

# Abounding Grace Christian Church

## A Study through the Epistle to the Romans – Part 33

### I. Exposition of Chapter Twelve. (Continued)

#### A. Verses 3-8 - Living out Spiritual Gifts.

1. Verse 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.

- a. “...through the grace given to me...” – Here we find the word “grace” used to refer to ministry gifting. Paul is alluding to the fact that his apostleship was a “grace” given to him. It was this grace gifting of a being an apostle that gave him the authority to speak what he was about to say.

“Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning:...” – NLT.

- b. “...to everyone who is among you...” – Paul is making it clear that this is a message for every believer.
- c. “...not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly...”  
Remember we saw in **verse 2** the necessity of renewing our minds. Now he explicitly warns every believer about an important way **NOT** to think. Paul is about to write about spiritual gifts but before he does, he warns about pride which often arises in people who see themselves as gifted. (cf. **Philippians 2:1-4**).
- d. Pride is Dangerous!!
  - 1) Pride originated with Satan. **Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:11-19.**
  - 2) Pride is part of the world’s system. **I John 2:15-16.**
  - 3) Pride can cause a hardened mind. **Daniel 5:17-20.** “...But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride...” (verse 20).
    - Pride then, causes a person not to think right. It messes up the mind. A person lifted up with pride is blind.
  - 4) Pride is Deception. When you’re in pride, you don’t see yourself, others, or God in the right perspective. **Jeremiah 43:1-2; 49:16.** **Pride is the beginning of further deception!!!**
  - 5) Pride leads to Destruction. **Proverbs 16:18; “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” (Example: Acts 12:20-23.)**
  - 6) Pride leads to strife. **Proverbs 28:25; Proverbs 13:10. (Example: Numbers 16:1-33)**
- e. We should always remember that spiritual giftedness does not equal spiritual maturity; just because a person is gifted does not mean that they are necessarily spiritually mature or a worthy example to imitate. (Example: **The Corinthian Church – I Corinthians 1:7; 3:1-3; 12:1-11**)
- f. “...as God has dealt to each a measure of faith.” – This idea of faith is also mentioned in **verse 6**. In the context it seems to mean that we receive various giftings from God by faith and operate them by faith. This again, eliminates any notion of earning them and, therefore, having any pride about it.

#### B. Verses 4-5 - Unity and diversity in the body of Christ.

1. “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.”
  - a. The Church is often described as a Body. **I Corinthians 10:17; 12:12, 27; Ephesians 4:12; 5:23, 30; Colossians 1:24.**
  - b. Just like the human body has many members with different functions, so does the church. The word “function” also means; “activity and/or responsibility” and “task”.<sup>1</sup>
  - c. As individual members we are “deficient by design.”

“The only way the local church can be successful is for us to first recognize that we are individually deficient by design, then to honor and respect the gifts He’s given others, and finally to use them together – in partnership and teamwork – for the building up of the Kingdom.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 510.

<sup>2</sup>Tony Cooke, *In Search of Timothy* (Rhema Bible Church, 2005), 47.

C. Verses 6-8 – Seven functions within the Body. (Certainly not an all-inclusive list. Cf. I Corinthians 12:1-11, 28; Ephesians 4:11.)

1. Verse 6 – **“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us let us use them...”**  
– Having different gifts doesn’t mean that some are better than others. All are important and need to function in the Body of Christ. It’s all according to His grace.
2. **“...if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith...”** – The word **“prophecy”** means;
  - a. **“To speak by inspiration in the form of prediction or simple discourse.”; “Discourse emanating from Divine inspiration and declaring the purposes of God.”<sup>3</sup>**
  - b. **“The speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God. The declaration of that which cannot be known by natural means.”** – W.E. Vines Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words.
  - c. **“The spontaneous, supernatural vocal expression of inspiration in a known language which strengthens, encourages, and comforts the Body of Christ. It is a direct message from God to a particular person or group of people.”** (cf. I Corinthians 14:3)
2. Verse 7 – **“...or ministry, let us use it in our ministering...”** –
  - a. The ministry of **“Practical Service”** seems similar to the Ministry of Helps mentioned in **I Corinthians 12:28.**
  - b. The word **“helps”** means; **“to take or seize hold together against”.**
  - c. Example: The miracle of the feeding of the 5000 could never have occurred without the ministry of **“helps”** or ministry of **“practical service”**. **Mark 6:37-44.**
    - 1) They organized the masses of the people.
    - 2) They guided them where to sit.
    - 3) They distributed the food as Jesus directed.
    - 4) They picked up the leftovers.
3. **Teaching** – **“...he who teaches, to his teaching...”**
4. **Verse 8 - Exhorter** – This word has the idea of **“to call near”**. **“to console”**; **“to encourage”**. It’s defined as **“The Spirit-given ability to come alongside to help, to strengthen the weak, steady the faltering and encourage the discouraged.”** Also means; **“to refresh”** or **“cheer up”**.
5. **Giver** – **“...he who contributes, let him do it in simplicity and liberality...”** This is the Spirit-given ability to give in extraordinary ways of finances and possessions in order to minister to the needs of people.
6. **Leader** – **“...he who gives aid and superintends, with zeal and singleness of mind...”**
7. **Shower of Mercy** – **“...he who does acts of mercy, with genuine cheerfulness and joyful eagerness...”**

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<sup>3</sup>Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*