

Give God's Gift Back to Him
Rom 12:3-8

This is the time of year when gifts are on everyone's mind. You're either thinking of gifts you need to get for others yet, or dreaming of the gifts you hope to get for yourself. Just remember, you could shoot your eye out with it!

What if you were given an incredible gift, with the caveat that you have to give it back? Strange, right? Worse than a dirty Santa exchange, or is it?

You see we all have different gifts from God and God planned for us to use them for his kingdom. My family on my mom's side takes pride in a gift that runs through the Clary family. It's a gift that even carries the family name. Most of the Clarys have the ability to remember the dumbest jokes ever told and then repeat them often. It's know at the Clary Corn! Of course we all know that I seem to be lacking in that gift! All my jokes are great ones. Okay, maybe that isn't one the gifts Paul is talking about in our text.

What are your gifts? Are you using them the way God intended? Let's look at those questions after the prayer.

PRAYER

I. It's All Me Baby!

A. You aren't all that.

1. Since my daughters hit their teen years, I learned something that has devastated me.

a) Apparently, I'm not near as groovy as I used to be.

b) I said that on purpose because I have a "sick" sense of humor that keeps me "dope". Right, teens?

c) One of the phrases younger people like to say is "she thinks she's all that."

d) That's girl talk for another girl, who isn't a friend, that isn't as popular or athletic or pretty as that particular person believes themselves to be.

2. How many of us think we are "all that" when it comes to the church?

a) I'm the song leader.

b) I'm a bible class teacher.

c) I'm part of the founding family of our congregation.

d) I'm the preacher.

e) I'm---- and you can fill in whatever blank someone uses to say that they are better in some way than the rest of the church.

3. Part of my family used to be the main family in a smaller congregation. They were fine with people moving in or being baptized until one day the church that wasn't related to them was getting bigger than those who were. One of my relatives actually remarked to me when I was visiting. "I

hate that the church has gotten so big that we don't control things anymore."

4. I about fell out of my chair when I heard that statement. What's even more frightening was that the person so said it was deadly serious. She wasn't joking in the least!

5. I have seen men want to become an elder or the preacher, so they can gain power in the church. They want everyone to know how important they are.

6. Somehow, they missed part of our text:

7. Romans 12:3 (NLT) — 3 Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better

than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us.

B. Sober Judgment

1. So, Paul tells us not to think we are all that, but to measure ourselves with sober judgment.
2. What does that mean?
3. The beatitudes talk about being poor in spirit.
 - a) It's an understanding of who you are as a person.
 - b) It's understanding you are impoverished spiritually, so you depend completely on God to meet your spiritual needs.
4. Paul calls us to measure with the same standards as Jesus did.
5. Remember who we are when measured against the perfection of Jesus Christ.
6. One of the things I love to do is people watch. It's interesting to watch kids at school or camp as they try to find out who they are on the social order.
 - a) Some don't care, they are proud to be the outsiders.
 - b) There are those who are genuinely good people. They would rise to the top of everyone's spiritual ladder.
 - c) There are some care too much and try to be much more than what others see them.
 - d) Then there are those who by birth, looks, or athleticism, believe they own the school or whatever environment they are in.
7. It's fine to be confident in what you do, but it can lead to being arrogant.
8. Arrogance can come back to bite you.
9. Christianity doesn't have room for arrogance.
10. If Jesus, the King of Kings, humbled himself to bring about salvation, we had better make sure we do the same thing as servants in his kingdom.

11. It doesn't matter if your family started a congregation. It doesn't matter if you are an elder. It doesn't matter if you are a rich and powerful member.

12. You're nothing compared to Jesus...just like me.

13. We're all on an equal playing field in the eyes of God.

II. Gifts for the Body

A. We belong to each other

1. After Paul address the need for humility, he begins talking about the fact that we each have gifts and roles within the kingdom of God.

2. Romans 12:4–5 (ESV) — 4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we,

though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

3. One of my favorite sayings is, "If everyone in the church was just like me, there wouldn't be any problems."
4. That's a great saying, but it would be disastrous if were actually true.
5. What would happen to the church if we could all preach, but no one could fix the baptistery?
6. What would happen if we could all make people feel at home, but no one would visit the hospital and encourage the sick?
7. What if we could all lead singing, but no one would give to the church?
8. Paul uses an analogy of the body.
9. We aren't individual bodies, we are all parts of one body.
10. We don't all have the same role in the body, but every role is just as important as any other role.
11. And we all belong to one another.
12. Another example might be our country. Each state is its own separate identity. However, all 50 states combine and use their resources to care for each other that binds us together as the United States of America.

B. Life Lessons

1. This passage should help every Christian to realize some very important life lessons.
2. Lessons that should free you to be the greatest servant of the kingdom you possibly can.
3. By recognizing we all have different gifts, frees me from jealousy.
 - a) I don't have to want so and so's gift, because God has given me my own to serve Him in my own special way.
 - b) I am proud that my brother or sister has that gift so they can serve God with all their abilities.
4. I can find fulfillment in who I am

a) Over can over I have heard our members say that they don't matter as much as someone else because they don't have any stand out gift.

b) This passage is a strong reminder that God has made each of us unique and special and when we all work together with our abilities, the body of Christ works as God intended.

c) Your role may be big or small, but without you, we suffer as a church.

d) Praise God for who you are in his kingdom.

5. My friendships are not distorted by status

a) My cousin was telling me about the congregation where they worship. It is quite the interesting mix of people. Some are street people, some are millionaires. Now you would never expect these two groups to mix together, but in God's kingdom, they are all brothers and sisters and are friends in Christ because of that. It doesn't matter where they live or what they do for a living. It only matter who lives in them.

b) That's an awesome picture of what Paul said when he said, neither Greek or Jew, male or female,

c) The only position in life that matters is the one position of submission to God.

C. Use Your Gifts

1. verses 6-8 Paul talks about several gifts that Christians have been given to them by God.

2. Romans 12:6–8 (ESV) — 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the

one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

3. Let's make that clear. The gifts you have aren't yours. They are given to you by God to use for his body.

4. Whatever gift you have, use it to the fullest in the service of God's body.

a) I have some gifts that God has blessed me with that make me an effective preacher and teacher. I try to use those gifts to bring glory to God as best as I can.

b) Sometimes they are here at this congregation, sometimes they are at camp and teaching the teenagers there.

c) Sometimes they are in Africa teaching and preaching there.

d) Sometimes they are in the community and relationship building there. The point is, I try to use them as best as I can.

5. You need to see your gifts are from God and use them as fully as possible, but that doesn't mean you can't do anything else; it only means that you do some things extremely well.

6. God did not gift me with building skills. I show up at our work days, not because God has blessed me with an ability to construct, but to encourage those that can. God has given me a gift of "gofer", and I'll "go fer" whatever the guys send me to get.

7. Remember verse 8. If it is encouraging let him encourage.

8. If that's the only gift you have, use it.

9. We need someone to keep encouraging others because it's easy to get discouraged.

10. Your gifts may also benefit you greatly, and that is just fine as long as you use them to benefit the body of Christ.

11. Whether you are a hand, foot, head or little toe, the body of Christ needs you.

12. God has you a gift to use, not bury.

13. Let's strive to be the best functioning body we can.