

## I. Introduction

- A. I have a “magic” tool drawer in my garage where I keep all my screwdrivers.
1. Somehow it magically makes sure that the screwdriver I need is never in tool drawer
    - a. If I need a COMMON screwdriver, the drawer has only PHILLIPS screwdrivers
    - b. If I need a PHILLIPS screwdriver, only thing in the drawer is COMMON
    - c. I’m not sure exactly how this phenomenon works, but it does seem pretty consistent
  2. It’s pretty frustrating. Because you need the right tool for the right job, right!
    - a. And you can never have enough of the tools, right? At least that what they tell me
    - b. I sometimes like to watch *This Old House* or *New Yankee Workshop* on PBS
      - 1) I never do any of the projects on those shows—I can’t afford the tools
      - 2) Before you make a \$50 shelf, you attach a \$500 gizmo to a big \$5000 gizmo
    - c. Can’t have just ONE tool. Or a toolbox with all SAME tool.
  3. You need a lot of different tools— the right tool for the right job.
    - a. That’s as true about God’s work in the church as it is with screwdrivers
    - b. Church can’t have just one or two of its members carrying the load
    - c. Everyone must working together, using their gift as a useful tool in kingdom
- B. We continue today our look at Unashamed: The Message of Romans for today
1. **Last Week:** Paul has now turned to a practical application of grace (**12:1-2**)
    - a. In the first part Romans, Paul built a meticulous case that we are saved by grace
    - b. So what? So we must offer ourselves to God as living sacrifices back to God
    - c. And that means that we can no longer salute the values and standards of the world
  2. That was **Roman 12:1-2**, his introduction summary of this last section of the book
    - a. But what will be the very first practical thing he will stress that they need to do?
    - b. Here it is: “*Get over yourself!*” That’s it! “*It’s not about you; This is about us*”
      - 1) He strikes at the basic arrogance that led to their disputing... and to ours
      - 2) He reminds them of grace and tells them use their grace gifts to serve other
      - 3) The antidote for fussing and fighting is to use their tools to serve each other
- C. Paul will give us three different lens through which to see ourselves in this text.

## II. Three Ways We Are to Look at Ourselves

### A. First, there is the lens of God's grace (Romans 12:3)

1. We might not like to admit it, but we do tend to “*think of ourselves more highly...*”
  - a. We've already seen Paul warn the Gentile Christians not to arrogant (Rom 11:20)
    - 1) Both Jewish and Roman Christians saw themselves smarter and more spiritual
    - 2) They dismissed one another; Paul comes back to pride later in chapter (12:16)
  - b. Anytime a church finds itself at odds with itself, no matter the issue—issue is pride!
  - c. Note to myself: I need to get over myself! It's not about ME; it's always about US!
2. So how are we supposed to see that? Paul starts in Rom 12:3 with **GOD'S GRACE**
  - a. Remember Paul's “*Popeye*” statement, as we called it in small group (1 Cor 15:10)
  - b. Paul said, “*By the grace of God I am what I am.*” How's that for solid self-image?
    - 1) Paul says if there's anything good in him, who is it that will get the credit?
    - 2) If there's anything bad in him (and there is), then grace is working on that too!
3. Paul sees this self-image as “*sober judgment*” or “*sober discernment*” (12:3, NET)
  - a. The word “*sober judgment*” is literally “*sound mind*” or “*clear-headed*” or “*sane*”
  - b. Tues's reading, demoniac was freed of demons and in “*his right mind*” (Lk 8:35)
  - c. Same word! NLT translates text, “*be honest in your evaluation of yourselves.*”
4. Notice it's “*by the faith God has given us,*” NOT comparing ourselves to next guy!
  - a. This isn't, “*I'm not as talented, as gifted, as creative, as next guy, so let him do it*”
    - 1) That's not sober judgment! That's just an excuse for not getting involved!
    - 2) Like Moses (Exo 3), “*I don't know enough; I can't speak well enough...*”
  - b. Paul says if we use FAITH to make sober judgment about ourselves, then...
    - 1) We won't think of ourselves too highly, putting ourselves first all the time
    - 2) We won't sell yourself short; think that you have nothing to offer others
5. The first lens through which we must see ourselves is the lens of God's grace

### B. Second, there is the lens of others; *see ourselves as part of one body* (Rom 12:4-5)

1. “*The body*” is one of Paul's favorite metaphors for church (1 Cor 12:12, Eph 4:16)
  - a. Our body had different parts with different functions; all of those are important
  - b. Church is one body (UNITY) with many different parts (DIVERSITY)
    - 1) The fact we are ONE BODY does not mean that the PARTS are all the SAME
    - 2) The whole point of having different parts is that they must remain all different

2. The fact that we remain DIFFERENT parts doesn't we're INDEPENDANT
    - a. We don't struggle with Christ as head; we do struggle with ideas we're connected
    - b. We approach most things at church totally with a "*What's in it for me?*" attitude
    - c. Why not come Wednesdays? Small Groups? Sunday School? *Or even to potlucks?*
      - 1) "*I don't get anything out of it.*" I deny the allegation & challenge the alligator!
      - 2) Might someone else benefit by you being here? *Is it about you or about us?*
  3. What would Paul think is a "sober judgment" way of thinking about this?
    - a. He says we "...form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."
    - b. We belong to Christ. But that means that we belong to one another as well!
- C. **Third**, we look through the **lens of our gifts** to that we use to bless others (**Rom 13:6-8**)
1. The word "*gifts*" here is another form of the word "*grace*" that appears in the text.
    - a. So Paul starts with God's grace (**v. 3**); now he tells us that we are to grace others.
      - 1) We are part of the same body; thus, we have been given the same grace
      - 2) We are different parts of body; thus, have been given different types of gifts
    - b. The gifts we have are from God, "*according to the grace given to each of us*"
    - c. This isn't a complete of spiritual gifts; Paul has another list in **1 Cor 12:28f**
  2. When we read this list, we immediately want to start grouping and categorizing
    - a. Which of these gifts are **miraculous** and which ones are **non-miraculous** gifts?
      - 1) Most of the gifts in the list 1 Corinthians 12 would seem to be miraculous
      - 2) Only "prophesy" here would seem so; the rest seem like "ordinary gifts"
      - 3) Though some missionaries tend to believe "giving generously" is close!
    - b. Some divide this into **gifts of prophecy** (*speaking*) and **gifts of service** (*ministry*).
      - 1) That also happen seems to be what Peter has in mind in **1 Peter 4:11**
      - 2) Think about that way of categorizing—which category do we value the most?
      - 3) Some churches really put the preacher on the pedestal; shouldn't be a pedestal!
    - c. Ben Witherington suggests prophesy would've been particularly valued in Rome
      - 1) Romans saw prophesy as how you determine which way political winds blew
      - 2) So someone recognized as a prophet would've had juice in the Roman church
        - a) Remember in Corinth, prophets and tongue-speakers competed for time/attention
        - b) The point of any spiritual gifts were to "*build up the church*" (**1 Cor 14:12**)
      - 3) Sometimes the best thing a prophets (or tongue speaker) could do was be quiet!

3. Most of the gifts here are MINISTRY gifts, not TEACHING gifts
    - a. **Servicing:** This is a “*generic word for a wide variety of ministries*” (Stott)
      - 1) Also form of word “*deacon.*” We see “deacon” as formal part of power chain
      - 2) Deacon was table server. Not about organization chart, but about washing feet
    - b. **Encouraging:** Barnabas was the “*Son Encouragement.*” Some have a special gift
    - c. **Giving:** Is it about **resources** (*wealth*) or **attitude** (*generosity*)? *Both are gifts!*
    - d. **To Lead:** Most of the major English translations render this as a gift of leadership
      - 1) Some have gift to lead people or to manage ministry (*not necessarily the same*)
      - 2) This same word can also be translated “*care for*” or “*take care of*”
      - 3) Many translations offer alternate note as “*to provide for others*” (NIV/ESV)
    - e. **Showing Mercy:** Message has “*Work with the disadvantaged...*” Spiritual gift?
  4. Paul’s point isn’t to describe each gift but stress we are to use our gift for each other
    - a. And not only that, we are to use our gift diligently, generously and cheerfully!
    - b. This is a representative list, not an exhaustive list; God gifts us in other ways too
      - 1) God gifts some to write music or lead worship or arrange flowers— not listed.
      - 2) God gifts some to take do church finances or write HTML code— not listed.
    - c. Paul’s REAL point is that we are to USE whatever we have to build other up
- D. Go back to last week’s lesson to the phrase “*true and proper worship*” (**Rom 12:1**)
1. We said “*worship*” here is word “*latría,*” the word “*ministry*” in **Hebrews 9:6**
    - a. What was the ministry of the priest? They were the ones who offer sacrifices, right?
      - 1) They were holy men in holy robes in holy place who offered holy sacrifices
      - 2) Priest who offered the sacrifice was expected to clean up after! (**Lev 16:27-28**)
    - b. That was every bit as much a part of their ministry or worship as the holy sacrifice
  2. Our “*spiritual act of worship*” is anything we do in service to God or to his body
    - a. Hayward hanging off the ladder in this room replacing bulbs— *act of worship*
    - b. When Lynn/Todd spend hours on memory verse pillows for middle school— *worship*
    - c. When Janet, Sara and Jen offer up time and creativity for MAGI boxes—*worship*
    - d. Tom Glaspell sacrifice his Saturdays on altar of camp septic system—*act of worship*
    - e. When Betty offers 3 mornings a week at *Five Loaves* to the poor— *act of worship*
    - f. When Renee and Richard go to city jails each week for CASA—*act of worship*
  3. All of these “acts of worship” both serve others and glorify God (**1 Peter 4:10-11**)

### III. Conclusion

- A. “80-20 Rule” is familiar principle on which most volunteer organizations operate
1. **Principle:** is volunteer organization, 80% of the work is done by 20% of the people
    - a. For many members, church the place they go to worship God on Sundays
    - b. All that stuff that has to happen to make church possible— church elves!
    - c. But what happens if those church elves decides to take a Sunday off?
      - 1) Heat isn’t turned on when you get here? Or worse, coffee pot isn’t turned on?
      - 2) No one is there to teach your kid’s Sunday School class or Children’s Church?
      - 3) No one has paid any bills? No one’s replaced light bulbs? Or mowed the lawn?
    - d. Would anyone complain? Even if they’d never done those things themselves?
  2. More than 20 years ago, we started thinking about Sunday night small groups
    - a. It was a major change, and not everyone was on-board like every other change
    - b. We did a pretty detailed survey; it would be until years before we’d pull the pin
    - c. **Survey:** Guess what group most opposed changing to Sunday night small groups?
      - 1) It was members who only came for the Sunday morning worship service
      - 2) They didn’t come on Sunday nights and wouldn’t be personally impacted
        - a) If they didn’t come on Sunday night anyway, why did they care what we did
        - b) Knew they SHOULD. And knew they’d be personally challenged by new effort
- B. Let me personally challenge each of us to use our gifts to serve one another
1. We all can’t do everything—but we should all be doing something for church
    - a. What is it that you are doing to **PERSONLY** build up the body here
    - b. Some may be thinking, “*I give money.*” And that’s one of Paul’s gifts, right?
      - 1) By in large, the more money someone gives to the church, the more involved
      - 2) Someone said, “*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*” (**Matt 6:21**)
      - 3) So it’s not like giving money absolves us of being connected to the body
  2. Remember the **three different views** that Paul asks us to take here—
    - a. We see ourselves (*and therefore one another*) through the **lens of grace**
    - b. We must see ourselves as **part of the body** (*and therefore of one another*)
    - c. We must see ourselves as having a **gift** that is needed (*to build up others*)
  3. How do you see yourself today? Where is your place in the body?
- C. God is calling each of us to be Him in this world; the place to start is right here!