

# The Romans 12 Gifts

**Romans 12:4-8 KJV** 4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6 Having then gifts (charisma) differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

**Again, everyone has received a gift:**

**1 Peter 4:10 KJV** 10 As every man hath received the gift (charisma), [even so] minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

These are seven gifts we are to use. We are instructed specifically on how to use them based on what they are (with cheerfulness, with simplicity, etc). Note the difference between the manifestation gifts and these ones. The gifts in Romans could be mistaken for skill or talents, while the supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12 most certainly could not. Make no mistake though; the seven items listed in Romans are most certainly gifts from God. In verse 6 we are described as “having” these gifts. These are gifts God has given us to use in the body of Christ. Additionally, because these gifts are always in us, it makes sense that they would naturally influence all areas of our lives.

Verses 4 and 5 would seem to indicate that these gifts make up our office (meaning function) within one Body. These gifts are our “functions.” Because these gifts are our functions, we will gravitate towards operating in them without even realizing it. A hand will naturally be a hand and an eye will naturally be an eye. We will be most effective when using our function within the Body that God has fit together. The more effective we are, the more joy and encouragement we will get from serving in God’s church. Consistently operating outside of our gifts can lead to frustration.

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Identifying these gifts within the church is a valuable exercise for many reasons.

- 1. Operating in our function is beneficial to our joy and fruitfulness. Knowing our gifts makes us aware of what we naturally do best.**

These gifts are our actual function. Would God give you a function and expect you not to use it? They are a part of who we are, our design. They motivate us and equip us to carry out the God-placed desires of our heart.

- 2. We view ministry through the lens of our gift. Knowing this helps us understand others and ourselves.**

If someone has the gift of leading/administration, they may come across as controlling or demanding while making sure everything is coordinated for a project. The person who shows mercy may be turned off by the tendency for those with the gift of prophecy to come across as blunt or appear judgmental. The server may become frustrated because

the exhorter is taking time out to encourage someone instead of pitching in and helping. Each gifted person will see the world through their own lens and have a tendency to ask, “Why don’t others see things the same way I do?”

We can’t help but see things through our own lens. Our motivation gifts shape our personalities. If we understand them in ourselves *and in others*, we can understand the strengths and weaknesses within the Body and adjust accordingly.

Here is a quote from the book *Discover Your God Given Gifts*.

“God has purposely limited and focused our giftedness so that we must work together and remain dependent on each other in order to grasp the whole truth. Remember the six blind men who went to “see” an elephant? One felt the side and said an elephant is like a wall. The next felt the tusk and claimed an elephant is like a spear. The third felt the trunk and likened it to a snake. The fourth felt a leg and said an elephant is like a tree. The fifth, touching an ear, declared an elephant is like a fan. The sixth felt the tail and insisted an elephant is like a rope. No one was altogether right, yet neither was he entirely wrong. It was only when they got all their observations together that they “saw” the whole elephant. Thus it is with our motivational gifts. Each of us is somewhat blind to the other perspectives. We are wrong to say our way of seeing is the only true one. We are each partly right. But we are not totally right all by ourselves. We need each other’s viewpoints in order to see the complete picture.”

### **3. It gives us permission to not excel at everything.**

When we realize that we primarily excel in one or two of the seven gifts, we can evaluate *how* we serve in the body of Christ and tailor that to our gifts. It will give us permission to say “no” to certain areas of ministry because there is someone more equipped wanting to say “yes.” We will also understand why certain things may come easier for us and certain things may frustrate us.

For example, let’s say it is a practice of a church to immediately gather in the fellowship hall after service to discuss the message. People are encouraged to go from person to person to share what they received from the message and spend no longer than 5 minutes with each person. This is a good exercise in general. Some people may do well with this while others may not. One with the gift of exhortation may thrive on this. They are eager to encourage and apply some basic message points in practical terms to stir others up to action. The person with the gift of teaching on the other hand may have a harder time. They will need more time to digest the message and research the truth behind it. Since truth and accurate doctrine are so important to them, this exercise may seem shallow and of little long term value. Those with the gift of serving may be distracted because they keep noticing practical needs that need to be met. Those with the gift of mercy/compassion may want to spend longer than 5 minutes with someone because more time is needed to sympathize with and restore that person.

In this example, people who do not understand their gifts may think that these feelings they have are something wrong. But when they understand their functional gifts, it gives them permission to use these natural tendencies for ministry. When a church understands this, it can tailor the administration of ministry to better utilize all seven of the gifts.