

"YOUR GIFTEDNESS DETERMINES YOUR INVOLVEMENT"

Romans 12:1-8

Take note of the word "THEREFORE." For you see the word "THEREFORE" is one of the most underrated words in all of the English language. This one word is said to serve as a hinge on a door that acts as the link between the wall and the door, and this word enables the one to relate to the other. So when we find this word "THEREFORE" in Scripture, it holds together doctrinal principles and practical application. Such is what we find in the first verse of Romans 12 where the Apostle Paul writes, "I appeal to you **therefore**, brothers and sisters," and then the Paul goes on to tell the believers that they are to demonstrate their commitment by presenting their bodies, refusing to conform to this world, and by being transformed through renewed minds.

This morning we look through the 9th of 10 windows as we have and continue our 70 Day Vision journey, seeking to establish a Biblical worldview

over-and-against a secular worldview. Today we are focusing on our giftedness.

The Bible teaches that each and every believer in Christ has a spiritual gift or gifts that have been given by the Holy Spirit. The point I want to make today is this- our giftedness determines our involvement and this is true whether it is in or outside the church. And while each believer has a gift or gift given by God, Paul, in verse 3 of our passage, challenges every believer to not think too highly of him or herself, to not think arrogantly thereby elevating and promoting oneself and maybe their own agenda. This type of attitude is unchristian and out of bounds in the Body of Christ. Paul says in verse 3 that we are not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. What Paul means here is that God equips each believer for a particular task and expects that person to discover and fulfill his or her specific role in the framework of the of the believing

community. And once this is understood, the believer is then freed from a number of potential misunderstandings. The believer will not aspire to be more than God intended him or her to be, and they will not settle for being anything less than what God created and redeemed him or her to be. And so, in the context of the church, the believer will make a sober and fair evaluation of his or her own gifts and calling.

But let's look at verse 2 where Paul says that we are to be what? We are to be transformed. Do you understand that **for each of us there is a transformed potential that has not yet been realized?** As our hearts are conforming to the image of Christ and our minds are renewed we will find ourselves growing and maturing in the faith.

Many times Paul will refer to believers as citizens of a new Kingdom. He tells us not to be conformed to this world because he knows all too well how evil and destructive this earthly world can be. And besides, this world is not our home for we are just passing through.

And so it is as if the believer has one foot in this world with the other foot in heaven. So in the meantime, we are to live as citizens of the heavenly Kingdom here on earth but not be conformed to this world. As believers, we have the unique privilege and tension-filled opportunity to live in the present “evil age” as members of the age to come. And so while we live and breathe and exist in this world Paul wants us to recognize and value the gifts we have been given and use them to build up the Body of Christ, the Church. And by the same token he doesn’t want us to undervalue our gifts.

Paul is all about the team, the Body of Christ, and he wants all believers to get in touch with God’s calling on our lives, to get in touch with each of our roles in the Body of Christ, to get in touch with each of our responsibilities in the Body of Christ.

A key point that Paul is trying to get across is that **each member functions to serve the Body of Christ.** When you think about the Body of Christ it is not there primarily to serve the members and meet the

members' needs. It does this collectively but we have a wrong understanding if all we think of the Body of Christ is for it to meet our needs. Paul is trying to get across that we all have a role and part to play in the mission of the Church and we need to have the right understanding. I find that there are times when we have a hard time getting our hands around the mission of the Church and so we might be tempted to say to ourselves or someone else, "What do I have to offer?" And what Paul would say to this is, "be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God— what is good and acceptable and perfect." And one of the ways we can all do this is get in touch with and understand our spiritual giftedness.

Earlier I mentioned that we have this transformed potential. Look at verses 4-5 for just a moment. Paul says, "For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members of one

another.” Here Paul is telling us that we express this transformed potential within the local church. And as God is shaping His Body, the Church, unity is the result. And this unity provides purpose and structure. But we have to remember that we are a part of something much, much bigger. We are a part of a living organism known as the Church that needs to be in constant action, constant motion with all the parts, you and me, working together. And when we are and when we do we are serving God’s purposes.

In verses 4 and 6 we find something very helpful. Paul tells us in verse 4 that even though we have many members we do not all have the same function. He emphasizes this by saying in verse 6 that we have gifts that differ. But even though there is diversity he tells us in verse 4 that we are one body. We are completely unified because **we all belong to each other**. Diverse but unified. Now I don’t know what you think, but to me, this is a scary thought! And also remember that even though we are united that does not mean that there is uniformity because there is much diversity.

All of us conforming to the image of Christ? Yes. But this doesn't mean that we are all going to be the same, look the same, and even act the same.

Paul makes it very clear in Romans 12 that every single one of us has a calling within the Body of Christ, the Church. We all, each and every one has a role and a call because God has given us a gift to be used within the Church. Friends, one of the greatest joys is to find where we can use our gift or gifts as, together, we build the Kingdom of God. For when we find our Kingdom niche, believe me, life becomes for us a calling, a mission. And guess what? Those around us are transformed in the process as we share the love of God with them.

A question: **are some gifts more important than others?** I mean is the gift of preaching more important than the gift of compassion? I mean, after all, the one preaching is out in the public limelight and the one sharing compassion might be almost invisible from the public eye so it only goes to reason that the one preaching is more important than the one showing forth

compassion, right? Wrong. Friends, Paul makes it clear in verse 6 that we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us but that doesn't mean that one is better or more important than the other. All the gifts are important; no gift is superior to another. And why? Because all the gifts contribute to the welfare of the Body and each gift should be seen as an expression of our relationship to Jesus Christ.

Let me ask you a hypothetical question using the body parts that may not be so hypothetical. Over here you have an eye who has a gift and doesn't use it while over here you have the ear who has a different gift. But because the eye isn't using their gift and the ear, out of love for Christ and His Church, steps in to do the ministry that the eye should do but doesn't, what do you think might happen? The ear, God bless them, in their valiant attempt to "fill in the gap" might be in over their head trying to do what the eye should do or they might become frustrated or discouraged because things aren't going the way they had hoped- let me ask you, do you see a

problem here? What happens is if we don't use our gifts, we hurt the Body, the Church and the team is incomplete. Friends, the point I want to make is this, **the gift or gifts God has given to us need to be developed, worked, molded and shaped.** We read in John 15 that God gives us these gifts to use so that we can bear fruit.

Here is what all of us need to do and here is what we need to ask ourselves: First, **what will using my gift accomplish?** Another way of putting it is **what will be the return of the investment?** Now, at first hearing, these questions might sound a bit unspiritual but God doesn't mind us thinking of these realities. God doesn't mind us dreaming of what He might do through us.

A second question is, **am I uniquely gifted for this work?** I mean, if a person has gifts and strengths in leadership or teaching, a fair question we can ask ourselves is does God want to use me to strengthen and build up His Church?

And here is a third question to consider, if I agree to do this job, this work or this ministry, **will I keep someone else from stepping in and using their gift?** I wonder if we ever need to step out of doing something and let someone else step in so that we can, in turn, do some other work that God has gifted us to do?

And here is a fourth and final question, **how much of me is required to do a good job?** In other words, how much time and energy is this work going to take? For in asking this question we might need to cut out some things in our lives in order to do a good job, cut out the clutter of our lives before we make a commitment.

Here are two final questions for all of us to consider- As you read with me earlier and as you hopefully read again our passage from Romans 12:1-8 ask yourself these two questions- **How does God want me to live out this passage? And, what are the gifts God has equipped me with to serve this Body, this Church?**

Jesus said in John 15 1-2, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit." Friends, we are called to bear fruit and this has Kingdom consequences, this has eternal consequences and we bear fruit by using our spiritual gifts.

Are you looking for something new in your life? Are you looking for your purpose? Do you want to find unbelievable fulfillment that will fill the void in your soul? Then use your gifts for the Kingdom of God and you will find fulfillment like you have never experienced it before. And guess what? The Church will become a vibrant and alive place for God glory. Folks, when it is all said and done, your giftedness determines your involvement! It is our calling; it is our responsibility. Amen.

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Introduction: take note of the word THEREFORE

Every believer has a gift or gifts; we are not to think too highly of ourselves vs.3

For each of us there is a **transformed** _____ that has not yet been realized

Each member functions to _____ the Body of Christ

Romans 12: 4 & 6

We all _____ to each other- diverse but united

A question- are some gifts more important than others?

The gifts God has given to us need to be developed...

We need to ask ourselves...

First, **what will using my gift _____?**

Second, **am I uniquely _____ for this work?**

Third, **will I keep someone else from stepping in and using their gift?**

Fourth, **how much of ME is _____ to do a good job?**

Finally, **how does God want me to live out this passage? What are the gifts God has equipped me with to serve the Body, the Church?**

Conclusion: Use your gifts for the Kingdom of God and you will find fulfillment like you have never experienced before!

