

Finding our Place # 42

Romans 12: 3-8

We began this new chapter with a compelling challenge to surrender our entire being to the Lord, offering ourselves a living sacrifice unto Him. We were warned against conformity to the world, while being admonished to being transformed through Christ.

Although this a tremendous task to accomplish, it ought to be the desire of every believer. Having provided the instruction necessary for total surrender and transformation, Paul now turns his attention to the behavior and action that must follow such a complete transformation. Contrary to popular opinion, believers are not “saved and shelved” until the Lord decides to call them home to heaven. Every believer is called to a life of surrender and service unto the Lord. The remainder of this great chapter will address our service unto the Lord and the obligations associated with that service. You will never enjoy a happy and fulfilling Christian life apart from surrender and service to Christ our Lord. Let’s take a few moments to consider the [instructions](#) offered in the text as we think on the thought: [Finding our Place](#).

I. A Word about Humility (3) – [For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.](#) Paul well understood the need for humility regarding service to Christ and offers instruction to every believer concerning humility. Consider:

A. The Caution (3a) – [For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.](#) He offers a word of caution concerning our Christian service. If we are to serve the Lord, and be effective in our service, we must possess an adequate measure of humility. He knew the dangers and pitfalls of pride and arrogance in service. He had lived the legalistic lifestyle that elevated the accomplishments of men while demeaning others. Paul knew some felt as if the work and ministries of God rested solely upon their abilities and accomplishments. [Gal.6:3 – For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.](#) James 4:6 – [But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.](#)

- This is a tactic Satan continues to use in our day. We must guard against pride in service to the Lord. We must continually remind ourselves that we are nothing more than sinners saved by the grace of God. Every ability we possess, He has given. We can do nothing apart from Him. It is easy to find ourselves in a position where we think the church could not function without our help. It survived long before we were ever born and it will continue after we are gone. Surely God equips us for service and desires us to be used of Him, but we must never feel as if the church

and her ministries revolve around us! As we will see, we all have a work to do and a place of service, but the church can and would survive if we were not here!

B. The Challenge (3b) – [but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.](#) After a warning against pride, Paul presents a challenge regarding our attitude toward service. We are challenged to think soberly. This has the idea of “*balanced thinking, being sane, and of a right mind.*” We are to clearly consider the abundance of grace God has provided in our lives and the abilities He has given us. This involves an attitude of thankfulness for God’s goodness, as well as humility. We are blessed beyond measure to even have a small part in the work of the Lord. We are blessed to have the opportunity to serve Him in any capacity.

- As God equips and leads us into areas of service, we must follow Him with humble hearts. His gracious leading in our lives never makes us superior to others. We are no more favored than they. God simply has a different assignment for them.
- We must also guard against jealousy in service. We are all gifted differently, and ministry requires each of us being in our place of obedient service. Serve faithfully, with a good attitude, where God has placed you. We all can’t serve in the same position, but that doesn’t elevate one place of service above the other. Just be thankful God has entrusted you with an assignment within the Kingdom work. [Psalm 84:10 – For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.](#)

II. A Word about Unity (4-5) – Closely related to the humility of those who serve the Lord is their unity with one another. Humility apart from unity will accomplish little. Consider:

A. The Diversity (4) – [For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office.](#) Paul reminds of the diversity within the body, along with the unity we share in Christ. Regardless of our position, we all belong to the body of Christ. In order for the body to function as it should as a whole, each member must be in their place while making specific contributions which benefit the body as a whole.

- Diversity is viewed as undesirable by some, but it is essential, particularly within the body of Christ. Every believer is gifted of the Lord in a particular area of service. We all have at least one gift, likely more than one, but none possess all gifts. In order for there to be harmony and fruitfulness within the body, each member must be in their place, contributing to the work of the body. [1 Cor.12:4 – Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ^{\[12\]} For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.](#)

^[18] But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. ^[27] Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

B. The Development (5a) – **So we, *being many*, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.** Again Paul reminds us that although we are many, with varied and diverse gifts, we all make up one body in Christ. The Lord has equipped us individually, placing us within His body as it has pleased Him. He takes vessels that once were unworthy and incapable of use, cleanses them in His shed blood, and places them within the body to serve Him and compliment the body as a whole. As we serve in our particular area within the body, we provide support and strength for the entire body. There are no lesser members within the body. Every part must function as it should in order for the body to operate and be effective.

- The body of Christ is a beautiful and amazing creation. He takes those from various backgrounds, with varied gifts and abilities, placing them within the body as it pleases Him, to create an organism that is functional and glorifies Him. He reached within the mass of humanity, pulling each of us from the depravity of sin, and placed us within the body to function as a whole. What a beautiful picture of grace! He develops the body according to His divine plan. I am thankful for the opportunity to have a small part within such a glorious body!

C. The Dependence (5b) – **So we, *being many*, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.** Each of us are members, one of another. This reveals the dependence we share with one another. We make up differing and separate parts of the body to create the whole. There would be a great void if one part of the body were separated or missing. Paul also spoke of this in 1 Corinthians 12. **1 Cor.12:14-19 – For the body is not one member, but many.** ^[15] *If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?* ^[16] *And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?* ^[17] *If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?* ^[18] *But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.* ^[19] *And if they were all one member, where were the body?* We need each other to serve the Lord and accomplish the great work He has entrusted to us!

III. A Word about Sincerity (6-8) – Now Paul speaks of the sincerity and commitment of our service to the Lord. Consider:

A. Our Calling (6a) – **Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us...**He speaks of the differing gifts each member of the body has received. While they are different, they have

been given nonetheless. Every one who has received salvation by faith in the Lord has been gifted of the Lord. We are equipped of the Lord as He sees fit. As He equips us with specific gifts, He calls us to areas of service in order to use those gifts. We are not gifted of the Lord out of obligation. He provides gifts in order to equip us to serve. With the reception of a particular gift comes the obligation to use that gift in service to the Lord for His glory and the benefit of the body!

B. Our Commitment (6b-8) – *Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; ^[7] Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; ^[8] Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.* Paul speaks of varied gifts given of the Lord and the responsibility to use those gifts faithfully for the Lord. Let's look at these gifts in particular. He speaks of the gift of:

- **Prophecy** – This deals with the gift of sharing inspiration from the Lord. The early apostles possessed the gift of prophecy, actually possessing the ability to foretell events that would come to pass through inspiration of the Spirit. Many agree, including myself, that the gift of prophecy through foretelling ceased to exist with the early apostles. However, many agree this gift remains in a modified sense through the preaching and forth-telling of divine truth by preachers and evangelists. John Phillips describes it as illumination today rather than prophetic inspiration.
- **Ministry** – This encompasses a large area of service to the Lord. It involves discernment of truth and application of that truth within daily life. It is obedience to the will of God through service to Him and others. It is interesting to note the word ministry is derived from the word through which we get our word deacon. Ministry emphasizes selfless service for the Lord, the body of Christ, and society at large.
- **Teaching** – This speaks of those who faithfully study and teach the Word of God to others. Many pastors possess the gift of teaching, but it isn't limited to pastors. Through faithful teaching of the Word, the body is admonished and edified. Both are essential to the health of the body.
- **Exhortation** – This is gift associated with encouragement and building up of others. It is similar to "*stirring the faint embers back to a flaming fire.*" I am thankful for those who possess and use the gift of exhortation. We all need built up through encouragement at times!
- **Giving** – This gift is not hard to define. It means what it says: those who are willing to give selflessly for the good of others. This isn't bound to monetary giving, but of various means. One may give of their time, their talents, or their resources. These are challenged to give with simplicity, *without pretense or hypocrisy*. These give because they desire to do so, not for recognition or personal gain through their giving.

➤ **Leadership** – Paul also speaks of those who are equipped to lead or rule over others. We cannot deny the need for sound leadership. If the body is to function as it should, it requires leadership. However, these are challenged to rule with diligence. This speaks of “*sensing the urgency of the need while reaching out to instruct and lead for the benefit of the entire body.*” Godly leaders seek to influence and guide others when needed for the good of the church and the glory of Christ our Lord. They realize their gift isn’t about their ego, but the good of the body.

➤ **Mercy** – These possess the ability to show compassion, mercy, and love to others in need. Often those gifted with mercy will feel compelled to visit the sick, suffering, and afflicted. This is a difficult task that is very needful. Paul urges those who possess the gift of mercy to carry out their service with cheerfulness. This is almost impossible to do apart from the help of the Spirit when exhibiting mercy. The merciful see others at the lowest places in life. Such interaction often brings despair and even a depressed state of mind. The Lord can equip the body to show mercy with joy.

Conclusion: I trust you have gained some insight regarding the body of Christ. Certainly we all possess varied gifts, but each are essential to the work of the body. We must serve with humility, while being united together for the good of the entire body. Each believer is gifted differently, and each possesses the ability to make necessary contributions. We need to use the gifts we have been given for the glory of the Lord and the benefit of the body of Christ.

Being placed within the body of Christ and gifted for service is reserved for those who have received Christ in salvation. If you have never been saved, you are not yet part of the body. Your name may be on a church role, but you are not part of the body of Christ. You may be in an area of service, but you are serving from mere human ability, not the gifts and calling of God. If you are unsaved, respond to the call of Christ and receive Him today!