

## ***The Whole is Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts***

Romans 12:1-8

August 27, 2023

Carol Stepp, Youth Pastor

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The animals under the Old Covenant would be brought alive for sacrifice, but once sacrificed, they were dead. But for us the exact opposite is true. When we present our body and soul to God and surrender our egos, God makes us alive! This is what it means to present your body as a sacrifice to God.

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Sometimes it's staggering what using one's gifts can do to build others up! But there are other times when our gifts seem so small that they are insignificant. Not so, says God. And if, by withholding them, you are cheating God, yourself, and others.

How do you **Discover** your gifts? These gifts are not given only to a special few, they are bestowed on everyone

We are moved by grace if we only pause to listen. You know...follow that still, small voice that we frequently try to beat down like "whack a mole!" It is real, and it is God calling...don't hang up!

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For many of us, it is difficult to "see with reality" (i.e., humbly) what our gifts are. We tend to depreciate what comes easy for us, thinking "that is so easy, anyone can do that." The reality is, however, that what is easy for us is often very difficult for others. Something that comes easily to us is often because we are gifted in that arena

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Here, Paul is talking about our spiritual gifting; these are **abilities God has given us to serve other believers (the Church) sacrificially** (v. 1) and *each of us is to exercise them*.

The Rev. Bryan Findlayson, wrote...

“One particular aspect of our being is found in the God-given talents that we possess. Our natural tendency is to use these talents for our own end. We succeed in business and the professions by drawing on a pool of personal resources that are part of our nature, or are acquired in our life's journey. This egocentric aspect of our natures can even show itself when we exercise these talents within the congregation. When personal status becomes our goal, there is a good chance we will misuse our God-given abilities.”

“We all have personal resources, talents, gifts.... When we give our lives to Jesus our personal abilities can be accentuated and empowered by the Spirit. We may even receive new spiritual abilities to use for the King. We can then use these gifts to exercise a particular ministry within the congregation. Each has their gift, and each is different. Each one of us has a peculiar combination of gifts that make us special and unique. Each one of us can use these gifts to build up the people of God.”

“So, a congregation is made up of a group of believers possessing diverse abilities for the perfection and extension of Christ's kingdom. There is no pecking order, just different believers with different gifts. There is certainly nothing in this passage to promote the development of a professional ministerial class. The clergy do not possess all the spiritual gifts, nor do they have the right to impose their will on the life of the congregation. Rather, each member is to prayerfully and thoughtfully seek to understand their abilities and then use them within the group for the benefit of the whole.”

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