# Men’s Bible Study – January 10, 2024

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Lesson 35

Romans 12:3-8 NASB

## **3) 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.**

## **4) For just as we have many parts in one body and all the body’s parts do not have the same function,**

## **5) so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually parts of one another.**

## **6) However, since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to use them properly: if prophecy, in proportion to one’s faith;**

## **7) if service, in the act of serving; or the one who teaches, in the act of teaching;**

## **8) or the one who exhorts, in the work of exhortation; the one who gives, with generosity; the one who is in leadership, with diligence; the one who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.**

## Introduction: Context to the chapter and book of Romans.

Our portion of Romans for tonight is an echo of Verse one and two of chapter twelve.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Romans 12:1,2*** | ***Romans 12:3-8*** |
| I urge you | I say |
| Brethren | Say to every man |
| Mercy of God | Grace given to me |
| Renewing of your mind | Sound judgement Don’t think more highly than you ought. |
| Spiritual Service | List of acts or methods of spiritual provision: prophecy, teaching, preaching, servanthood, exhortation, giver, leader, mercy. |
| Prove the will of God | Gifts that differ according to the Grace given by God. |

## Definition: Major ideas or concepts in this scripture.

**GRACE:**

**Defined in English**: simple elegance or refinement of movement; courteous goodwill.

**Defined in Greek**: **Charitos**, *the state of kindness and favor toward someone, often with a focus on a benefit given to the object; by extension: gift, benefit; credit; words of kindness and benefit: thanks, blessing.*

***Defined in context:*** *a gift given to Paul by God for the performance of God’s will. It is associated with the authority or position to which Paul is giving admonition and advice.*

**GIFT:**

**Defined in English**: (1) a thing given willingly to someone without payment; a present. (2) a natural ability or talent.

**Defined in Greek**: **Charismata**, *a divine gratuity, that is, deliverance from danger or passion; a spiritual endowment, that is, a religious qualification, or miraculous faculty.*

***Defined in context:*** *A divine presentation of worth associated with an assignment for mercy, and or ministry.*

**FAITH:**

**Defined in English:** (1) complete trust or confidence in someone or something. (2) strong belief in God or in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof.

**Defined in Greek**: **pisteos** *faith, faithfulness, belief, trust, with an implication that actions based on that trust may follow; the faith often refers to the Christian system of belief and lifestyle. Faith almost always implies certitude even where there is no evidence or proof.*

***Defined in context:*** *An expectation of God working in life. It is a dependance on something we can not see, measure, or store up.*

**THINK:**

**Defined in English:** (1) have a particular opinion, belief, or idea about someone or something. (2) direct one's mind toward someone or something; use one's mind actively to form connected ideas.

**Defined in Greek**: ***phronéō*** *to have understanding, be wise to feel, to think. to have an opinion of oneself, think of one's self, to be modest, not let one's opinion though just of himself exceed the bounds of modesty*

***Defined in context:*** *This root word in the Greek is used three times in our portion of scripture. (1), to think more highly of one’s self (****hyperphroneo****) seeing yourself as better than others, (2) to think properly (****phroneo****) what you should think of yourself, and (3) to be of sound mind, to put a moderate estimate upon one’s self, to think soberly , to curb our passions (****sophroneo****). Therefore, there seems to be three views of self:*

***Three views of self***

***More highly:*** *Greater than you are Equated as PRIDE*

***Proper:*** *To understand your place as seen by society and self as seen by others*

***Realistically:*** *To see yourself through the eyes of God and see you are*

1. ***A sinner in need of mercy***
2. ***Saved by Grace***
3. ***Given a new life in Christ***
4. ***Given a purpose by Christ.***
5. ***Given empowerment to do your purpose.***

## Analysis

As we look closely at this portion of the Book of Romans, we must first understand the end point or the conclusion Paul is trying to relate. There are a number of methods of teaching and preaching on these verses. But each method should be based on the discovery of the reason for the writing. Among the ideas used for rightly dividing the word of truth are:

1. This portion is all about Paul’s position and authority in the church to meter out offices to gifted people. The beginning of the classification and separation of individually gifted people to do specific jobs which defines the person. For the Catholic church this is the precedent for making a hierarchy of offices in the church, i.e. Pope, Archbishop, Bishop, Priest.
2. This portion is all about how we see ourselves, i.e. pride vs. humility. It is about measurement of self. A mental decision made by only seeing the self-assessed successes and failures of life. Paul admonishing Christians to live a life of modesty and proper self worth. This view ultimately led to the idea of asceticism or becoming a monk to set your self apart from all temptation.
3. This portion is all about gifts and their necessity in the church. Seeing a great analogy of the body and its many members. The inability of the church to function effectively without all the gifts of the spirit. All have duties, callings, and gifts to do within the Church. This view has been emphasizing the gifts over ministry. Further this view has caused some to associate some gifts as being more important than others. It has become an issue between rights and responsibilities.
4. This portion is all about the measure of faith. The quantity of faith in the individual. This view is that there is a finite amount of faith available. It is measured or given to a more or less degree depending upon the divine will. Further, the resulting gifts are also measured.

These four ideas are taken as closely aligned thoughts but separate. Those who cut and slice and make Julian fries of the scripture take it apart and neglect the unifying principle of God.

Nevertheless, the underlying principle is looking at all these ideas from God’s point of view.

1. It is God that gave Paul his position and authority in the speak to the church. Paul’s place was the driving force to further the Church. To this end Paul knew full well the trials and temptations it would and did bring. Paul also was willing to do whatever it took to fulfill his gifted mission. While Paul used his gift of being the Apostle of the Gentiles, he did not neglect his beloved Jewish countrymen.
2. It is God who gave us this ability to see ourselves correctly. In our own self-assessment we have great value to God. We are part of the pearl of great price. We are the Body of Christ on earth. We are called, we are filled with grace and mercy, we are call to do more than what we can do on our own.
3. It is God who gives gifts and their necessity in the church. It is not our internal bent or even our talent that makes us necessary to the church. The Gifts are for the furtherance of the church and are by their nature gifts. Not earned, not worthy of, and sometimes not even asked for. It is God’s privilege to give as He wills.
4. Is it God who measures faith not ourselves. This portion is all about God’s measure of faith. Jesus said if you have the faith of a mustard see you can move mountains. Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). This “word” is ultimately from God, “inspired” (literally “breathed out”) by God through the work of the Holy Spirit.

It is only when we look though God’s window at ourselves can we rightly understand the relationship between position, pride, humility, gifts, and faith.

# The gifts of Romans 12

A reminder here. All gifts are important to the Body. They work because each function within the church for the church. None is more important than any other. And associated with each is an imperative.

Romans 12:3

***For through the grace given to me.***

Paul has been given grace. What is this grace? Paul must have been giving the reason for his ability to tell those in the Roman Church he had the authority to do what he was going to command. Paul’s given grace was to be the Apostle to the Gentiles.

It was seen by Paul as the greatest calling because it cost him so much. Paul moved around a lot. He supported Jerusalem. Asked for help in Spain. He preached in Galatia, Philippi, Ephesus, Colossi, Rome and Corinth. And he suffered for his calling, his grace. Five times Paul had received 40 stripes minus one. Three times he was beaten with rods. Three times he was stoned. Three times he was shipwrecked. He spent one night and a day floating into the sea. He suffered perils of waters, robbers, countrymen, gentiles in the city and in the wilderness. He suffered by his false brethren. He suffered of weariness,toil, of sleeplessness, of hunger, thirst fasting. He suffered cold and being naked.

Yet at the end it states, “I have fought the good fight. I have finished his race.” He saw himself as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God which was his reasonable service of worship.

**PROPHECY**:

**What it is**: There are three types of prophecy in the bible. The first type is called **FORETELLING** or telling of future events. This gift to see into the future is rare. The second type is **FORTHTELLING** or pronouncement and announcement of the Christian message with authority. It is knowing God in your life so much it can and will be heard. Forthtelling is in the church today as a gift of preaching. The third type is a deep understanding of the present world. It is the ability to see the strings and movement of God within the chaos of this world. And once understood and seen it is actively shared. It may be called **TRUTHTELLING**. All three are listened to and respond not so much as the content but the speakers gifting of revelation.

**What is the imperative**: Again it is attached to the opposite of pride and in proportion of faith.

**PRACTICE OF SERVICE:**

**What it is:** The word in Greek is diakonia. It is the act of showing love and compassion toward others without a sense of accomplishment. It is showing Jesus in the now and toward the needy. It is much more than moving chairs in the morning service. It is a sacrificial gifting in the same manner and amount that God has given.

**What is the imperative:** Serving is the reward for serving. It is the understanding of the acts toward the less fortunate, the less able in the church is being served by God through your acts of service. There is no other incentive or specialness to the giver but the gift itself.

**TEACHING:**

**What it is:** Teaching is the next step for the church to grow. It is an explanation to those who need to grow. To those who want to grow. It is the primary vehicle for discipleship. Making disciples starts with teaching. All the exhortation and invitation avail little without explanation; without explanation of the claims and calling will only create

shallow Christians who start to grow and die quickly. Filling the church is not enough there must be a revelation of the next steps.

**EXHORTATION:**

**What it is:** This gift given in direct proportion of faith is the gift of calling. It is invitation to come along side to help. It is the giving of advice to those who are falling short of their potential within the church. It is admonishment in love. It is an invitation to hope. It is to make an appeal for change and a movement forward.

**What is the imperative:** Like the gift of service the gift of exhortation is to have its own internal reward. It is the satisfaction of straightening the path of a brother in love and respect. This gifted person does because that is who he is. It is not done in pride or for self-satisfaction, but for the assurance for the furthering of the Kingdom of God.

**GIVING:**

**What it is:** Giving is sharing, to impart, to contribute. It is giving what you have.

The story of the Good Samaritan given by Jesus can well be divided into five kinds of people:

*What is mine is yours because I am a victim.* Take what you want I will never fight back, I will never object, I will be content in whatever you do to me. *This attitude is played out as the person robbed along the roadside.*

What is yours is mine if I can steal it. It will take advantage of the weak and the helpless. I will go wherever I want to go, I will take whatever I want, I am so full of myself, I take whenever. This attitude is played out as the persons who robbed the traveler.

What is mine is mine, and don’t involve me. As the religionist Levi walked by, he saw the robbed one and simply walked the other way.

What is mine is mine, unless you pay for it. The innkeeper who saw the plight of the victim and simply had to be paid and paid full and even paid if the victim did not leave the next day.

What is mine is mine, unless you need it. The one person that saw the need, determined the best response and carried through with it. The person who had the gift of giving.

**What is the imperative**: Giving just the minimum is not exercising the gift of giving. Giving requires simple kindness. In the original language the word carries the thought of simplicity. It does not include grand gestures, no alternative motives. It is simply given with no expectation.

**LEADERSHIP:**

**What it is:** Those who are called and placed in the role of a leader. The person who is gifted with the ability to make decisions and be followed. A person who takes the front but is never seen as the front runner.

In today’s church there is a problem with leadership. The longer I am in the church, leadership seems to be done by professionals. Less and less leadership is provided by humble service.

**What is the imperative:** A leader must be willing to give up anonymity. It is characterized by humility balanced with strength. The gifted leader sees the fulfillment of his faith as a pleasure and never a “Have to”. If you are ever appointed to a leadership role with out the gift of leadership, it will always be an addon instead of a calling. If you are appointed to a leadership role, get out in front and lead.

I had a hat a number of years ago. It has two bills and the statement, “I am their leader which way did the go?”

**MERCY:**

**What it is:** There always be a time in the church when the gifted with mercy are needed to simply give up on judgement and condemnation and just be merciful. It is probably the most difficult to have this gift. We want so much for others to be like yourself so filled with God’s grace and mercy that the only response to others is seeing the hurt, the anguish, the pain and being not sympathetic by empathetic: Not just understanding but feeling the hurt.

**What is the imperative:** I had a junior high school aged boy in one of my churches. His name was Levi. He had a severe mental handicap. When we would sing in the church, Levi would get a smile on is face that would light up the world. One after noon I was listening to his mother and wondering what I could do to help. “I need Levi, to feel he is a part of the church.” The next Sunday I invited Levi to come up front and lead the singing. He waved his arms to the melody and no one would ever underestimate Levi again. He was a part of the family of God and deserved mercy. And it brought me joy.

Mercy is giving, mercy is forgiving, mercy is looking beyond the flaws, mercy is giving a second look in a bad situation. Mercy is loving when no one else does. Mercy is based on love and never in superiority.

After understanding that the gifts listed in Romans 12, Paul inserts three thoughts:

1. We are gifted by faith
2. We are all one body
3. There is a large danger with gifts given, PRIDE.

Chuck Smith said this about faith:

“*God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. What do you do with it? We can exercise the faith. We can use the faith that God has given to us, or we can just let it die. But God has given to every man a measure of faith. A person says, "Well, I just don't have any faith." That is not true. I've not yet met a person that didn't have faith. If you didn't have faith, you wouldn't lie down on that bed tonight. You'd be afraid that it was going to fall through. Faith is going to hold you up so you can lie down. If you didn't have faith, you wouldn't try to start your car, because you wouldn't have faith that the thing was going to start when you turned the ignition key. We exercise faith in a lot of things, not always the right things*.”

* What is the measure of our faith?

I am a child of God. It is who I am. God created a new creature by the renewal of my mind. I am a living sacrifice. I am not conformed to this worldly idea of how I should act. I have been transformed. I am aligning myself to the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.

I cannot measure faith by mass. It has none. There is no standard man can devise to that has even close to the idea of measurement of faith. I suppose we could measure the number of people who have come to Jesus as a measurement of faith. If it be prophecy, I guess I could. measure the number of people I have preached to and perhaps changed. If it is teaching, I guess the number of people that have been disciplined can be measured. If it's preachers, it's the number of people that are in church. Servants, well, it's got to be the number of acts made that made a difference. Exhortation is the number of times I've given advice. That's a measurement. How about giving? Can I say my faith is measured by the number of dollars given? But it's more than that. How do we measure the leadership? By the number of followers, obviously. And mercy. Yes, the number of times I have forgiven others.

Is God the eternal bean counter? How do we know? How do we know when it's enough? How do we know when it's not enough?

Here is the trap here. The more we focus on MY FAITH instead of the measure of faith given to me. God saving me is identical to the process, measure and completion to all others. Pride is a response to my actions and my status, not to what God has done.

But God is not done with the gift giving business. God has a new gift. A place of belonging in a living breathing organism: The Body of Christ.

It is further most important to know “Measure of faith” does not mean “amount of faith” but rather a “standard by which we measure ourselves”.

The first characteristic of this new gift is that it is proportional to the quantity of our faith. “**Allotted to the measure to each as a measure of faith”.** The logic here is that as our faith in God’s workings and the diminishment of our pride, will result in the amount of faith in your life. And further the more faith the greater the allotment. There is a direct proportion between faith and gifts given**.**

This leads us to the context of these gifts. **The gifts are to be exercised and primarily pointed to the ministry of the church.** Please note while the gifts spoken of here are of great importance to the function of the church, they also need to used outside of the church for the furtherance of the Gospel.

**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.**

* To whom is Paul addressing?

From his position of Apostle to the Gentiles, he is telling a group of people expressly and explicitly in the Church. People who stirred their hearts to conform to the ways of Jesus. When Paul addressed every man the meaning from the original language was “every individual” or “among you” was the target of his arrow. This admonition was for the church.

But more than that he was addressing those considering the very act of maturity. Going on beyond the showing up stage of Christianity. He was addressing those who need to know and then do the expressed will of God. Furthermore, with this expressed will of God is a required behavior and response. As we said last lesson there is a requirement of submission, unconformity, transformation, and proof of the will of God.

* What is this grace given to Paul in verse 3?

The definition of Grace is the unmerited favor bestowed on someone. It is giving of a very special and valuable gift. But here Paul is saying God has given to him this grace in the form of a calling. To become a living sacrifice (the body), in spiritual service (the spirit), and a renewed mind (soul), Paul was called to be an Apostle to the Gentiles. This grace stated here is more about the results of grace than the grace itself. Here in this section is given in authority of Paul’s office of Apostle. This the agency or vocation is used to give an admonition to every man in the church.

“I say” is Paul stating by his authority of God’s grace given to him as the Apostle to the Gentiles that those in the church were susceptible to a inner attitude.

* What is the why of the gifts given in proportion to our faith?

Paul uses an analogy of the Body. We must assume this referring to the Church as the Body of Christ when Paul changes from “you” to “we”. It is striking there are many thoughts associated with this analogy:

* A gift is given as a gift but **the gift is not the same for everyone**.

A pastor was asked about those who volunteered in the church. He responded with a litany of volunteers and the efforts they all contributed. “But are they doing what God wanted them to do?” The pastor responded, “If they only did what God wanted nothing would get done in the church.”

* It is a gift **fits the gifted**. In the list of gifts which are included in this portion of Romans 12, Paul states there are some gifts that are in all churches. And the gift always suits or makes the best of what they had before. There are exceptions of course, but seldom is a gift given to someone who already is exhibiting the associated traits.
* Each gift **is to be exercised.** If you neglect your gift it will diminish over time.
* There is a **dependence upon each other**. The gift is for the body. There is an inferred requirement to use the gift for the furtherance of the Body of Believers. The list given here in Romans 12, while not exhaustive is specifically pointed to the church. We need each other to do our gifted stuff. And I believe if there is no one in the church that does not have one of these bodily function gifts, God will raise him or her up.
* Gifting to God’s people is the next step after knowing the will of God through our transformation. **It points us the point of greatest worth to the church**.
* What is the attitude of those who Paul was referring to?

Every call to God is accompanied with a requirement of response. Our response will be to accept or reject. To know the will of God is true for us it must be proved by the Word of God. Here in this verse is another reaction to something gifted to the believer. This admonishment here is taking on an attitude of pride. To think this gift makes you something more than all others.

This attitude is a negative response. It is something we should refrain from. On a line of responses to the mercies of God given to us, pride is not acceptable. We are to refrain from them. It is an act of the decision-making soul. It is saying to all to hear, the gift that I did not earn or even ask for, made me so special I see myself a greater than all others.

**Pride** is thinking and acting as though you are higher than others. You see yourself as more than you are. It is esteeming yourself as better than others. But there is a better way. There is an alternative to pride. This second choice should be first. To be sober minded. To be hyper in love with yourself, to a place where you understand the reality of where you are in God’s eyes.

God has given grace. I know what I was like before I accepted this gift. We are called to first think about your thinking. Pride is taking my old truck to the Lamborghini dealership and selecting the most expensive car they have and saying, “I will trade you my truck straight across, and while you are at it through in a 5 year maintenance agreement.”

Gifts can be dangerous, because they can lead to **pride**. Paul begins by warning us of thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought, and that is one of the greatest dangers that I see of men who have been gifted of God--they get into a little castle of exclusivity and they begin to think that they are really something, and they begin to seek adulation, admiration, bucks for my gift, you know. How many have prostituted the works and the gifts of God in their lives trying to use it for their own personal enrichment or glory.

I have made a covenant with God. If ever I start to do create my own little fiefdom with the goal of being “all that”, He is to wipe me out immediately. God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Jesus Christ by which I was crucified to the world and the world to me. But there is a prevalent danger to any person who experiences the working of God's Holy Spirit through their lives to become lifted up by those around them because of what God has done. And the moment you begin to be lifted up, your effectiveness for God's kingdom diminishes.

I have known those who say, “look at me” and “follow my path” and “I know best.” If I'm giving my body to be burned and it isn't the love of Christ that is motivating me, but the love for riches or glory or whatever, then it earns me less than nothing. For many will come in a day saying, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? We cast out devils in your name. We healed the sick. We did many marvelous works." And Jesus will say, "Depart from me ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you." Motivations get all twisted up. They began to do things for their own glory and to seek their own honor and their own name.

* What are the characteristics of this new gifts of ministry?

***Romans 12:1,2 are about the transformation of our lives. Romans 12:3-8 are about the reason God has to transformation process.***

It is an allotment given freely in response to our faith in direct measurement and in the same quantity. Gifts are given to all that would be transformed. They are given in the measure of faith. The more faith the more the gift. But again we must be wary of Pride. Your faith will increase the gift but it is still God and not you.

We can measure the amount of the God given gift by our faithful response. When we start doing something in faith in God, God in turn opens the spigot a little more. And the more we develop the gift in faith the greater the gift.

# Appendix

## Greek to me!

Our text was originally written in ancient Greek. In this study we utilize the New American Standard Bible unless specifically noted. Definitions given are contextualized from the original Greek and come from three translators of Thayer, Strong, and Mounce

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| **English Word** | **Greek word** | **Word type** | **Definition** |
| Grace | charitos | Noun | the state of kindness and favor toward someone, often with a focus on a benefit given to the object; by extension: gift, benefit; credit; words of kindness and benefit: thanks, blessing; gratitude; unmerited favor given with any expectation of return |
| High minded | hyperphronéō | Verb | to think too highly of oneself, to be vain, to be arrogant, to be prideful |
| Allotted | emerisen | Verb | to give, assign; to divide, share; to be divided; difference between, distribute, give part. |
| measure | metron | Noun | measure, limit, what is apportioned |
| faith | pisteōs | Noun | faith, faithfulness, belief, trust, with an implication that actions based on that trust may follow; the faith often refers to the Christian system of belief and lifestyle; persuasion, that is, credence; moral conviction, especially reliance upon Christ for salvation; abstractly constancy in such profession; by extension the system of religious truth itself: - assurance, fidelity. |
| body | sōmati | Noun | body, the mass of anything, usually a corporeal tissue, human, animal, or plant; used of a (large or small) number of men closely united into one society, or family as it were; a social, ethical, mystical body so in the NT of the church |
| function | prax'in | Noun | deed, action, practice, deed, work: a thing to be done, business; a doing, a mode of acting, a deal, a transaction. |
| gifts | charismata | Noun | a divine gratuity, that is, deliverance from danger or passion; specifically a spiritual endowment, a religious qualification, or a miraculous faculty: - The same root word as grace. |
| properly | Kata | Prep | in, by, with, in accordance with, toward, along. |
| prophecy | prophēteía | Noun | prophecy, an inspired message: Forthtelling  encouragement toward obedience to God: encouragement.  proclaiming the future as a warning to preparedness and continued obedience: Foretelling. |
| service | diakonian | Noun | ministry, service, the action of a bringing of a gift: providing others an expressed need. Relief of want. |
| teaching | didasko | Verb | to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them, deliver didactic discourses. to teach, instruct, to provide information in a manner intended to produce understanding, either in a formal or informal setting |
| exhortation | parakaléō | Verb | to ask, beg, plead; to comfort, encourage, exhort, urge; to call, invite; to call to one's side, call for, summon |
| giving | metadídōmi | Verb | to impart, share, contribute to needs |
| leadership | proḯstēmi | Verb | to manage, direct, lead; to devote oneself, busy oneself to. To stand before, that is, to preside, or to practice: - maintain, be over, rule. |

# Next week:

1. Read Romans 12:9-21
2. Make notes as to any words or ideas that are not immediately clear to you.
3. Pray for the Men in your church to take leadership in their homes.