STEWARDSHIP OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS:

Healthy Church Life – Part 1

Romans 12:1-8

DQ: What are spiritual gifts?

A. Key Doctrine in the New Testament

1. Romans 12
2. Ephesians 4
3. 1 Corinthians 12-14
4. 1 Peter 4
5. Throughout the Book of Acts

B. Definition of Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual gifts are special abilities given differently to each one of us by the special grace of God through Christ and through the Holy Spirit that God uses to build up the Body of Christ. These special abilities include such things as these listed here in verses 6-8

vs. 6-8 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8 if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

Prophecy, service, teaching, encouragement, giving, leadership, mercy, evangelism, pastoring, hospitality, wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues

C. Paul’s Body Analogy

1. Used here in Romans 12 (but more developed in 1 Cor. 12)
Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.

DQ: What are some basic ideas/observations that we can glean from this passage?

D. Significance for Each of Us: We are stewards who will give an account

E. Significance for FBC: We need to use our gifts better to be what God wants us to be

THREE KEY STEPS: DISCOVER, DEVELOP, USE

I. HOW DO WE DISCOVER OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

A. What You Can Do For Yourself (Romans 12:1-8)

Romans 12:1-8  Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will. ¶ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.

1. Step One: Understand God Has a Plan for Your Life

2. Step Two: Present Yourself as a Living Sacrifice

3. Step Three: Be Renewed by Transforming Your Mind

4. Step Four: Think About Yourself Properly

5. Step Five: Serve God Constantly in Common Ways

6. Step Six: Look for the Validation of the Body of Christ
B. What You Can Do For Others

_Hebrews 10:24_ And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works

1. Think about them: “What are their spiritual gifts?”
2. Pray about them: “What are their spiritual gifts?”
3. Spur them on: “Use your spiritual gifts”
4. Encourage them: “I am so blessed by your spiritual gifts!”

_Hebrews 10:25_ Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

5. Tell them the truth: “Your spiritual gifts are in another place!”

II. **HOW SHOULD I DEVELOP MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS?**

1. Spiritual gifts do not come fully developed
2. The lesson of Paul’s advice to Timothy in several places is clear: you must develop your spiritual gifts to full maturity

_2 Timothy 1:6_ For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

_1 Timothy 4:14-16_ Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. 15 Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. 16 Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers

3. The work and effort and zeal involved is a large measure of the worship we give to God in using our gifts
4. It also is in complete harmony with God’s usual way of dealing with us... all things grow and develop

_DQ: How do we develop spiritual gifts?

A. USE THEM

B. STUDY THEM

1. Each gift ministry has its secrets of the trade...
2. Each ministry requires careful study
3. Prime example is Timothy’s gift of teaching
2 Timothy 2:15 *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

4. Other gifts also require careful study

   a. Those with the gift of administration still need to learn the best way to organize ministries and to lead people winsomely

   b. Those with the gift of giving still need to study the best way to earn money and the best way to give it away

   c. Those with the gift of hospitality would still need to study how to minister to people of different cultures, perhaps, or with different lavish display of welcome and greeting...they can learn from some women, perhaps, who have been making guests feel at home for decades

C. LISTEN TO OTHERS

1. We should submit our ministries to more skilled and more mature Christians who also have those same gifts

2. We should submit our ministries to the Body as a whole for help in discerning the best ways to grow

III. HOW SHOULD I USE MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

A. USE THEM CONSISTENTLY

*Romans 12:6-8* If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8 if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

1. The central point Paul is making about spiritual gifts is that we MUST use them

2. We need to get out there are trade with the talents that have been given to us

3. Think about the parable of the talents

*Matthew 25:15-18* To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16 The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. 17 So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. 18 But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

4. The basic idea is that spiritual gifts are given as a stewardship from God and He expects you to use them

5. There will come a time when He will ask for them back... WITH INTEREST

6. The extra is what you did with the gift while you had it
7. Use them knowing that it is only as each of us uses our gifts that the whole church can grow

B. USE THEM IN A FOCUSED WAY

1. Spiritual gifts should dictate the way you spend much of your ministry time
2. If your gift is teaching, you should TEACH
3. If your gift is encouraging, you should ENCOURAGE
4. The special gifting and calling of God in your life should be the majority of your ministry time

NOW, THIS DOESN’T MEAN YOU CAN’T ALSO DO THOSE THINGS ALL CHRISTIANS ARE COMMANDED TO DO

a. Everyone is commanded to be a witness for Christ... so no one should say “I do not have the gift of evangelism, so I won’t ever witness for Christ”
b. Every Christian has faith, but not all Christians have the “gift of faith”
c. Every Christian should give, but not all Christians have the gift of giving

C. USE THEM SKILLFULLY

1. Look at some of these words

Romans 12:6-9 If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8 if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. 9 Love must be sincere.

a. Prophecy: “let him use it in proportion to the faith”
b. Giving: “let him give generously”
c. Leadership: “let him govern diligently”
d. Mercy: “let him do it cheerfully”

D. USE THEM LOVINGLY

1. There should be a sense of lavish outpouring of these gifts, a sense that the Spirit is using you in a wonderful way to bless the Body of Christ
2. There should be a sense of unity in the Spiritual Gifts similar to that of the marital union between a husband and wife

Romans 12:5 in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.
a. “each member belongs to all the others” means that my gift of teaching/preaching really doesn’t belong to me alone, but to the church

b. Therefore, I can’t withhold it from the church, because it belongs to others

c. Paul spoke similarly about marriage and the physical union there is between the husband and wife

1 Corinthians 7:4-5  The wife’s body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband’s body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.  

 d. There is a common sharing of the spiritual gifts -YOUR GIFT BELONGS TO GOD WHO GAVE IT AND TO THE CHURCH FOR WHOM HE GAVE IT

e. We do not have the right to withhold it

IV. APPLICATION

A. Discover: Have You Discovered Your Spiritual Gifts?

1. Have you learned from example, from watching others, how spiritual gifts should function?

2. Have you followed the steps Paul gave in Romans 12 to discerning and approving God’s good, pleasing and perfect will for you?

3. Do you have a strong sense of what God is calling you to devote yourself to?

4. Have you submitted to the insights and guidance of the Body of Christ, of other Christians who can help you determine how God has gifted you?

5. If you haven’t discovered your gifts, are you involved in an array of ministries, serving in many different ways so that your gifts can be discovered?

B. Develop

1. If you know what your gifts are, are you studying them carefully to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who doesn’t need to be ashamed?

2. Are you fanning your gifts into a flame? Can people see your progress as a teacher or encourager or giver or leader or prayer warrior?

3. Are you developing your gifts to a honed, gleaming sharp edge so you can be maximally useful?

C. Use

1. The major thrust of Romans 12 is USE YOUR GIFTS!!! Don’t hide them in the ground like the lazy servant hid his talent!

2. If your gift is teaching, then TEACH... if your gift is serving, the SERVE... of your gift is giving, GIVE... if your gift is encouragement, ENCOURAGE