

The Gift of Leadership --- Romans 12:6-8

September 6, 2020

Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Introduction

I believe, along with many others, that we are seeing the stage set for the culmination of God's plan foretold in Scripture concerning the exaltation of Christ on this earth. Christ's kingdom on this earth is preceded by a seven year tribulation in which God purges mankind by bringing justice and judgment upon all who will not acknowledge Him even though they have no excuse for ignoring Him. I have told you that, as the end draws near, the purpose of the Church to minister to each other—to edify each other and to make disciples—is of vital importance.

The Church is not a business. The Church was never designed to be ordered along the lines of the world's organizational principles. It was never intended to follow business philosophy. Furthermore, the Church was not intended to be on the cutting edge of the entertainment industry. The Church is not a community social center where everybody goes because it is a nice place to be. It is not a country club.

What is the Church? The Church is an organism, not an organization. The Church is not a highly structured organization with all the right parts including nice, comfortable seats.

Every believer in a local church gathering is spiritually alive. The Spirit of God works in each one of us. Just as every cell and every member in your body is alive, so everyone in the Church is alive. We comprise a body.

There are a variety of terms used for the Church in Scripture. The Church is referred to as a body in Ephesians 1:22-23. *“And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is*

His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all”

In Ephesians 2:19-22, the Church is referred to both a family and a temple. *“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household (family),²⁰ having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;²² in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.”*

You can readily see the Church is not a organization patterned after the world's definitions. The Church is a body, a family, a temple being built up to reflect Christ on earth. The Bible teaches that we all have a function in the Church in order for it to operate at optimum ability.

It is my prayer that we are all challenged to serve one another in the Church as a result of knowing our spiritual gifts and being diligent use them. As a result, we will be effective in glorifying Christ by making disciples and by edifying the Church.

Review

The last two weeks we have been focusing on the gift of giving. It has taken multiple weeks because the Bible has much to say about wealth, money and giving. I told you that we are studying what the Bible says about giving, not because our church is in financial need, but because the purpose for giving and the attitude in giving is important to God.

Why do you give to the Church? Do you give to the Church? What is your attitude when you give? Last week, we looked at Two Foundational Teachings Concerning Giving to God: first—The Purpose of Giving (primarily to honor God); and second—The Attitude of Giving.

The Bible says more about money than heaven, hell, love, the Church and many other subjects. I believe that God knew that money would be a sensitive issue, so He made sure to give a large amount of commentary in His Word concerning what He thinks about money.

We saw that God does not need money. Our giving is not related to God's

need. So when a person says, "I am going to make a million dollars for God" God is not in need. He already owns everything. The root issue is that God desires that we love Him with all of our soul, mind, strength and body, all of who we are. Your money is a good indicator of where your heart is.

Jesus said in Matthew 6:19-21, *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* All we do when we give to God is to take out of His hand and give back what is already His.

Furthermore, we considered that God gives you the ability to gain money. Our giving reflects an understanding that we are dependent upon God. Your capacity to earn a living is from God. Even a non-believer cannot stay alive without God's enabling. This principle is expressed in Deuteronomy 8:18. *"But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth,"*

We also saw in 1 Timothy that God gives specific warnings concerning our relationship to money and how we regard money.

1 Timothy 6:10 *For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.* (Notice, it is the love of money and not money itself that is the root of all sorts of evil)

1 Timothy 6:17-19 *Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. 18Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 19storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.*

In fact, the Bible teaches that it is very difficult for people who have a lot of money to get to heaven. Jesus said in Mark 10:24 and 25, *"How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."*

The reason why it is hard for the rich to enter heaven is because money can

serve as a god in peoples' lives. If you have a great savings and you are set for the rest of your life, it is hard to be dependent upon God. Jesus summed it up this way in Matthew 6:24, *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (or wealth)."*

We saw that the Purpose for Giving is to honor God. Proverbs 3:9, *"Honor the LORD from your wealth, and from the first of all your produce."* We give to God in recognition that all we have is from God. He wants you to give back a portion of your wealth in recognition of His provision and your dependence upon Him. So if giving honors Him, then we should gladly give.

We also considered the Attitude of Giving. We are to be cheerful and generous in our giving, and we are to understand that we are investing in God's kingdom. Concerning giving cheerfully and generously, 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 says, *"Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. γ Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver."*

Lastly, we considered the amount of giving. In the New Testament, the guideline for giving is proportional to how God has blessed you. There is no set percentage given in the New Testament. Some say that we should then give according to Old Testament standards, but a closer study of Old Testament giving shows that would be close to about 25%. When you consider examples of giving in the New Testament, they range widely. Zacchaeus gave around 50% of what he owned, and the poor widow in Mark 12 gave 100%.

The point is that there is no set amount that you are to legalistically adhere to. You are to be a cheerful, regular giver according to how God has prospered you. I have always thought that if the bare minimum in the Old Testament was 10%, then how much more should be our giving in light of the Cross?

1 Corinthians 16:2 *On the first day of every week let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come.*

I want to take a moment and give some concluding thoughts about giving before we move on. For example when it comes to giving, God directs us to give humbly in private.

Concluding Thoughts on the Gift of Giving

*he who gives, with liberality;
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he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*
Romans 12:8

Matthew 6:1-4 Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. 2So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 3But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.”

So when you give, let it be between you and the Lord. Some other additional thoughts have to do with some practical reasons why we give. One practical reason we give is to support the needy in the Church. Much of Paul’s ministry involved gathering a collection for poor Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. They had been ostracized by their families and had no way of making a living among the Jews. So Paul was eager to help raise money to help them.

Romans 15:26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

Hebrews 13:16 And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

There are people in our church who from time to time have their needs met as we supply what they do not have. Along with that, there are others that the Bible makes clear that the Church is to take care of—like widows who fit a certain criteria.

1 Timothy 5:3-5 Honor widows who are widows indeed; 4but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God. 5Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has fixed her hope on God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day.

1 Timothy 5:9-10 A widow is to be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man, ¹⁰having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work.

One purpose of giving is to help others in the Church. This may be done through the Church or by your direct giving to them. Another reason is to support leaders of the Church and the ministries of the Church. Christians are not only to support the people in their church, but also they are to support their leaders as well. Paul is very clear that men whose job it is to be in full-time ministry are to be financially supported by the Church.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 9:7, 11, 14, *"Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock? ¹¹If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? ¹⁴So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel."* Galatians 6:6 furthers this exhortation, *"And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches."*

Obviously, this subject matter has direct application to me personally. But I am not the issue just because I happen to be the full-time person here. If I were to die and Grace Community Fellowship found another full-time pastor/teacher, God has ordained that men who give themselves to ministry full-time should receive their living from the Church.

Having been a layman for the majority of my life, and in full-time ministry for twenty years, I can say that to study the Word of God at a level by which a person can effectively stand up Sunday after Sunday and systematically go through the Word verse by verse takes more than what a person can do if he is working a secular job requiring a minimum of 40 hours a week.

Furthermore if a pastor is also to be about the business of shepherding the flock, God knew it would be necessary for the Church to support a man or men in order to do this. God has purposed for the Church to free up a man to give himself to study and to shepherding a local church. Therefore, God makes it clear that a local Church is to support that man so he can give himself to study

and pastoring.

1 Timothy 5:17-18 *Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. 18For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."*

So the purpose for giving is to support the needy in the Church and to provide for leaders in full-time service and the ministry of the Church. Our attitude in giving is to honor God, is to be cheerful, is to be humbly done in private, viewed as a portion representing all of who we are, and seen as investing in the eternal kingdom of God. I want to conclude our consideration of the gift of giving by referring to the time of giving.

Giving should be tied closely with worship. It is to be done with an attitude of thanksgiving to God for supplying our needs. As a kid, I always wondered why we passed the offering plate in the middle of the service. Unfortunately, the passing of the plate came to be seen by many as an intrusion into worship, i.e. its just an attempt to get money. Seen rightly, however, giving our money to God is rightfully done during the worship service.

Having said that, the time of giving is to be regularly each week. There is a precedent set by Paul in 1 Corinthians 16 that Christians should give on the first day of the week. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 states, *"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. 2On the first day of every week let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come."*

We will not go into great detail of church history at this time; but during the time of the early church, Christians began meeting on Sunday instead of the Saturday (Saturday being the Jewish Sabbath). Sunday became known as the Lord's Day by the time of John's writing of Revelation in the first chapter of Revelation. It was in remembrance that Christ rose on Sunday.

It was on this day that the Church gathered, so thus that Paul said believers should save up and give according to how God had prospered them. I believe that giving weekly as a part of worship to God is God's design for giving. Now

this is not to be done legalistically. If you get paid once or twice a month, it does not mean that you need to cut a check every Sunday. Nonetheless, it does mean that you are to be aware of God's provision and other's needs even when you may not be giving on any particular Sunday.

Those with the gift of giving do so cheerfully, liberally, unselfishly and to honor God. They are so gifted in order to teach the rest of the Church how to give. That brings us to the next gifts in our text: the gift of leading and the gift of mercy.

The Gift of Giving

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Romans 12:8

Let's begin our study of the gift of leading/administration by asking two important questions: #1 What is a leader as defined by Scripture? (again this is not a leader of a corporation, but a leader in the Church); #2 What are the traits of a leader?

What is a leader as defined by Scripture? The word used here refers to one who leads, who has authority over, who manages; who cares for, and gives help. The word is derived from the idea of piloting a ship, so it acquires the sense of giving direction. The one with this gift gives administrative direction to steer the flock of God. A gifted leader comes to know those who he leads and is able to delegate and coordinate efforts. Leading is the ability to see an objective, mobilize a group of people, and then work with them to reach the objective. The term is mostly used of those who give leadership in the Church, i.e. overseers and elders (those who have responsibility).

1 Thessalonians 5:12 *But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction*

1 Timothy 5:17 *Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.*

This leadership ability is accompanied by diligent labor, teaching and giving

instruction. Leading does not just oversee but interacts and motivates. The word used here also carries the sense of caring for, giving help. The one with this gift manages people in the sense of being able to interact with people for the sake of example, to exercise authority, takes care of, and nurtures.

In addressing leaders in 1 Peter 5:2-3, Peter exhorts them to, *“exercise oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.”*

When I think of “not lording it over others”, I think of the example of Moses in Exodus 18:13-27. Moses desired to help the people; he was teachable; and he delegated responsibility. He did not feel like he needed to lord his authority over others.

Exodus 18:13-27 *It came about the next day that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from the morning until the evening. 14Now when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, “What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge and all the people stand about you from morning until evening?” 15Moses said to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to inquire of God. 16When they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor and make known the statutes of God and His laws.”*

17Moses' father-in-law said to him, “The thing that you are doing is not good. 18You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. 19Now listen to me: I will give you counsel, and God be with you. You be the people's representative before God, and you bring the disputes to God, 20then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the work they are to do.

21Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. 22Let them judge the people at all times; and let it be that every major dispute they will bring to you, but every minor they themselves will judge. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. 23If you do this thing and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people also will

go to their place in peace.”

24So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said. 25Moses chose able men out of all Israel and made them heads over the people, leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and [ad]of tens. 26They judged the people at all times; the difficult dispute they would bring to Moses, but every minor [af]dispute they themselves would judge. 27Then Moses bade his father-in-law farewell, and he went his way into his own land.

In exercising authority a leader understands his own weaknesses, he is teachable, and he learns to include others. *“Not yet as Lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.”* One pastor writes, “The gift of leading is not a type of tyrannical dictatorship in which one person dominates. It is the combined wisdom of a team where a group of people who are so gifted pool their skills and reach a decision about how to steer the body. No single person has all the right answers.” The one who leads in the Church is responsible for the spiritual environment of the Church.

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

There are many opinions of what a leader is or should be, however, God has given us a perfect standard for the qualities a leader is to have. We find them in the requirements of an elder because the elder is to be the leader in the church. Anyone who would be a godly leader should strive to exhibit these qualities.

1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 God gives us a list of qualities that a godly leader is to have. We could take a few Sundays to explain these traits, but I want to give them to you in summary fashion. These are not characteristics for leaders only. We are all to strive to exhibit these in our lives.

Temperate: His pleasures are not primarily those of the senses. He is not given to excess; he is not a drunkard [i.e. drunkenness or anything mind altering]. He is moderate, well balanced, calm, and steady.

Self-Disciplined: He is serious about spiritual matters. That does not mean he avoids humor, but he has an appreciation for what really matters in life. He knows how to order his priorities.

Organized: His life is not characterized by chaos. He is able to establish priorities. He can give oversight. He is systematic and orderly.

Hospitable: Literally, this means: lover of strangers. He reaches out to others, even those he does not know well. He is quick to show kindness.

Not Violent: He does not settle disputes with his fists or in other violent ways. He is not quick tempered and does not have outbursts of anger. He rules his spirit.

Patient: He is considerate, forbearing, gracious, and gentle. He easily pardons human failure. In a practical sense, he is able to remember good and forget evil. He does not keep a record of wrongs people have committed against him.

Not Quarrelsome: This is similar to not being violent. The difference is violence refers to blows while quarrelsome refers to words. He is not constantly argumentative.

Free from the Love of Money: A leader is not materialistic. He uses money but is not enslaved to money. It is not his goal to get rich. Money is not his god.

Home Tested: Home is his testing ground. 1 Timothy 3:4-5 states, *“He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity. **but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?”***

The statement *“but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?”* is a revealing. It states that what a man is at home is really what kind of leader that man is in the eyes of God. The world may see him one way in his field, but before God what that man is at home is really what kind of leader he is. So, the gift of leading in the Church is affirmed at home. He must be a strong spiritual leader in the home before he is qualified to lead in the church. John MacArthur wrote, “He must rule his home well. There are many who rule their home, but the do not rule very well—meaning they do not get the desired results.”

Some of the areas of leadership in the home are as follows—

Spiritual Leader: He is to be growing as an example and a resource of understanding. I believe it is important to emphasize that this is a process. No one becomes a Christian and instantly is a spiritual leader. I believe 1 John portrays an accurate picture of what the Christian's progress is like by referring to children, young men, and fathers in the faith. When one is a spiritual leader, his life reflects a sound, deep theology. He knows God and knows truths about God. He has grown in his understanding and his walk coincides with his belief.

Finances: He must show himself able to manage his finances. He is not to be continually in bankruptcy because he cannot pay off his debts.

Children: Whether we like it or not, as long as we are raising our children men, we are their local theologian. They normally will reflect what is important to you. A godly leader is to have his children under control. The term used here is a military term referring to lining up in rank under authority. They are to be respectful, controlled, and disciplined. They are to be dignified and courteous.

A leader is one who combines firmness with love. Children ought to desire to obey their father because they would not want to do anything that would hinder their relationship with you. According to Titus 1:6, "*...his children are not have the reputation as being rebellious or given to substance abuse.*"

One pastor writes, "I believe there is no better place to see a man's commitment to meeting the needs of others than in his own home. Does he care about his family? Is he committed to each member? Does he work hard to meet their needs?"

J. Oswald Sanders in his book Spiritual Leadership says, "The man who is impatient with weakness will be defective in his leadership. The evidence of our strength lies not in streaking ahead but in a willingness to adapt our stride to the slower pace of our weaker brethren, while not forfeiting our lead. If we run too far ahead, we lose our power to influence."

The gift of leading involves the ability to direct, to exercise authority, to manage, to care for. The traits of a leader are he is not violent, patient, not quarrelsome,

free from the love of money, and home tested (manages home life well).

May I add one to this list that the text adds? He is diligent. Diligence in leading means he is earnest, eager, zealous, applies maximum effort; zealously engaged, actively or extremely concerned about something. He pushes on with a task and makes a serious effort until completed. He is intensely involved and fully dedicated.

The Spirit has empowered some with a heightened ability to lead with the traits He has laid out in the Scriptures. Every person should make it his goal to continually grow in these godly traits of being a godly leader. Those with the gift of leading must lead the body in a godly direction according to the Scriptures. Lastly, we consider the gift of giving.

The Gift of Giving

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Mercy is the act of helping someone. The gift of mercy is the enabling to sympathize with a suffering person—to come alongside and minister. “Showing mercy” as a spiritual gift does not pertain to the area of forgiveness or sparing judgment. It has to do with ministering to the needy. This is to be done in a cheerful, spontaneous manner that will convey blessing rather than stimulate self-pity.

This gift has the key to open the heart of the sufferer. “Cheerfulness” is the joyful eagerness, the friendliness, and warmth. They are a sunbeam penetrating into the heart of the afflicted. You recall Jesus' teaching of the Good Samaritan recorded in Luke 10:25-37. A Jewish man was going from Jerusalem to Jericho and was sorely beaten and robbed by thieves who left him half-dead.

A priest came along the road and passed on the other side, not willing to show mercy to the man. A Levite also passed over on the other side when coming to the place where the man lay. But then a Samaritan, one who was considered an enemy by the Jewish nation, came and show mercy to him by bandaging him up. He put him on his horse and brought him to a nearby inn.

Luke 10:35-37 *On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you."* ³⁶Jesus said, "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" ³⁷And religious leader said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

Mercy emphasizes the compassion of the heart. The idea is conveyed by 1 Corinthians 12:26, "And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it." Some of you are gifted in the area of mercy. The Spirit has given you areas of ministry to help those who are suffering physically and/or emotionally, and you do it with cheerfulness. Again, we are all called to show mercy. The ones with this gift show us how to do it effectively.

Romans 12:3-5 *For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. ⁴For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*