foreigners, or the sick and dying. Those with this gift are to minister it with cheerfulness. Attitude matters.

A Christian lady once said, "When my mother became old and needed someone to care for her, my husband and I invited her to come and live with us. I did all I could to make her comfortable. I cooked for her, did her washing, took her out in the car, and generally cared for her needs. But while I was going through the motions outwardly, I was unhappy inside. Subconsciously I resented the interruption of our usual schedule. Sometimes my mother would say to me, "You never smile anymore. Why don't you ever smile?" You see, I was showing mercy, but I wasn't doing it with cheerfulness.

– **William MacDonald**

Someone has written: "If you come with sympathy to sorrow, bring God's sunlight in your face." (cf. Prov. 17:22)

Slide # 25
Romans 12:6-8

1. Prophecy
2. Ministry
3. Teaching
4. Exhortation
5. Giving
6. Leading
7. Mercy

There may well be overlap in how a person is gifted. For example encouraging and mercy may blend together; leading and teaching may blend together. As I said earlier I believe that each individual is totally unique in their giftedness and that no two people are gifted exactly alike in every regard – just as no two people are exactly the same. All of us are to live out the various graces related to the fruit of the Spirit, but at the same time we are all gifted differently having the ability to excel in certain areas of spiritual service.

In general Peter breaks the gifts down into two general categories, that of speaking and that of serving (1 Pet. 4:11). Every gift, in general, fits into one of these two categories.

Slide # 26

Stand by Faith (Rom. 11:20)

Living Sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2)

Body Life – Gift Use (Rom. 12:3-8)

So many people want to know what the WILL of God is and it turns out to be very simple and clearly spelled out in the word. God wants us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to Him and that most directly ties to our service and gift use in relation to the body of Christ. Sadly, so many Christians largely miss this reality!

The Lonely Ember. (Unknown Author)

A member of a certain church, who previously had been attending services regularly, stopped going. After a few weeks, the pastor decided to visit him. It was a chilly evening. The pastor found the man at home alone, sitting before a blazing fire. Guessing the reason for his pastor's visit, the man welcomed him, led him to a big chair near the fireplace and waited. The pastor made himself comfortable but said nothing. In the grave silence, he contemplated the play of the flames around the burning logs. After some minutes, the pastor took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to one side of the hearth all alone. Then he sat back in his chair, still silent. The host watched all this in quiet fascination. As the one lone ember's flame diminished, there was a momentary glow and then its fire was no more. Soon it was cold and "dead as a doornail." Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting. Just before the pastor was ready to leave, he picked up the cold, dead ember and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately it began to glow once more with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it. As the pastor reached the door to leave, his host said, "Thank you so much for your visit and especially for the fiery sermon. I shall be back in church next Sunday."

God help us to live the life of being a living sacrifice that demonstrates itself in faithful gift use in the context of body life. God help us to think soberly and then live accordingly! This is the will of God for God's people!