

THE EPISTLES TO THE ROMANS

ROMANS 12:1-15:13, THE PRACTICE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

INTRODUCTION

A. Outline of Romans

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B. Comments on Romans 12:1-15:13

1. Paul divided Romans into doctrinal (chapters 1-11) and practical (chapters 12-15) sections as he did in Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, and 1 Thessalonians.
2. C. E. B. Cranfield, *...the obedience required of Christians is not just an obedience in principle. It is rather an obedience of thought and attitude, of word and deed, wrought out in the concrete situations of life...*
3. Douglas Moo, *...Jesus Christ is the Lord; and thus to believe in him means at the same time a commitment to obey him...The "imperative" of a transformed life is therefore not an optional "second step" after we embrace the gospel: it is rooted in our initial response to the gospel itself. To eliminate this part of Romans would be therefore to omit an indispensable dimension of the gospel.*
4. Warren Wiersbe, *In the Christian life, doctrine and duty always go together. What we believe helps to determine how we behave. It is not enough for us to understand Paul's doctrinal explanations. We must translate our learning into living and show by our daily lives that we trust God's Word.*

ROMANS 12:1-8, DEVOTION TO GOD AND HUMILITY TOWARD OTHERS

A. A Christian's priority is devotion to God (1-2)

1. Paul pleads for total commitment to God which is true spiritual worship (1), ***I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.***
 - a. Paul makes a similar *appeal* in other epistles.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 1:10, *I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.*
 - 2) Ephesians 4:1, *I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,*
 - 3) Colossians 3:1, *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.*
 - 4) 1 Thessalonians 4:1, *Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.*
 - b. *therefore*
 - 1) Paul is looking back to the first section of his epistle.
 - 2) What he will now instruct concerning proper behavior is built on correct doctrine.
 - 3) C. E. B. Cranfield, *The implication of this 'therefore' is that Christian ethics are theologically motivated or—to put it in a different way—that the Christian's obedience is his response to what God has done for him in Christ, the expression of his gratitude...the source from which such effort springs is neither a humanistic desire for the enhancement of the self by the attainment of moral superiority, nor the legalist's illusory hope of putting God under an obligation, but the saving deed of God itself.*
 - c. *brothers*
 - 1) Paul is speaking to men and women, *brothers and sisters.*
 - 2) Specifically, he is speaking to Christians who are those who have placed faith in Christ alone.

- d. *appeal*
- 1) It means *to urge, exhort, encourage*.
 - 2) It literally means *to call to one's side*
 - 3) Paul is not commanding the readers to do what he says out of compulsion but because of what God has done for them.
 - 4) Thomas Constable, *The charge rises out of humankind's universal condemnation by God (3:20), the justification that God has freely provided (5:1), and the assurance of acceptance that the believing sinner can have (8:1). Because of all this, it is only reasonable to present our lives to God as living sacrifices (12:1).*
- e. *by the mercies of God*
- 1) Paul's appeal is not based on human effort but on God's merciful provision.
 - 2) Note Romans 11:30-32, *For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.*
 - 3) Thomas Constable, *Mercy expresses deliverance from condemnation that we deserve and grace the bestowal of blessings that we do not deserve...Paul called us to sacrifice ourselves to God because He has been merciful to us.*
 - 4) John Calvin, *...men will never worship God with a sincere heart, or be roused to fear and obey Him with sufficient zeal, until they properly understand how much they are indebted to His mercy...*
 - 5) Thomas Erskine, *... "in the New Testament religion is grace, and ethics is gratitude.*
 - 6) John Stott, *God's grace, far from encouraging or condoning sin, is the spring and foundation of righteous conduct.*
- f. *present your bodies as a living sacrifice*
- 1) *Present* means *to offer as a sacrifice*.
 - a) Romans 6:13, *Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.*
 - b) Romans 6:19, *I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.*
 - 2) *bodies*
 - a) The body represents the whole person, body, soul, and spirit being offered to God for service to Him.
 - b) John Calvin, *By bodies he means not only our skin and bones, but the totality of which we are composed...*
 - 3) *a living sacrifice*
 - a) Douglas Moo on *living*, *...it is more likely to refer to the nature of the sacrifice itself: one that does not die as it is offered but goes on living and therefore continues in its efficacy until the person who is offered dies.*
 - b) Thomas Constable, *In pagan religions of Paul's day the worshippers typically first offered sacrifices to secure the mercy of the gods. That is unnecessary in Christianity because God has taken the initiative.*
 - c) C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Christian, already God's by right of creation and by right of redemption, has yet again to become God's by virtue of his own free surrender of himself. And this self-surrender has, of course, to be continually repeated...Since God is the sort of God He has revealed Himself to be, to belong to Him involves the obligation to strive to be and to do what is in accordance with His character.*
 - d) Warren Wiersbe, *Isaac willingly put himself on the altar and would have died in obedience to God's will, but the Lord sent a ram to take his place...When he got off that altar, Isaac was a "living sacrifice" to the glory of God.*
 - e) Douglas Moo, *It is not only what we can give that God demands; he demands the giver.*
 - f) Jesus is the perfect example of a *living sacrifice*. He died but was raised from the dead and is at the right hand of the Father, our *living sacrifice*.

- 4) *holy and acceptable to God*
 - a) Note Romans 15:16, *to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.*
 - b) John Witmer, *A believer's offering of his total life as a sacrifice to God is therefore sacred service.*
 - c) God demands holiness of those who He draws close to Himself, Romans 6:19b, *...For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.*
 - d) C. E. B. Cranfield, *...Since God is the sort of God He has revealed Himself to be, to belong to Him involves the obligation to strive to be and to do what is in accordance with His character...a true and proper sacrifice, one which is desired by God which He will accept.*
 - e) Douglas Moo, *"Holy" is a regular description of sacrifices; it implies here that the offering of ourselves to God involves a being "set apart" from the profane and a dedication to the service of the Lord.*

- 5) *which is your spiritual worship*
 - a) *Spiritual* may be translated *rational, endowed with reason.*
 - 1] It bears the meaning *true to the real and essential nature of something.*
 - 2] *Spiritual worship is true worship.*

 - b) *Worship* may be translated *service, ritual duties.*
 - 1] Hebrews 9:6, *These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties,*
 - 2] *Service to God is worship.*

 - c) Submitting oneself to God as a living sacrifice is true worship.
 - 1] Thomas Constable, *There are many ways in which we can worship God, but this is the most fundamental and important way. This service of worship should precede all other service of worship or else worship and service are superficial.*
 - 2] C. E. B. Cranfield, *The continuous offering of our whole selves in all our concrete living is our 'logical' action of worshipping...worship which is not accompanied by obedience in the ordinary affairs of life must be regarded as false worship, unacceptable to God...note Amos 5:21-24, I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.*
 - 3] Chrysostom, *And how is the body, it may be said, to become a sacrifice? Let the eye look on no evil thing, and it hath become a sacrifice; let thy tongue speak nothing filthy, and it hath become an offering; let thine hand do no lawless deed, and it hath become a whole burnt offering.*
 - 4] John Stott, *No worship is pleasing to God which is purely inward, abstract and mystical; it must express itself in concrete acts of service performed by our bodies...our feet will walk in his paths, our lips will speak the truth and spread the gospel, our tongues will bring healing, our hands will lift up those who have fallen, and perform many mundane tasks as well like cooking and cleaning, typing and mending; our arms will embrace the lonely and the unloved, our ears will listen to the cries of the distressed, and our eyes will look humbly and patiently towards God.*
 - 6] Warren Wiersbe, *...every day is a worship experience when your body is yielded to the Lord.*

2. True spiritual worship is transformational (2), ***Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.***
 - a. Paul moves from an appeal in verse 1 (what) to a command in verse 2 (how).
 - 1) D. Edmond Hiebert, *The first verse calls for an explicit act; the second commands a resultant lifelong process. These verses are a call for an act of presentation and the resultant duty of transformation.*
 - 2) Douglas Moo, *...Paul leaves open the exact relationship between vv. 1 and 2. The two verses could be coordinate, issuing two parallel but separate exhortations. But v. 2 is probably subordinate to v. 1, giving the means by which we can carry out the sweeping exhortation of v. 1.*
 - 3) John Stott, *If the first part of Paul's appeal relates to the presentation of our bodies to God, the second relates to our transformation according to his will.*

- b. Paul's first command is *do not be conformed to this world*.
- 1) *Do not be conformed*
 - a) The verb means *to be formed like, to be guided by*.
 - b) The word is used here and in 1 Peter 1:14, *As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,*
 - c) Thomas Constable, *The present tense in the Greek text of verse 2 indicates our continuing responsibility in contrast to the aorist tense in verse 1 that stresses a decisive act.*
 - d) The verb form of the command is tied to a specific thing which is *world* in verse 2.
 - 2) *this world*
 - a) In this verse, *world* means *a period of time, age*.
 - b) Luke 16:8, *The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.*
 - c) Galatians 1:4, *who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,*
 - d) 1 John 2:15, *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*
 - e) Douglas Moo, *This world,* "literally "this age," is the sin-dominated, death-producing realm in which all people, included in Adam's fall, naturally belong.
 - 3) Comments on Paul's first command.
 - a) C. E. B. Cranfield, *...when Christians allow themselves to be conformed to this world, what takes place is not just a disguising of their real nature but an inward corruption.*
 - b) C. K. Barrett, *...conformity to this age is no superficial matter.*
 - c) Conformity to the world is totally opposed to God's will for believers which is conformity to Christ, Romans 8:29, *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*
- c. Paul's second command is *be transformed by the renewal of your mind*.
- 1) *be transformed*
 - a) It means *an internal change*.
 - b) The force of the verb translates, *keep on being transformed*.
 - c) 2 Corinthians 3:18, *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*
 - d) C. E. B. Cranfield, *...while this transformation is not the Christians' own doing but the work of the Holy Spirit, they nevertheless have a real responsibility in the matter—to let themselves be transformed, to respond to the leading and pressure of God's Spirit...We may bring out the force of the tense by translating: 'stop allowing yourselves to be conformed ... continue to let yourselves be transformed ...*
 - e) John Stott, *We must go on refusing to conform to the world's ways and go on letting ourselves be transformed according to God's will...it is a fundamental transformation of character and conduct, away from the standards of the world and into the image of Christ himself.*
 - 2) *by the renewal of your mind*
 - a) *renewal*
 - 1] It means *to cause something to be new and different*.
 - 2] There is only one other New Testament use, Titus 3:5, *he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,*
 - 3] Thomas Constable, *The Christian should be continually renewing his or her mind by returning mentally to the decision to dedicate self to God and by reaffirming that decision.*
 - b) *mind*
 - 1] It is the way of thinking, the whole mental and moral state of being, including thoughts, feelings, and actions.
 - 2] Mark 8:33, *But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."*

- 3] 1 Corinthians 1:10, *I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.*
- 4] Grant Osborne, ... *the mind is the sphere of battle between the desire to serve God and the fleshly proclivity to sin... But the mind is also the place where spiritual growth takes place. There we make decisions that determine our spiritual direction and destiny.*
- 3) Comments on Paul's second command
- a) C. E. B. Cranfield, *The transformation is not something which is brought about in an instant; it has to be continually repeated, or, rather, it is a process which has to go on all the time the Christian is in this life...Christians still live in this age...But, if they understand what God has done for them in Christ, they know that they belong, by virtue of God's merciful decision, to His new order, and therefore cannot be content to go on allowing themselves to be continually stamped afresh with the stamp of this age that is passing away.*
- b) Douglas Moo, *Christians are to adjust their way of thinking about everything in accordance with the "newness" of their life in the Spirit...This re-programming of the mind does not take place overnight but is a lifelong process by which our way of thinking is to resemble more and more the way God wants us to think.*
John Stott, ...*it is a fundamental transformation of character and conduct, away from the standards of the world and into the image of Christ himself.*
- c) Warren Wiersbe, *The world wants to change your mind, so it exerts pressure from without. But the Holy Spirit changes your mind by releasing power from within. If the world controls your thinking, you are a conformer; if God controls your thinking, you are a transformer.*
- d) John Witmer, *As one's mind keeps on being made new by the spiritual input of God's Word, prayer, and Christian fellowship, his lifestyle keeps on being transformed.*
- d. Paul gives directions on discerning the will of God.
- 1) *by testing you may discern*
- a) This phrase is one verb which means *to examine, prove, test, approve.*
- b) The New American Standard translates it as *prove*. Several translations use *discern*.
- c) Grant Osborne, *The verb means to examine something so as to live according to it, involving both discernment and practice.*
- d) I believe the word *affirm* is very appropriate. A Christian's desire should be to align his thinking with God's will. Paul will explain how we can know what we affirm is true.
- e) John Stott, ...*only a renewed mind can test and approve, that is, discern, appreciate and determine to obey, God's will.*
- 2) *the will of God*
- a) 1 Thessalonians 4:3, *For this is the will of God, your sanctification...*
- b) Grant Osborne, "*God's will*" *connotes the direction and guidance that comes from God, that moral and ethical leading regarding proper Christian thoughts and conduct in his eyes.*
- c) What the will of God's is like.
- 1] *Good*
- a] God's will is good for every believer.
- b] It is morally good for the believer.
- 2] *Acceptable*
- a] The word can mean *pleasing*.
- b] It may mean that our accepting God's will is pleasing to Him.
- c] Ephesians 5:10, *and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.*
- 3] *Perfect*
- a] God's will is completely fulfilling.
- b] His will is centered solely in Himself with nothing added by man.

3. Comments on Romans 12:1-2
 - a. C. E. B. Cranfield, *What may perhaps strike the modern reader as a rather over-anxious concern for defining the will of God may well have been prompted by Paul's knowledge that the Roman church contained those who were inclined to value the more spectacular charismatic gifts more highly than the ethical fruit of the Spirit and those who were impatient of moral restraints and prone to mistake licence for the freedom of the Spirit.*
 - b. Thomas Constable, *Dedication to God is a response to the mercy of God that we receive in salvation. It is not a condition for receiving that mercy. It is a voluntary commitment that every Christian should make out of love for the Savior, but it is not one that every Christian will make.*
 - c. John Stott, *Only a vision of his mercy will inspire us to present our bodies to him and allow him to transform us according to his will.*
 - d. Warren Wiersbe, *For many years I have tried to begin each day by surrendering my body to the Lord. Then I spend time with His Word and let Him transform my mind and prepare my thinking for that new day. Then I pray, and I yield the plans of the day to Him and let Him work as He sees best. I especially pray about those tasks that upset or worry me—and He always sees me through. To have a right relationship with God, we must start the day by yielding to Him our bodies, minds, and wills.*

B. Responsibilities concerning interpersonal relationships in the body of Christ (3-8)

1. Introductory notes
 - a. *For* connects verses 1-2 with the following verses concerning how to live what we believe.
 - b. A living sacrifice has responsibilities not required of those who live for themselves, especially interpersonal relationships.
 - c. Douglas Moo, *No specific relationship with vv. 1–2 is evident, but this call to Christian humility and unity is certainly one important manifestation of the transformation in thinking that should characterize the believer. Perhaps Paul is especially concerned that believers not take too individualistic an approach to transformation. Thus he wants us to recognize that the transformation of character is seen especially in our relationships with one another... Here, he suggests, is one specific example of the will of God for the Christian who has been transferred into the new age.*
 - d. John Stott, *...we need to know who we are, and to have an accurate, balanced and above all sober self-image. A renewed mind is a humble mind like Christ's.*
2. The necessity of humility (3)
 - a. Paul establishes his authority to give instruction to other believers (3a), ***For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you***
 - 1) New Testament references to his apostolic authority.
 - a) Acts 9:15, *But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.*
 - b) Romans 1:4b-5, *...Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations,*
 - c) Romans 15:15-16, *But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.*
 - 2) Paul's instruction on verse 3 is an authoritative command.
 - a) Thomas Constable on reminding the readers of his apostolic authority, *He probably did so because what he was about to say required personal application that would affect the conduct of his readers. The Romans had not met Paul personally so he urged them to receive his teaching humbly.*
 - b) Grant Osborne, *So when he says, "I say to every one of you," it is not just a gentle request but an authoritative command.*
 - c) C. E. B. Cranfield, *What is said in v. 3 applies equally to every member of the church.*
 - b. Paul's instruction to Roman believers (3b)
 - 1) The negative command, ***not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think,***
 - a) *not to think of himself*
 - 1] The work means *to be haughty, literally, to think higher of oneself.*
 - 2] It is *the exaggerated opinion of of one's importance.*

- b) Paul's concern regarding pride probably came from his dealings with the Corinthian church. He wrote this epistle while living in Corinth.
- 1] Other New Testament references concerning pride.
 - a] Romans 12:16, *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.*
 - b] 1 Corinthians 13:4, *Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant.*
 - 2] Comments on Paul's negative command.
 - a] Thomas Constable, *The main point of this entire paragraph (vv. 3–8) is that Christians should not think more highly of ourselves than we should but use sober judgment in evaluating ourselves.*
 - b] John Witmer, *An inflated view of oneself is out of place in the Christian life.*
 - c] C. E. B. Cranfield, *It is a command not to estimate oneself too highly but to entertain a sober opinion of oneself.*
 - d] Warren Wiersbe, *Nothing causes more damage in a local church than a believer who overrates himself and tries to perform a ministry that he cannot do. (Sometimes the opposite is true, and people undervalue themselves. Both attitudes are wrong.)*
- 2) The positive command, ***but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.***
- a) *to think with sober judgment*
 - 1] It means *to be reasonable, sensible, serious, to keep one's head.*
 - 2] Douglas Moo, *Paul insists that we are to view ourselves in a "sober" manner—in accordance with a true and objective estimate, the product of the "renewed mind" (12:2).*
 - 3] Grant Osborne, *If you are transformed by the Spirit, you will "think of yourself with sober judgment," that is, be humble and seek to serve rather than be served... To think soberly is to have the divine perspective—we are slaves to God (Rom 6:16, 18, 22) and to those around us (Gal 5:13), wanting always to use our gifts to serve them.*
 - 4] Consider our Savior as the perfect example of humility, Philippians 2:5-8, *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*
 - b) *according to the measure of faith that God has assigned*
 - 1] The means of humility is faith received from God.
 - 2] *the measure of faith*
 - a] It can mean *standard.*
 - b] Ephesians 4:7, *But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.*
 - c] Here, the standard by which to judge oneself soberly is one's faith in Christ.
 - d] C. E. B. Cranfield, *...when they measure themselves by the standard which God has given them in their faith, they then—and only then—achieve a sober and true estimate of themselves as, equally with their fellows, both sinners revealed in their true colours by the judgment of the Cross and also the objects of God's undeserved and triumphant mercy in Jesus Christ...the controlling, determinative, element in faith is not the believing subject but the believed-in Object.*
 - e] Douglas Moo, *It is that faith which believers have in common as fellow members of the body of Christ that Paul here highlights as the standard against which each of us is to estimate himself.*
3. The importance of unity in diversity (4-5), ***For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.***
- a. *For*
 - 1) Paul is tying the importance of humility in verse 3 to the body of Christ in verses 4-8.
 - 2) Douglas Moo, *...Paul uses the metaphor (the body of Christ) to back up his exhortation that believers not think more highly of themselves than they should.*

- b. There is unity in the Christian community.
 - 1) It is the body of Christ which is composed of many members.
 - 2) John 17:11, *And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.*
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many.*
 - 4) Douglas Moo, *Our oneness in Christ, Paul reminds us, extends beyond those with whom we meet weekly for worship, embracing all who call on the name of the Lord.*

- c. There is diversity in the body of Christ.
 - 1) *Members means parts.*
 - 2) The parts of Christ's body have differing functions.
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 12:14-20, *For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.*
 - 4) Functions will be defined as gifts in verses 6-8.

- d. Paul exhorts Christians to see that the beauty of unity and diversity is interdependence.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 10:17, *Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.*
 - 2) Ephesians 4:25, *Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.*
 - 3) Thomas Constable, *Each member profits from the contribution of every other member too. This realization should help us to avoid becoming proud.*
 - 4) John Witmer, *...each member functions to serve the body, not the body to serve the members.*
 - 5) C. E. B. Cranfield, *Whatever other unity the Christians in Rome may have had, the unity to which Paul is appealing is the unity which they have by virtue of what God has done for them in Christ.*
 - 6) An appropriate description for *individually members one of another* is interdependence.
 - a) John Stott, *...we are dependent on one another, and the one-anotherness of the Christian fellowship is enhanced by the diversity of our gifts.*
 - b) Grant Osborne, *God does not want us to be rugged individualists but wants us to think of ourselves as differing parts of one body. Vertically, we belong to Christ as part of his body (1 Cor 6:19–20). Horizontally, we belong to each other. This is the principle of the many and the one: many members that form one body and are interdependent.*

4. The use of spiritual gifts (6-8)
 - a. A proper understanding of spiritual gifts (6a), ***Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us,***
 - 1) There are different gifts.
 - a) 1 Corinthians 7:7, *I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.*
 - b) 1 Corinthians 12:4, *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;*
 - c) C. E. B. Cranfield, *The gifts are given for the fulfilment of different functions, and, according to Paul... they differ in value, in importance. But the reception of a greater gift does not carry with it any right to regard oneself, or to be regarded by others, as personally superior to one's fellow-Christian who has only received a lesser gift...the believer, in so far as he is truly a believer, will never forget that his gift is God's free gift, in no way something merited by himself.*
 - 2) They are gifts by means of God's grace.
 - a) 1 Corinthians 12:6, *and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.*
 - b) Ephesians 4:7, *But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.*

- c) 1 Peter 4:10, *As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:*
 - d) C. E. B. Cranfield, *...gifts or endowments which God bestows on believers to be used in His service and in the service of men....It is the Holy Spirit who mediates them....The wide variety of the gifts is grounded in the one grace shown to all; for God's grace, His underserved love in action, while it is one and the same for all, is free and sovereign, and it is according to this royal freedom of His grace that He bestows different gifts on different persons.*
- 3) The purpose of spiritual gifts.
- a) Warren Wiersbe, *Spiritual gifts are tools to build with, not toys to play with or weapons to fight with.*
 - b) Thomas Constable, *The gifts that we have are abilities that God gives us by His grace...They are capacities for His service.*
 - c) Douglas Moo, *...he (Paul) is exhorting each member of the community to use his or her own gift diligently and faithfully to strengthen the body's unity and help it to flourish.*
- b. The proper use of specific spiritual gifts (6b-8), ***let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.***
- 1) The following list is not exhaustive.
- a) They demonstrate the proper use of spiritual gifts which involves building up the body of Christ.
 - b) Compare lists of spiritual gifts.
 - 1] 1 Corinthians 12:28, *And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.*
 - 2] Ephesians 4:11, *And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,*
 - c) John Stott, *Paul proceeds to give his readers a sample of seven gifts, which he urges them to exercise conscientiously for the common good.*
 - d) Grant Osborne, *The gifts are not intended to benefit the individuals who possess them but to benefit the body of Christ. These are ministry gifts rather than status gifts. We are all meant to be servants who use them to help and bless the other members of the church.*
- 2) Paul's list of spiritual gifts in verses 6-8 may be divided into the following two categories noted by John Stott.
- a) Speaking gifts
 - 1] Prophesying
 - a] Meanings of prophecy
 - 1} Thomas Constable, *Probably Paul meant prophecy in the sense of communicating revealed truth (cf. 1 Cor. 14:3, 31) rather than as predicting or proclaiming new revelation.*
 - 2} Grant Osborne, *In many circles today it is linked with preaching or teaching, but that was not the case in the early church.*
 - 3} C. E. B. Cranfield, *The prophet was distinguished from the teacher by the immediacy of his inspiration: his utterance was the result of a particular revelation. It might be a prediction about the future of the community (e.g. Acts 11:27f) or of an individual (e.g. Acts 21:10f), or an announcement of something which God required to be done (e.g. Acts 13:1ff). It was a characteristic of prophecy that it was directed to a particular concrete situation.*
 - 4} John Stott, *In two lists of charismata, however, prophets are placed in a secondary position to the apostles, suggesting that there was a lesser prophetic gift, subsidiary to that of the biblical prophets. Words spoken by such prophets were to be 'weighed' and 'tested', whereas the apostles were to be believed and obeyed, and no sifting process was deemed appropriate or necessary in their case. Another difference seems to have been that prophets spoke to a local situation, whereas the authority of the apostles was universal.*
 - 5} I believe the close of the New Testament canon (the inspired books) signaled a shift from prophet to preacher. Of course, God can and does speak through individuals concerning specific situations with the provision addressed under *in proportion to our faith.*

- b] *in proportion to our faith*
 - 1] John Witmer, *One's "prophesying" is to be done in proportion to his faith; a better translation would be "in agreement to the (not 'his') faith."* That is, *prophesying—communicating God's message, to strengthen, encourage, and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3)—is to be in right relationship to the body of truth already revealed (cf. "faith" as doctrine in Gal. 1:23; Jude 3, 20).*
 - 2] C. E. B. Cranfield, *according to the standard of faith...the prophets are to prophesy in agreement with the standard which they possess in their apprehension of, and response to, the grace of God in Jesus Christ—they are to be careful not to utter (under the impression that they are inspired) anything which is incompatible with their believing in Christ.*
 - 3] John Stott, *...we should translate the phrase 'in agreement with the faith'. That is, 'the prophet is to make sure that his message does not in any way contradict the Christian faith.'*

2] Teaching

- a] C. E. B. Cranfield, *Whereas the prophet of the early Church was immediately inspired, the content of his message being a particular and direct revelation, the teacher based his teaching upon the OT scriptures, the tradition of Jesus and the catechetical material current in the Christian community.*
- b] In Ephesians 4:11, pastors and teachers are regarded as one group.
- c] Douglas Moo, *"Prophecy," as we have seen, has a revelatory basis: the prophet speaks the words that God "puts into his mouth." Teaching, on the other hand, involves the passing on of the truth of the gospel as it has been preserved in the church.*
- d] John Stott concerning *in his teaching, ...whatever ministry-gift people have been given, they should concentrate on using it...teachers should cultivate their teaching gift and develop their teaching ministry. This is arguably the most urgently needed gift in the worldwide church today, as hundreds of thousands of converts are pressing into the churches, but there are few teachers to nurture them in the faith.*

3] Exhortation

- a] It means *appeal to, urge, encourage, comfort.*
- b] Thomas Constable, *Whereas teaching appeals to the mind, exhortation appeals to the will.*
- c] C. E. B. Cranfield, *While the immediate purpose of teaching was to instruct, to impart information, to explain, the immediate purpose of exhortation was to help Christians to live out their obedience to the gospel. It was the pastoral application of the gospel to a particular congregation, both to the congregation as a whole and also to the members of it severally.*
- d] Douglas Moo, *The word translated "exhorter" could also be translated "comforter," or "encourager" (NIV; TEV). But coming immediately after "teacher," the word probably denotes the activity of urging Christians to live out the truth of the gospel.*
- e] John Stott, *This gift may be exercised from a pulpit or platform...or through writing (12:1), but more often it is used behind the scenes as 'the gift of counselling' (REB), or in offering friendship to the lonely and giving fresh courage to those who have lost heart.*
- f] Grant Osborne, *The main difference with teaching is that while teaching is sharing the content of Scripture, exhortation concerns itself with the practical application of scriptural truths to daily life. Doctrines are not only to be understood but also lived out in daily conduct.*

b) Service gifts

1] Serving

- a] It primarily deals with ministering to the material needs of others.
- b] It denotes things which became part of the ministry of deacons, Acts 6:1-3, Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.
- c] Douglas Moo, *...Paul thinks of a specific gift of service that qualifies a person to fill the office of "deacon," a ministry that apparently involved especially organizing and providing for the material needs of the church.*
- d] Grant Osborne, *Those called to all types of ministry are being called to give themselves up to that task, recognizing it is a high calling to serve the saints any way God directs.*

- 2] Contributing
- a] The word probably is emphasizing the giving of what is one's own.
 - b] C. E. B. Cranfield, *...the person who gives his substance to the poor is to do so without any ulterior motive.*
 - c] The attitude for sharing is generosity without grudging, note 2 Corinthians 9:11, *You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.*
 - d] Thomas Constable, *We should practice giving with singleness of heart and free of mixed motives (cf. Acts 5). The idea is not so much giving lavishly as giving single-mindedly.*
 - e] Douglas Moo, *Paul is encouraging the one who gives to others to do so straightforwardly and without ulterior motives.*
 - f] Grant Osborne, *When God's people seek to help others, the purpose is to provide for their needs and not to gain credit from others or God (see Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-34).*
 - g] William Hendriksen, *True givers are those who give wholeheartedly, all the while remembering what they themselves have received from their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*
- 3] Leading
- a] It can mean *rule, direct* as in 1 Timothy 5:17, *Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.*
 - b] Also, it can mean *care for, give aid* as in 1 Thessalonians 5:12, *We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you,*
 - c] Paul notes that leading should be done with *zeal* which means with *eagerness, earnestness, diligence, not lazily or half-heartedly.*
 - d] Thomas Constable, *Leaders experience temptation simply to enjoy the benefits of their positions rather than really providing leadership.*
 - e] C. E. B. Cranfield, *...a function which may be exercised by several persons, perhaps jointly or in turn.*
 - f] Grant Osborne, *Paul's admonition is to govern the church "diligently," with zeal and eagerness to do a good job. It involves a willingness to work hard and do our best to serve God's people with all the strength we possess.*
 - g] Many believe Paul is speaking of leaders of the local church or in the home.
- 4] Acts of mercy
- a] The emphasis is on *doing* acts of mercy, *to show mercy, to be merciful toward, to have mercy on.*
 - b] Matthew 15:22, *And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon."*
 - c] *Acts of mercy* are to be performed with *cheerfulness, gladness, graciousness.*
 - d] Thomas Constable, *Showing mercy relates to ministering to the sick and specially needy.*
 - e] C. E. B. Cranfield, *It need hardly be added that the designation of some people specially as those who show mercy in no way implies that the rest of the members of a church are free from the obligation to show mercy personally as they are able; Paul here speaks of those who, having a special aptitude, are appointed by the church to concentrate upon this work in its name.*
 - f] Douglas Moo, *...we are to understand the ministry very generally and include within it any act of mercy toward others, such as visiting the sick, caring for the elderly or disabled, and providing for the poor.*
 - g] John Calvin, *As nothing affords more consolation to the sick or to anyone otherwise distressed than the sight of helpers eagerly and readily disposed to afford him help, so if he observes gloominess on the face of those who help him, he will take it as an affront.*
 - h] Grant Osborne, *There should be the joy of the Lord in the heart, recognizing the grand privilege of being used by the Lord to alleviate suffering. We should be thrilled to be allowed to make a difference in people's lives, to give back a small amount of what God and his people have given us.*

CONCLUSION

- John Witmer, *Three of these seven gifts are mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:28 (prophets, teachers, administration); two (prophets and pastor-teachers) are included in Ephesians 4:11; and two (administering and serving) are listed in 1 Peter 4:10–11. Whatever one's gift, he should exercise it faithfully as a stewardship from God.*
- Grant Osborne, *A life of giving is so much more satisfying than a life of taking, and as we begin to discover how much we have to offer those around us, we realize we find greater ways to live joyous lives in the church.*