

We Need Each Other! (Part 1)

Romans 12:3-8

Thought for the Day: One of the most important ways that we can show love for one another in the body of Christ is by discovering, developing and deploying our spiritual gift(s) in order to build up and serve one another.

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you:

- Every aspect of the Christian life is by the grace of God which He has given to us!
- Paul is putting into practice that which he is about to enjoin upon his readers.

Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

- When our mind is in the process of being renewed by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God (verse 2), we begin to think correctly, "with sober judgment", about God, about the world around us, and about ourselves.
- We're only going to think rightly as our minds are filled and controlled by the Word of God.
 - Our living flows out of our thinking—we cannot live well if we do not think well.
 - We are to think of ourselves "with sober and sound judgment" (*NASB*).
- *NLT*— "Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves..."

Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought...

- Pride, thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, is never a good thing in the Christian life and is always detrimental to our relationship with God and with others in the body of Christ. (Phil. 2:3; 1 Pe. 5:5-6; Psa. 51:16-17; Isa. 66:2; James 4:6, 10; Rom. 12:16)
- Pride destroys unity and harmony within the body of Christ! It destroys our relationships with others.
- God hates pride! (Proverbs 6:16-17; Psalm 101:5)

...but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

"God has given each believer a measure of faith with which to serve him. This expression refers to the spiritual capacity and/or power given to each person to carry out his or her function in the church... Whatever we have in the way of natural abilities or spiritual gifts should all be used with humility for building up the body of Christ. If we are proud, we cannot exercise our faith and gifts to benefit others. And if we consider ourselves worthless, we also withhold what God intended to deliver to others through us..."

"Healthy self-esteem is important because some of us think too little of ourselves; on the other hand, some of us overestimate ourselves. The key to an honest and accurate evaluation is knowing the basis of our self-worth — our identity in Christ. Apart from him, we aren't capable of very much by eternal standards; in him, we are valuable and capable of worthy service."

Evaluating ourselves by worldly standards of success and achievement can cause us to think too much about our worth in the eyes of others and thus miss our true value in God's eyes." (*Life Application Commentary Series*)

- Am I using the gifts and abilities God has given me to serve and build up the body of Christ?
- Low self-esteem is not biblical humility. Low self-esteem is actually a manifestation of pride and the worst kind of pride because it disguises / tries to pass itself off as humility.

This lesson on humility and healthy self-esteem is especially important in light of Paul's teaching on spiritual gifts and our roles within the body the body of Christ in verses 4-8.

4 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

- Just as the human body is a single unit made up of many different parts and each part has its own function, so the Church is a single unit made up of many different members and each member has his/her own, God-given function.
- Each member is important and the whole body is healthy and functions properly only as each member does his/her part.
- We need each other! God did not create us nor redeem us to be Lone Rangers. It is simply not true that we can be in right relationship with God and experience all that He has for us apart from the fellowship and ministries of the church family. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.

- The Holy Spirit has given every believer at least one spiritual gift that is to be used for the purpose of building up the body. (1 Cor. 12:11, 18; Eph. 4:16)
- "Spiritual gifts are extraordinary God-given abilities [vs. natural talents and abilities] that the Spirit gives to a believer to build up other members of the church" (*New King James Study Bible, pp. 1902, 1931*). "These gifts are not the result of intense prayer or spirituality. Instead, God simply gives everyone certain gifts so each person can strengthen the church." (*ibid, pp. 1901-02*)

If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8 if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

Are you using the gifts and abilities God has given you to serve and build up the body of Christ? If not, why not? When will you begin?