

Find Your Identity

By: Earl Radmacher

Earl Radmacher:

Thank you very, very much. I think that we were right on target when we gave Ron a night off here. He's been busily at it all week long. But I think we need to be concerned about him, because when a 44 year old man gets out there in a basketball court like he is tonight, you'll need to check up on him for his bruises and so forth. When he gets back tomorrow, you probably are to the point of spiritual indigestion by now, having taken in more than you are able to assimilate.

Or as Joe was reminding us earlier in the week, the mind can only absorb as much as the seat can endure. And probably we're about to the extent of that, I want to turn back once more to Romans chapter twelve. And now I'd like to deal with the third part of that section that we looked at, starting with Romans 11:33, that focuses our attention on what God is like, and then to chapter twelve, verses one and two, the familiar passage that talks about our not being conformed but being transformed. We've tried to look at some of the ways that that can happen. I hope that those two words, those antonyms there will not be left without filling in the blanks.

It is one thing to say stop being conformed. It's another thing to ask, what does that mean in the society in which I live? We probably will not know exactly what it meant back in Paul's society, not being familiar with all of the challenges that faced him, but we can be very familiar with it in our society. So I need to ask myself what other things that are being said in the world system around me that are unlike God and are unlike his truth? And how can I change my life to be less conformed to the world and more transformed by viewing his word?

Now, with that basically in mind, I'd like to come to the third part of the major section we suggested in verses three to eight. I'm going to read that, and I'd like to go back and create a setting for today and then see if we can make some application of it. If I were to ask you, how many of you basically have known Romans 12:1-2 before you came to this session this evening, how many would feel comfortable that you have known those two verses? Let me see your hand.

Okay. That's a large majority of you. How many of you, before you looked at this passage tonight could have said that you knew Romans 12:3. 1, 2, 3? About three. That's a normal average. We very often memorized versus one and two.

And we don't really know why they are there, because we use them to speak about everything else other than that which Paul had in mind when he put them there. And you'll notice that verse three begins with a very crucial little word it is the word "for." Translates the Greek preposition "Gar." And I'm sure that has real devotional value for you. That little preposition, that little conjunction there is giving you the reason in verses three through eight for the presentation in verses one and two, based on the mercies of chapters eleven, one through eleven. Now with that in mind, look at verse three, "for I say," or "because I say through the Grace given to me, to everyone who is among you."

And now notice how beautifully the song that you were singing fits into this next phrase. "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. 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, having then gifts differing according to the Grace that is given to us, let us use them. If prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith or to the faith or Ministry, let us use it in our ministering.

He who teaches in teaching, he who exhorts in exhortation, he who gives with liberality, he who leads with diligence, he who shows mercy with cheerfulness." And then it goes on to express the fruit of the Spirit that ought to accompany the gifts of the Spirit. So verses three to eight in my mind are one of the clearest passages of the Scripture for determining our identity, who we really are. Now with that in mind, let me relate that back to the period in which we live. How do I turn this thing on here?

There it is. Okay. I don't have my degree in electronics.

I think it's helpful to not only look at the context of the scripture, but to look at the context of our period in history, to see where we have come from and where perhaps we are going. And if you go back to the last two decades of the 60s and the 70s and you try to ask yourself, what was the world saying? And what would the Word say in contrast to that following through verse two? In the world in the 60s, the big word was identity.

Some of you will still recall the effects of Kent State and Berkeley, and you are aware of the minority groups that were crying. We will be heard, and they were willing to even take steps of violence in order to be heard. They were tired of being ignored and they wanted to be heard. So

on the campus at Berkeley, there were groups regularly most all day long, pleading for a hearing. And out there with their megaphones seeking to have the world give them a hearing.

Identity was the big thrust in the 60s, in the 70s that moved from identity to what has been referred to as "selfism" or "me-ism" or narcissism-- self love. You couldn't get a riot started at Berkeley today, people are too busily engaged, fulfilling their own needs in this materialistic society which they were condemning in the 60s, the very society that was being condemned on the College campuses in the 60s. Those very people doing it then are now a part of the materialistic orientation that they were condemning. The identity, the cry for identity has developed in the 70s to the decade of Me-ism, self-ism, narcissism. In fact, sociologists tell us that this is the first generation in American history to so be designated the self-centered society.

If you want to read on that more, in the December 20 issue of Time magazine, an article by Etsyone on the Halloween of America, speaking particularly of the "me generation," "self-ism," narcissism. So in the 60s, the world was crying for identity. In the 70s, there was a tremendous move toward fulfilling all of my desires and "self-ism," "me-ism," narcissism. Now, what was God doing at that time?

Well, at that same time, God was giving through his Providence by means of his word new emphasis or revived emphasis on the things that a Christian could plug into his mind to counteract the thought of his day. As the world was seeking for identity, God brought about a new thrust on the believers basis for identity. And that is the area of spiritual gifts which we just read about in Ephesians, pardon me, in Romans, chapter twelve.

Before this date, you would have had a hard time finding one book in print on the subject of spiritual gifts. There were those, but the only one I know of was not one that was done by publisher that was apparently recording in books, in print, and so I was not able to find it there. But I'm thinking of the book by Alexander Hay, a missionary for some 50 years in South America, who wrote a monumental volume, a very large volume entitled New Testament Order for Church and Missionary, and that was a book well ahead of its time. Before there was ever an interest in spiritual gifts. Alexander Hay had written this doctrinal treatise, which was a very helpful biblical presentation on spiritual gifts.

Beyond that, I do not know of any book in print on the doctrine of spiritual gifts before the 60s. Then in 1960, here in the Los Angeles area in Van Nuys, an Episcopalian priest by the name of Dennis Bennett rocked the evangelical world by announcing that he had been baptized in the Spirit and had spoken in other tongues, and that had been heard of in Pentecostalism for some 60 years, going back to Topeka, Kansas, in 1901 and here in Azusa Street in 1905. But it had never really been spoken of very much outside of the Pentecostal churches. And nobody paid much attention to the Pentecostal churches. I happen to have been a member of one at that time, and most people looked upon us as fringe fanatics and religious nuts.

And they paid very little attention to them. But then when this erudite Episcopalian priest had this experience, all of a sudden it became something that everybody should seek out and understand what it was about. So it spread from the Episcopal Church to the Brethren Church and Presbyterian and Methodist and Baptist and Catholic and Greek Orthodox, et cetera, and

spawned a movement called the Charismatic movement, which put its thrust on spiritual gifts. Now, I am willing to agree that the basic thrust of that movement was not the full orb doctrine of spiritual gifts. It was more on the spontaneous gifts, you might say, or the gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues and miracles and healings.

But at least it brought that arena into focus. I remember being in a debate with a Pentecostal friend of mine back in Boston a few years later, and we were talking about what the Church needs in the next ten years in order to really do the job. And so the subject of the gift of tongues came up on his part, and one of the scholars from Trinity Seminary was seated in the audience and he said, I don't really understand why you are putting such a focus on the gift of tongues and referring to a "tongues movement." He said, as I read my Bible, I find a number of charismata here in Romans chapter twelve. I don't find so much emphasis on a gift of tongues, but I see a gift of mercy and a gift of administration and a gift of giving, et cetera.

And I thought at that time, wouldn't it be fantastic if somebody in their pure, peaceful mind got the idea of starting a movement on the gift of giving, and we called it a giving movement rather than a tongues movement? That probably would be a whole lot more beneficial in the final analysis. Someone had asked me at that time if I thought we needed a movement of the gift of tongues. And I said at that time I thought that probably what we needed to do was to cut off about 40ft of the one that was moving in our mouth and we would probably have solved most of our problems. I find that that thing, according to James 3, gives me an awful lot of trouble.

But all of that aside, there was the spawning then of this huge movement that went literally worldwide, and it drove people back to the word of God to examine what has God said about spiritual gifts. And not everybody came up with the same analysis, obviously, but at least they began to deal with the subject, which is more than one could say of the situation prior to 1960. Thus, if you simply went to books in print and made an objective study of the books before 60 and the books after 60, you would not have to be very smart to find out that there have literally been dozens of books on the subject of spiritual gifts since 1960, whereas there were virtually none before 1960. That is not a matter of subjective evaluation. That is just a matter of a look at the objective data.

That is there something very dramatic happened in 1960 which has had ongoing results to this very day, so that today there are many good books on the subject of spiritual gifts, which subject we will look at in a little bit there in Romans chapter twelve. So this really happened in the 60s, and I hope you can see the contrast. While the world was crying for identity, God was giving to his children a renewed thrust in the Word on the biblical basis for their identity. Not to think of myself more highly than I ought to think, but to think soberly. And what is sober thinking?

Sober thinking is thinking and keeping with the sovereign gifting that I have by God of spiritual gift and using that to his glory. Now, what did this cry for identity in the world's way lead to? In the 70s, we said it led to what has been designated as the narcissistic society. But what happened in the Church and among God's people related to the Word. In the 70s, you got a whole new thrust on God and what he is like.

Now let me test that on you again.

In 1973, some very far reaching events happened. We're still dealing with one of them. It's called OPEC. And I would say that it's safe to say that OPEC influenced the entire world. Your gas station attendant will affirm that that happened in 73.

There was also an Israeli war that happened in 1973. There was also a Supreme Court decision with regard to abortion that happened in also in 1973. You had the aftermath of Watergate, and you might look back at 1973 and say, that was really a bad year. What a bummer. We ought to wipe it out.

Not too quick for also, in 1973, for the first time in recent American history, at least, a book on God became a best seller. Now, if you'd go back before 1973, you would have found a few books on the Excellencies of God, the attributes of God, but very few. And there would be one writer that would stand out above others, though once again, he was a man ahead of his time in this subject, much like Alexander Hay was ahead of his time in the area of spiritual gifts. I'm wondering if any of you can think of the name of a Christian and Missionary Alliance pastor who was writing on God before 1973, and the new emphasis on the person of God came to the fore. Anybody know the man?

A. W. Tozer, right. In fact, there were a couple of A. W.s that wrote on the person of God prior to that time. One was A. W. Pink on the sovereignty of God and the attributes of God, and the other man was A. W. Tozer. Pink wrote more in theological style and Tozer wrote more in

practical and devotional style. And I can recall my wife on her third time through Tozer's book *The Pursuit of God*. She could hardly put it down.

Tozer's book *The Pursuit of God* and *the Knowledge of the Holy* were two of the very few books on God in print before 1973. In fact, you could have counted on one hand the books on God before '73 that were in print, but with 1973 another book came into being that was mentioned down here that became an instant bestseller. Tozer's book was not a best seller and this book was written by a British writer with no intent of it ever even becoming a book. He wrote it as a series of articles for a quarterly or magazine presentation in Britain, but I believe it was *Inner Varsity* that picked it up and put it into a book form and it came out under the now well known title *Knowing God*. How many of you happen to have a copy of *Knowing God*?

Look at that. Isn't that amazing? That would never have happened before 1973. Now Packer's book *Knowing God*, which really highlights what verse of scripture? Do you recall that? Daniel 11:32 "they that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits." Since 1973 there have been literally dozens of books on the person of God that have come into print.

One of our faculty members, Dr. Alexander, his wife, did a book entitled *Behold Your God*, a study book for women that is used all over the country now gone through I don't know how many dozens of printings. And it's only one of many books like that that have grabbed the attention of people. In other words, a subject that would have been considered quite boring prior to 1973 is now right on the front burner, so to speak. People who would not have had any interest before in looking up such attributes of God as the immutability of God, the incomprehensibility

of God, the omniscience of God, the omnipotence of God, and so forth now are very interested in studying those things and they're finding it changing their life.

Why? Because "they that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits." So God is always at work. He is not asleep like the Baals of the Old Testament. He doesn't have to be awakened to our situation.

He really does know what is going on. And if I'm sensitive to what he is providing, I will see that in every decade, in every year, in every age, God is providing the very things I need to counteract the world thought system. So in the 60s he brought to the fore the doctrine of spiritual gifts which had largely been dormant prior to that time. And in the 70s he brought to the fore the doctrine of God which had largely been untouched by Christian writers prior to that time. Now there are dozens of books here and there are dozens of books here, so God has given to us a refreshing encounter with these subjects from the Scripture.

Now, so much for the historical review. I just think it's kind of fun to look and see how God is constantly providing me with what I need in order to not be conformed to the world system, but to be transformed by the renewing of my mind. In God's Providence he provided these things. Now then, a passage of Scripture which was very, very often overlooked ignored was Romans chapter twelve verses three to eight. Now if we had taken twelve one and two in context, we would not have ignored three to eight.

But we tended to preach to use Romans twelve one and two to preach any exhortation which happened to be on our heart at that time. If you're going to have a new Church building program, then preach Romans twelve one and two and get everybody revved up to commit themselves to that building program or whatever else it is that we happen to be interested in getting going. But actually in Romans twelve, Paul put Romans twelve one and two there as a means of getting us going with that particular gift that God had given to us for identity. Now let me relate just one more thing concerning the setting in which we find ourselves.

Dr. Aldrich and myself and perhaps another person maybe it was Bruce Wilkinson in the course of this week have all raised concern about the self esteem movement of this particular year, this particular time in which we find ourselves. I have on my desk at least four books that I've gotten in the last several weeks that have come to my desk free of charge on the subject of self-esteem. And I think basically the Christian public is way off course in that emphasis. I think the reason we feel that we have to put a focus on self and self-esteem is because we have not been looking carefully at God and what he is like.

Earlier in the week, I sought to just make mention of a distinction between self-esteem and self-worth, and maybe on a later occasion you will take the time to think through those two terms and see that they move in opposite directions. Self-esteem focuses here. Self-worth causes me to focus on that which gives me worth, namely God. The focus of self-worth is exactly the opposite of self-esteem. If you look up self-esteem in the dictionary, you'll find that a synonym for self-esteem is pride.

Why would that be true? Because self-esteem leads to pride, but self-worth leads to worship, for it causes me to find out the basis of my worth. For example, keeping your finger in Romans twelve. Just flip back quickly to Isaiah chapter six and Isaiah's vision.

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above it stood Seraphim. Each one had six wings. With two he covered his face. With two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

And one cried to another and said, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole Earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. Then I said, Woe is me, for I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips. And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.

For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." See, when he saw God, then he saw himself properly as being utterly undone. Unclean. When I failed to look at God, then my view of myself rises in an unworthy way. When I look at God and see him as he is, then my self esteem will be lowered.

But I will see in God not only His Holiness, but I will see his mercy, so that look at the next phrase. "Then one of the Seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it and said, Behold, this has touched your lips. Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send?

And who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I, Lord, send me." When he saw God properly, then he saw himself properly, then he had proper self-worth and he had something to offer God. "Here am I, send me." That's the same thrust exactly you have back in Romans chapter twelve.

You have twelve chapters of The Mercies of God. Paul concludes the 11th, rather the eleven chapters of The Mercy of God. And Paul concludes that last chapter with a paean of praise on what God is like. And then, after seeing what God is like, he is ready to present himself. Why?

Because he has not only seen what God is like, but he has seen what the sovereign God has provided for him. And that's why verses three to eight becomes so important. "For I say, through the Grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but think soberly." What is sober thinking? Sober thinking is starting with the sovereign God and the gifts that he has given to me.

Keep your finger in Romans twelve again and turn over to the next book. First Corinthians, chapter twelve, and look at verse twelve, verse eleven there. In the first three verses you have an introduction to the chapter. And then in verses four through eleven, you have a basic synopsis of the doctrine of spiritual gifts. And then at the very end he says this, "but one and the same spirit works all these things, having named various gifts, distributing to each one individually as he wills."

So I pick up immediately, that gifting is not something that I have worked out. It is something that God has worked out. God doesn't give gifts to me in keeping with my spirituality. He does not give gifts to me in keeping with my much prayer about it. He does not give gifts to me in keeping with my emotion about it.

He gives gifts on the basis of his own sovereign planning. Gifting has absolutely nothing to do at bottom line with spirituality. It has nothing to do with the fruit of the Spirit. Every individual is pardon me, every individual in Christ is a gifted person. Now, in our educational system, we tend to have gifted classes for the erudite intellectually, and I've never liked those classes because I never was in one.

So I obviously wouldn't like them. But we separate people out at times and we'll say, here is a gifted class of people. Now, in the Church, there is no such thing with regard to gift. There is no gifted class of people. Rather, every person in the body of Christ is a gifted person.

And the gift that I have is not by my preference. It has not a thing to do with my preference. It has only to do with God's sovereignty. I am what I am by his Grace. Now, in every one of the passages that deal with spiritual gifts, and there are four basic passages.

One is Romans twelve and one Corinthians twelve through 14, and Ephesians four and one Peter four. In every one of those passages it says "to each one," "to each one is given." In other words, there are not some that have and some that don't. But everyone who knows Christ in his Salvation package received spiritual gifts.

Voiceover 1:

Please turn the tape to side two for the continuation of this session.

Earl Radmacher:

Ephesians four and one Peter four. In every one of those passages it says "to each one," "to each one is given." In other words, there are not some that have and some that don't.

But everyone who knows Christ in his Salvation package received spiritual gifts. And by the way, when you come to a verse like Philippians two and verse 12, 13, "work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who has worked into you both the willing and the doing of his good pleasure." What he is driving at there is get the lid off your Salvation package and find out what is inside of it, work it out, develop it, cultivate it, for God has given you something very specific which needs to be mobilized if the Church to which you belong is going to be effective for his glory. So every passage that deals with spiritual gift emphasizes "to each one," "to each one," "to each one."

During the last 17 years, I think I've probably had about 450 spiritual gift conferences that will last over three, four, five days. And one of the hardest things to get across in those conferences is this very point that every person is a gifted person. And invariably I'll have somebody at the end of the conference that will come up and say, oh, I sure want to thank you for this week. I've learned so much and you've opened up the scriptures, and I appreciate it. And then they will conclude with some statement like this, I just wish I had a spiritual gift, and at that point, you just want to give up the Ministry.

What have I been doing here all week long? I thought I at least had made that point clear. But you have all kinds of people who have a demeaning view of themselves. They say, "oh, I am nothing." Now that is not any better than saying, "I am really something in myself."

I have something by God's Grace, and that something that I have is a spiritual gift. It is my spiritual tool for doing my work in and through the body of Christ. And it is the basis by which I will be evaluated at the judgment seat of Christ. So it is very, very central to my life today and to my reward tomorrow. My spiritual gift.

Who am I? Don't think of myself more highly than I ought to think, but think soberly, sober thinking is according to the gifting that you have. So spiritual gifting is not just a sideline kind of thing. I've also heard people say, well, let's not be so concerned about the gifts of the Spirit. Let's really just work on the fruit of the Spirit. That's what really is important.

Well, why should it be an either or? The two things are not the same at all. They're not in the same category at all. The fruit of the Spirit is one thing that is entirely different in scripture from the gift of the Spirit.

Some time ago, I got some plans made for a home, and we built a home, and we had a number of subcontractors doing various things in the home. And most of the subcontractors were not only qualified people do their job, but they were nice people. But we had one man that was a qualified man. He was a good electrician, and he was not a nice person. He was just a hard person to get along with.

And he was a messy person, and he was an obnoxious person. And the main contractor brought this man back out of retirement because he was just such a good electrician. And he put up with all of his idiosyncrasies and eccentricities because he was such a good electrician. He was willing to do that. Now, I would rather that he had been a good electrician plus a nice man.

But I'll tell you something, I would rather have a good electrician who is not a nice man than a very nice man who does not know wiring. Who does my electrical work.

You see, my first thing I want to know is do you know how to wire? Not, are you a nice man?

I hope he will also be a nice man. Now, the gifts of the Spirit parallel knowing electricity or knowing carpentry or whatever else my skill is. I would hope that a person will conjoin with the gifts of the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit, and in the process of doing his skill for Christ, do it in Christ's likeness. Do it with the fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control.

But don't confuse the two. One is not a substitute for the other. There is no place for being ignorant about my spiritual gift. I need to be informed about it. So if I am born again, every one of the passages teaching on spiritual gifts tells me that I have a gift.

Some will say, well, could you have more than one? Maybe, but I'm not here to argue that if everybody would get one going, we would dramatically change the activity of the Church in

America if we could somehow get this sleeping giant moving, if we could get the people of God meaningfully mobilized for service for Christ. There is a phenomenal amount of work to do. Let me give you just one task. I'm just reviewing a book now that is going to be printed by the Step Foundation.

Steps, which the Step Foundation is strategies to elevate people, and they are tremendously concerned about the plight of the poor in America. And the problem is increasing daily and the Church is doing very little about it. We can read the Great Commission, and we all get excited about the Great Commission. One passage in the Scripture, did you know that there are over 400 passages in the scripture that talked about our relationship to the poor, the oppressed, the widowed, the orphan? And the government is doing a miserable job of trying to meet that need. And now under the present administration, we are cutting back some of those programs so that the plight of the poor is even worse. And it may be the golden opportunity for the Church to really get with it.

Some are catching the vision. There is a Church in Portland, the Hinson Memorial Baptist Church. I think probably some of you here are from that Church that is in the Buckman district in Portland. The Buckman Sunnyside district comprises several square miles. In that area, there are 8000 people that are considered below poverty level.

Also in that Church are about 14 churches. Pardon me, in that district are about 14 churches. Those 14 churches did something really significant. They saw the plight of the poor in their area, and they realized that the poor were becoming increasingly disgusted with them. The poor in the

area saw all these approximately 8,000 Church people in these 14 churches driving into their community with their lovely cars.

Parking them in front of their driveways, just becoming a nuisance to them. And as far as they were concerned, the churches are good for nothing.

The churches got together and they said, Why can't we do something about the plight of these people? And so they took two of their people who were out of work at Hinson. And they found, by the way, in a little study that they had 65 families out of work. So they took two a couple. The wife was a registered nurse, the husband was an artist. They were out of work. And these churches put together monies to hire these two people for \$1,000 a month and made them coordinators of a program for helping the poor in the area. They got a telephone for them that its numbers were 236-NEED. N.E.E.D. And then they took time in the churches to sign up people who would be willing to help, to use their skill, their ability in helping poor people.

Are you a Carpenter? Are you a plumber? What do you do? And they signed up, I think, over 1000 people. And then they circulated a flyer throughout that whole several square mile area telling the people about the service that was available.

If you have something go wrong in your home and you need help, you call 236-NEED, and we'll come out and check it out. Then we'll find a person who has signed up who has that particular skill, and they will come here and take care of your problem. The first party to call in was a lady in her early 80s whose name was Maud. I don't know what her last name was, but she called in

and said that her hot water heater was not working. One of our students who was signed up for the program was called.

He immediately went out there, and it was a small thing. He had it fixed in about five minutes. And then as he walked out, he saw that her ceiling had a big wet spot in the ceiling. And he said, Your roof must be leaking. And she said, It is, but I can't afford to do anything about it.

He went back into the coordinators. He told them that they called a person who came out and took care of that. As he walked outside, he saw the lawn was in terrible shape and she, of course, could not mow the lawn. They got somebody to do that. Do you think that woman has any question about the love of Jesus Christ being ministered through people who know him?

You see, they didn't start out with an evangelistic thrust, as we typically know it. And that may be right in some situations to go right at it. But they did something else. They recognized that people made in the image of God are people that God cares about, and I ought to care about them. And so they've begun mobilizing the people in this community to meet the needs of the poor, the oppressed, the widowed, orphaned, etc. in that community. There is enough manpower in America, and I use that term generically. There is enough manpower to solve the plight of the poor if the churches would simply get serious about it. If every Christian would seek out a poor person, an underprivileged person, a widow, an orphan, just with that emphasis, you would basically solve our problem in America. Now that's just one arena.

So when we say we need to get our people mobilized in keeping with their spiritual gift, we can't afford the luxury of a lot of people who are gifted by God, who are not mobilized to use their gift. My brother in law was signed up on the program that I just mentioned. He has just retired and he's been called three times. He is absolutely fulfilled in the fact that he has been able to go out and meet people's needs and in the process has been able to say a word for Jesus Christ. We really do need to get everybody mobilized in keeping with their talents and their gifts.

So Romans twelve says, if you understand what your God is like, you are now ready to present your body. What is it in your body that you have to present? You have a capacity for servants. You have a spiritual gift which is sovereignly and distinctively, given to you by God. Now we don't have to measure ourselves by each other.

I'm not going to look to find the same gift in you that I have in me and vice versa. I'm going to expect a great deal of diversity. And once again, in Romans chapter twelve, you find that diversity and you find it in the other spiritual gifting passages. In verse six, he gives you two kinds of categories of gifting. I cannot take the time here to work this out dramatically and exegetically for you.

You'll have to take it by faith at this point and check it out later. But the first two usages in verse six are really categories of gift. One says, if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith. And verse seven says, if it's Ministry, let us use it in our ministering. And the next five are specific examples of speaking and serving gifts.

Prophecy is used here as a categorizing thing. Ministry is used as a categorizing thing. It is not a specific gift. It is a category. The reason I can say that is because it is without an article.

It is what we call anarthrous. The last five are articular, the first two are anarthrous. The first two are categories. The last five are examples of the two categories of gifting. So he says there is a speaking category and there is a serving category.

And he gives you several examples. Look at them. You've got a teaching gift. That would be the speaking category. You've got an exhorting gift that's a speaking category.

You've got a giving gift, a leading gift, a showing mercy gift. Those are in the serving categories. So some people are mercy people. Oftentimes a nurse who is really good at her work will find that she has a gift of mercy or that he has a gift of mercy, as the case may be. They are people who find by their gifting that they are drawn to meet needs of mercy.

There are other people who have the gift of giving. I'm happy about a couple of those that I know. I mentioned them to you in Chapel or in the gym service today, a man that came to my attention and to whose life I was able to pour some of my life. And he became aware of his resources as well as his gift of giving. And he has turned around and used that gift of giving substantially with Western seminary.

I'm glad he happened to become aware of his gift and of mobilizing that gift. But he is really fulfilled as he sees his gift of giving. He is not particularly a speaker, but he is a server. And in

that serving, he has immense financial resources and those financial resources now have a spiritual quality for him. He no longer sees it as just money.

And oftentimes people who are wealthy, who are Christians who have a gift of giving do not really see it as a gift. They say, oh, I wish I had the ability to speak like you do. All I've got is money and they don't see it as a gift.

Some people have the gift of taking the financial resources that God has put at their disposal. And so managing those that whatever they touch turns to gold, so to speak, they're able to multiply it. And if their gifting is connected with a growing demonstration of the fruit of the spirit, then there will be a spiritual quantity in the use of that gift of giving that is fulfilling to them and meets the needs of many, many others. God distributes the gifts sovereignly. They do not change.

Why? Because they were not based on anything in me. They are based on something in God. Therefore, Romans 11:32 says, the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. They are without change.

They are given sovereignly without any spiritual quantity as such in view. Now, when Paul wants to say that and I quickly come to a conclusion here in Romans chapter twelve, after he has said it in a rather doctrinaire way, he then says it in a more colorful, picturesque way from this framework of the body of Christ. And he says, for as the body is one and has many members, but

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all the members of that one body being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For in one spirit we were all baptized into one body. Whether Jews or Greeks, whether...

[Recording abruptly stops]