

THE 7 GRACE GIFTS Lesson 1 The Trinity Endowments

The Psalmist revealed God to be “**a very present help in trouble.**” The Apostle Paul’s doctrine affirms this. His epistles teach us that each member of the Trinity has graciously given the Body of Christ a total of 21 different endowments. We use the term “endowment” as a general term because each person of the Godhead bestows a different type of help: the Father bestows “grace gifts,” the Son bestows “ministry gifts,” and the Spirit bestows “manifestations.” Collectively, we will call these the *Trinity Endowments*. They are enumerated below. They are all necessary to accomplish the Kingdom’s work.

Endowment: *that which has been endowed*

To endow: *to furnish with talent, quality, ability, function, etc.*

Each of these three terms (grace gifts, ministry gifts, manifestations) are different in their function, purpose, and distribution. These facts only stand to reason. The efficiency and perfection of God doesn’t require redundancy on His part. The Father and the Son are not in competition; one gives one type of gift, the other gives another type. This also means that if prophecy appears in one list, its function, purpose, and distribution must be different than the prophecy in another list. The existence of 21 helping endowments also testifies to how eager God is to help His people serve Him, honor Him, and finish their race.

It is also worth acknowledging that of the following 21 endowments, many modern denominations, theologians, and ministers only believe about nine or 10 are still necessary and functioning today (e.g., evangelist, pastor, teacher; ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, ruling, and mercy). This doctrine is generally known as *cessationism*. Cessationists believe the supernatural workings of God (e.g., miracles, healings, the Gifts of the Spirit) have ceased.

There is no consistent logic or biblical proof as to why 10 to 12 of the 21 Trinity Endowments have been turned off or have ceased in their operation. There is no clear or logical explanation why only one of the Father’s endowments, two of the Son’s endowments, and almost all of the Spirit’s endowments are no longer available to the Church.

Some affirm that all 21 endowments are still active, claiming to believe in their existence. However, in practice they still actually function as cessationists. Unfortunately, this means their lives, churches, and ministries will only function with about 43% of God’s available help. This lesson will briefly cover the Trinity’s 21 endowments, while the remainder of this Course will focus on the seven grace gifts of the Father.

THE 9 MANIFESTATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (1 CORINTHIANS 12:7-11)

There are only nine categories by which the Holy Spirit manifests (*phanérōsis*). These manifestations are “**[divided] to every man severally as He wills.**” They are given “**to profit withal,**” or “**for the common good**” (NIV). (For in-depth lessons on the Gifts of the Spirit, see the PodSchool Course: *The Gifts of the Spirit*.) These nine manifestations are:

1. Word of Wisdom
2. Word of Knowledge
3. Special Faith
4. Gifts of Healing
5. Working of Miracles
6. Prophecy
7. Discerning of Spirits
8. Divers Kinds of Tongues
9. Interpretation of Tongues

- **Person of Origin:** The Holy Spirit
- **Endowment:** *phanérōsis*, Greek meaning *to expose to view, an exhibition, to make evident to the understanding by proof*
- **Recipient:** “**the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man**” or “**to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit**” (NASB95). These manifestations are divided to each believer individually as God wills when God wills, not as we will. We cannot turn these endowments on or off at will.
- **Purpose:** “**to profit withal**” or “**for the common good,**” the Holy Spirit manifests through believers when and how He sees fit for the purpose of blessing and profiting as many people as possible. A closer evaluation of each manifestation will reveal how beneficial they are.
- **Function:** The nine manifestations of the Spirit “manifest” differently. Each manifestation is a different exhibition of the Holy Spirit’s power. To that end, anything the Holy Spirit does today must be able to be classified in one of these nine categories.

THE 5 MINISTRY GIFTS OF THE SON (EPHESIANS 4:8, 11)

Jesus is the giver of these gifts (*dómata*) to “some” men, but they are given to perfect every believer for the work of the ministry. The 5 ministry gifts are:

1. Apostle
2. Prophet
3. Evangelist
4. Pastor
5. Teacher

- **Person of Origin:** Jesus
- **Endowment:** *dómata*, meaning *an appropriate gift at a proper time*. These gifts are people.
- **Recipient:** “Some.” This excludes others. The “some” has been estimated to be 10% or less of the Body of Christ. The ministry calling is according to the will of God, not the will of man. (See **Ephesians 1:1**).
- **Purpose:** “**For the perfecting [and equipping] of the saints, for the work of the ministry.**”
- **Function:** These five spiritual endowments allow those who are called as ordained ministers to operate supernaturally as the officers of the New Testament Church. Each office is distinct from the other, the individual *dómata* having its own assignment and strengths.

THE SEVEN GRACE GIFTS OF THE FATHER (ROMANS 12:4-8)

The Father distributes the grace gifts (*chárisma*). These grace gifts are effectively the individual believer's function or role in the Body of Christ. The seven grace gifts are:

1. Prophecy
2. Ministry
3. Teaching
4. Exhortation
5. Giving
6. Ruling
7. Mercy

- **Person of Origin:** The Father
- **Endowment:** *chárisma*, or grace gift. These endowments are “jobs” or “special functions.”
- **Recipient:** “All members have not the same *prâxis* (work, office, job, special function)” and “having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us.”
- **Purpose:** To supply aid to the Body as **Ephesians 4:16 (NIV)** adds, “the whole body . . . grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” What work? The work that each member is graced to perform.
- **Function:** I believe these seven grace gifts are distinct divisions or categories under which all the ordained works of the Body of Christ, whether the local church or the Universal Church, can be organized. These are the seven categories of works that build and advance the Kingdom of God. If you are born again, God has given you at least one of these gifts for His glory, the Body's benefit, and your advancement.

REVIEW

- God the Father bestows 7 grace gifts (*charísmata*).
- Jesus the Son bestows 5 ministry gifts (*dómata*).
- The Holy Spirit bestows 9 manifestations (*phanérōsis*).

The focus of these lessons will be upon the seven grace gifts of **Romans 12**. Amen.

THE 7 GRACE GIFTS Lesson 2 *Chárisma* As A Special Function

In the previous lesson, we saw how each member of the Godhead distributes three different categories of help to the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit grants nine manifestations (*phanérōsis*, commonly called the Gifts of the Spirit). The Lord Jesus gives five ministry gifts (aka preachers, *dómata*). And the Father bestows seven grace gifts (*chárisma*).

First Corinthians 12:4-7 gives us another outline of the Trinity's diverse help. This passage also aids in defining Paul's usage of *chárisma*:

- **⁴Now there are diversities (*diáresis*) of gifts (*chárisma*), but the same Spirit. ⁵And there are differences (*diáresis*) of administrations (*diakonía*—official services, ministries), but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities (*diáresis*) of operations (*enérgeia*—workings), but it is the same God which worketh all in all. ⁷But the manifestation (*phanérōsis*) of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.**

Diáresis means “a dividing” and “distribution.” It is used in the first three verses to indicate that each member of the Godhead doesn't just diversify their help, they then distribute it as well. After all, what good is help if it is never given? This passage further shows how each member of the Trinity has a different role in the economy of Kingdom work (i.e., *chárisma*, *diakonía*, and *enérgeia*) yet as would be expected, there is unity. **Verses 4-6** can be summarized as follows:

*****The Trinity's help bestows a grace on believers for an official service that accomplishes a necessary work for the Kingdom and the Body.*****

This sentiment is repeated in **Ephesians 4:16 NLT**:

- **He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.**

Every born-again member of the Body of Christ has been given a special grace to accomplish a special work in the Body. Have you discovered what your special work is yet? The focus of the next few lessons will be upon the seven grace gifts of the Father. Pray that God would reveal to you what He's called you to do for Him.

THE HUMAN BODY ALLEGORY

Paul frequently used the human body as an allegory to relate the interconnectedness of the believers as members of Christ's Body (see **1 Corinthians 12:21-27**). Like the above verse in **Ephesians 4:16**, He uses the same allegory in **Romans 12** to explain the grace gifts of God and the vanity of personal pride.

- **³Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. ⁴Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function (*prâxis*—function, office), ⁵so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. Romans 12:3-5 NLT**

Paul reminds us that our bodies have many parts, with each part performing a special function. While this metaphor is used again in **1 Corinthians 12** as a source of encouragement (i.e., each member is important and necessary), the Roman epistle uses it to warn against personal pride (i.e., no member is better or more important than another). And he adds, “**we all belong to each other.**” Each Christian's ability is necessary to help the Body. The distinct ability each believer has to serve the Body of Christ is called a *chárisma*, a grace gift.

Paul further teaches on giftings in and for the Body in the final verses of **1 Corinthians 12**:

- **²⁷All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it. ²⁸Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership, those who speak in unknown languages. 1 Corinthians 12:27-28 NLT**

This list includes some but not all of the endowments from each of the three members of the Godhead. It is clear that it is not meant to be a concise list but rather an abbreviated list of eight (out of 21) endowments meant to make a point. What point? Everyone is different but necessary. The grace endowments listed are:

- (Jesus) Ministry gifts listed—*apostles, prophets, teachers*
- (The Holy Spirit) Spiritual gifts listed—*working of miracles, gifts of healing, diversity of tongues*
- (The Father) Grace gifts listed—*helps, leadership*

Paul continued to explain how the Trinity's endowments are limited and unique in distribution. I answer each question in parentheses.

- **²⁹Are we all apostles? [No] Are we all prophets? [No] Are we all teachers? [No] Do we all have the power to do miracles? [No] ³⁰Do we all have the gift of healing? [No] Do we all speak in unknown languages? [No] Do we all have the ability to interpret unknown languages? [No] Of course not! 1 Corinthians 12:29-30 NLT**

It is curious that the only endowments Paul lists a second time are either ministry gifts or spiritual gifts, both of which are very limited in their distribution. Omitted are helps (service) and governments (leadership). Why? Because everyone can participate in serving and leading in one capacity or another. Paul then concludes his teaching by referring to all three groups of endowments as gifts (*chárisma*).

- **So you should earnestly desire the most helpful gifts (*chárisma*). But now let me show you a way of life that is best of all. 1 Corinthians 12:31 NLT**

WHAT IS *CHÁRISMA*?

Biblical *chárisma* has nothing to do with charm or personality, though we do derive the English cognate from the same word. The root is *cháris*, meaning "joy." It is also a noun related to the verb *charízomai*, meaning "to show favor." *Chárisma* is a gift, a grace, or a favor given by God.

Except for its use in **1 Peter 4:10** (which is quoted below), the word is strictly a Pauline doctrinal term. Its usage can be divided into two doctrinal categories:

1. Salvation grace available to everyone through Christ Jesus, and
2. Spiritual graces (abilities or impartations) granted to certain individuals as God determines.

We will not focus on salvation grace, though it should be clear that salvation is the premier favor and gift given by God to mankind. It is the gift of eternal life.

In general terms, *chárisma* is any favor gift given by God to His people. If God is giving something to bless His people, it is *chárisma*—a gift resulting from His favor toward us. There are several examples of this in the New Testament.

- Salvation is a *chárisma* (**Romans 5:15-16; 6:23**)
- There is a manifestation of the Spirit called the *chárisma* of healing (**1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30**).
- We are to covet earnestly the best *chárisma* (**1 Corinthians 12:31**).
- Any answer to prayer is also considered a *chárisma* (**2 Corinthians 1:11**).

CHÁRISMA AS A STEWARDSHIP

The Bible further confirms that God's *charísmata* are stewardships. As such, we will be judged for what we do or don't do with them.

- **⁹Use hospitality one to another without grudging. ¹⁰As every man hath received the gift (*chárisma*), even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace (*cháris*) of God. ¹¹If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.**

1 Peter 4:9-11

Peter exhorts the believer to first recognize what grace gift they have received (here, either hospitality, speaking, or serving), then minister it to other Christians with the ability God has granted. Truly, not all graces are given in equal measure. Not all hospitality graces are meant to host 10 missionaries at once. Not all teaching graces can exegete Habakkuk.

Using your grace for the glory of God is called stewarding the grace of God. To have a grace and not use it is to receive the grace of God in vain.

- **But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.** **1 Corinthians 15:10**

Paul taught the same concept: We each receive special graces or grace gifts in order to accomplish a work for God. If we allow them to remain dormant or unused for any reason, the wonderful grace of God is classified as “vain.” If you haven’t already discovered what God has graced you to do, pray and ask Him for clarity. But begin serving somewhere so that God has something with which to work. You can’t steer a parked car.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CONCEPT

This teaching takes literally the bodily allegory of the New Testament. If Paul and Peter are to be taken seriously, and they should be, then every local church will have the necessary grace endowments on hand each time God gives a new assignment. If this is not the case, God would be unjust to expect His congregation to accomplish something for Him without His help presently imparted. For God to command a legless, local body to run would be unjust.

If a church or pastor believes they are lacking a necessary ability or grace, one of three explanations might be offered:

1. The task for which a grace is needed may not be a God-ordained task but rather a human endeavor; therefore, God is not obligated to provide it. Don’t chase carnal pipe dreams.

Assuming the task is divinely commissioned, if the necessary grace gift is still absent, two further explanations are possible:

2. It may be that it simply lies dormant in one or a few church members. Thus, the pastor needs to take pulpit time and teach on graces, callings, and the task at hand. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God; the sermons will activate any relevant graces.
3. It may be that the person with the grace is on the way and the pastor and leadership team need to continue to pray God would send them the right laborers for the harvest. This was the Lord’s own prayer request (see **Matthew 9:38** and **Luke 10:2**).

Just as athletes work on developing the body they have been given, pastors would be wise to work on developing the body they currently shepherd. Develop the inherent graces already within their church as if they were the muscles of the local body. It isn’t always advisable to recruit from the outside. You can only pastor the people you have, not the people you don’t.

Amen!

THE 7 GRACE GIFTS

Lesson 3

Prophecy

We have seen that each person of the Godhead (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) disburses help in the form of endowments to the Body of Christ. Any gift God gives to help the Body is called a *chárisma*, or grace gift. This is anything God gives as a result of favor in order to help His people. To review, these three types of gifts are:

1. People, as in the case of the **Ephesians 4** ministry gifts.
2. Manifestations of power, as in the case of the **1 Corinthians 12** gifts of the Spirit.
3. Special functions, as enumerated in the **Romans 12** grace gifts.

Furthermore, we are commanded to "**covet earnestly the best gifts.**" Which of the 21 grace endowments from the Godhead is the best one? The one needed most in the moment. Though each believer has been given one (or perhaps more than one gift) at which they will excel, several necessary observations concerning the seven grace gifts must be made.

1. We don't get to select our graces (**1 Corinthians 15:9-10**).
2. Graces can be imparted through the laying on of hands by the elders (**Romans 1:11; 1 Timothy 4:14**).
3. Every believer is called to do all of them (see below).
4. Even our abilities to do our unique gift is varied as God sees fit (e.g., not all givers give equally; not all teachers are gifted the same; not all servants are graced for the same area of service; not all mercy manifests the same, etc.)
5. Individual graces can be developed through prayer, practice, training, and impartation. The grace you recognize in your life today is not as fully realized as it can be.

Below are the seven grace gifts and scriptures confirming that every Christian is called to have all seven functioning in our lives to a lesser extent:

- Prophecy—(**1 Corinthians 14:1, 5, 24, 31; Revelation 19:10**)
- Ministry/Service—(**1 Corinthians 12:28; 2 Corinthians 9:1; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 4:12; 6:7; 1 Timothy 6:2**)
- Teaching—(**Matthew 5:19; Colossians 3:16; 1 Timothy 4:11; 6:2**)
- Exhortation—(**1 Timothy 6:2; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9; Hebrews 3:13**)
- Giving—(**Luke 6:38; 2 Corinthians 8:6-7 NLT**)
- Leadership—(**1 Corinthians 9:5; 1 Timothy 3:4-5**)
- Mercy—(**Romans 11:31; James 3:17; 1 Peter 3:8; Jude 1:22**)

This lesson will define and discuss the first of the seven grace gifts of the Father revealed in **Romans 12: prophecy**.

PROPHECY

Prophecy has been the most enigmatic grace gift to explain. Even Kittel admits in his *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* that "Romans 12:6 is a difficult passage." The

confusion originates from the fact that prophecy is not just a grace gift of the Father, but it is also a manifestation of the Spirit, and it is erroneously believed to automatically make you one of the Son's ministry gifts—a prophet. However, our preceding analyses of the 21 divine endowments has revealed that they cannot be same gift since scripture's description for each set differs. The resolution to this tension (prophecy, prophet, gift of prophecy) can be found by studying the original 1st century definition and usage of **prophēteían** (prophecy) and the associated family of words.

The Greeks' understanding and application of prophecy was far broader than ours is today. This is the understanding by which Paul used these words. A close evaluation of the New Testament's use of this family of words reveals a wide application in line with its secular application. The New Testament's usage of **prophēteían** and the cognate verb **prophēteúō** are also used in a wider sense than modern Pentecostals might like to acknowledge.

- **Prophēteían/prophēteúō**—to declare openly, to make known publicly, and also to make public declaration. This verb then makes the **prophētēs**, “one who proclaims” and a “speaker.”
- **Prophētēs** (from whence we get our word prophet)—“generally speaking one who speaks in the name of a god declaring the divine will and counsel in the oracle (i.e., a message or speech)”
- **Prophēteía**—prophecy, the revealed utterance or oracle, the gift of interpreting the will of the gods, proclamation.
- “This family of words expresses the formal function of declaring, proclaiming, and making known.”
- Historically, seers and prophets not connected with an oracle (message or speech) are never called prophets, instead they were called soothsayers.
- When a prophet was connected with the divine, they were often referred to as an “oracle prophet” because what they declared was an oracle from the deity.
- “Every prophet declares something that is not his own,” thus the word “herald” was often used as a synonym for “prophet.”
- Other Greek synonyms included “adviser” and “interpreter.”
- Only very much later under Christian influence does **prophētēs** take on the modern sense of “one who declares the future.”
- It was not until the 2nd century AD that **prophētēs** took on a strictly religious meaning.
- Thus, a **prophētēs** can also be seen as a herald, adviser, interpreter, proclaimer, declarer, testifier, preacher, and speaker.
- Gerhardt Kittel likened some prophecy to evangelism directed to the believer.

THE POET/SINGER/SONGWRITER AS PROPHET

- Grammar was considered the “exegesis” (prophetess) of the poets.
- “The Homeric poet-singer feels that in his work he is dependent on the divine. The gift sought from the Muse (a goddess) is not only song but also the content of the past which is to be depicted. The Muses have seen and know all things and they remind the singer, who is first the hearer and then the poet and speaker in the endowed power of presentation . . . calling by the Muses, who breathe into him the divine voice.” Thus, the poet and singer were prophetic.

- “The Bacchics call themselves the prophets of Dionysus because through frenzied singing and dancing they ‘proclaim’ the nature of the new god who inspires them.”
- Poets were prophets, the “spokesmen and advocates of men,” because they “express[ed] public opinion.”

THE PHILOSOPHER AND SCIENTIST

- Plato used the term to describe “the spokesman” who leads any inquiry out of difficulty.
- The Epicureans were the “spokesmen” (*prophētēs*) of their masters and “proclaimers” of his teaching.
- Dioscorides used *prophētēs* to describe the “specialist” in botany.
- Galen used *prophētēs* to describe the “quacks” in medicine.

MISCELLANEOUS USES OF PROPHECY/PROPHET

- The trumpet was called the “prophetess” of war and peace (i.e., it signaled both).
- The “heralds” announcing the winners at games were called *prophētēs*.
- Hunger was called the prophecy of the next meal.

NEW TESTAMENT USES OF PROPHECY

According to G. Kittel, “the NT prophet is essentially a proclaimer of God’s Word.” In line with the Greek usage at the time, the prophet can also be the mouthpiece of a god, proclaiming His will and His mind. This is a break from our modern Pentecostal understanding of the term, which sees a very limited usage and application of the word (e.g., a foreteller or seer, often more akin to a soothsayer or psychic). The New Testament does not fully support our modern understanding of prophecy. Curious uses of prophecy, prophet, and prophesy in the New Testament include:

- **All the prophets and the Law prophesied until John (Matthew 11:13).** This reveals that writings are prophetic in the sense that they are declarative. How does the Law foretell? It doesn’t. But it does proclaim what is right and what is wrong.
- **But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail (1 Corinthians 13:8).** Old Testament prophecies had to come to pass, otherwise the prophet was put to death. This is a new permission in the realm of prophecy.
- **He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. (See 1 Corinthians 14:1-4.)** This prophecy is not a foretelling but an encouraging. This is a change from the Old Testament. This is a corporate proclamation.
- **Ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted (1 Corinthians 14:31).** Again, not a foretelling but a comforting. This type of prophecy can be learned, and everyone can do it! Everyone. There was so much prophecy at Corinth, they had to limit it to two or three utterances per service.
- **One of themselves, even a prophet of their own . . . (Titus 1:12)** The prophet in question was Epimenides, a Cretan philosopher. He was a prophet in that he made a bold proclamation about his own people: they are all liars.
- **And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth (Revelation 11:3).** What is to be foretold about the last 3.5 years of time? Other synonyms

might better fit here such as “proclaim” and “herald.” What is the proclamation?
REPENT!!!

- **The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10).** Any way the testimony of Jesus can be shared will carry the spirit of prophecy. Any medium (e.g., sermon, music, poetry, writing, etc.) that can convey the testimony of Jesus is by Greek understanding prophetic.

NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY GRACES

These lessons are written from the perspective that each of the seven grace gifts represents a category of abilities. In light of the ancient usage and understanding of *Prophēteía* and the New Testament’s diverse uses of the term, I believe the *chárisma* to prophesy is a category that includes the following abilities:

- **Preaching**—Preaching is the ultimate way to herald and proclaim God’s Word and Gospel. Furthermore, the very testimony of Jesus is the essence of prophesying. Not everyone is good at this. Preaching doesn’t make you a full-time minister. This grace can be developed.
- **Testifying**—Some seem to be able to give an enrapturing testimony. This really is an art and a powerful way of proclaiming the Gospel. The Gospel is often called “the testimony,” “the record,” or “the witness.” Jesus told Paul in **Acts 22:18** to leave Jerusalem, “**for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.**”
- **Evangelism**—Some believers just seem to have a knack for sharing the Gospel. They are not exactly evangelists as seen in **Ephesians 4:11**, but they are really good at soulwinning. It seems they’ve never met a stranger. This would be a grace to proclaim the testimony of Jesus. This grace can be further developed.
- **Singing**—Singing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit proclaims the testimony of Jesus. This singer is not just musically talented but also anointed. Just because someone can sing doesn’t mean singing is their grace gift. This grace can be further developed.
- **Musicians**—Not every musician is anointed, but some are. Surely this true grace would fall under some category of *chárisma*.
 - **Moreover, David and the commanders of the army selected for the [temple] service some of the sons of Aspah, Heman, and Jeduthun, who were to prophesy with lyres, harps, and cymbals. The list of the musicians who performed their service was as follows:**
1 Chronicles 25:1 AMP
 - There is debate concerning the exact meaning of “**to prophesy with lyres.**” Does it mean that the music proclaims something, or does it mean the prophet declares his message accompanied by the instrument (as seen in **1 Samuel 10:5**)? Instruments heralding messages is in line with the Koine Greek definition of *prophēteían/prophēteúō*. (See also **1 Corinthians 14:8**; cf. **Revelation 1:10, 4:1**, where the Lord’s voice is like the voice of a trumpet.) This grace can be further developed.
- **Poets/Writers**—In keeping with the 1st century Greek understanding of prophecy, writing and poetry would also be included in a list of prophecy *charismata*.

Writing is a gift as is songwriting. Writers “make known” through authorship. Poetry is also easily translated into songwriting. These are all truly unique gifts not given to every believer, but when developed, they are a tremendous blessing to the Body of Christ, proclaiming His greatness and heralding His majesty.

- The writers of the Psalms would be classified as prophetic poets/writers. This was not just David. Asaph, one of David’s worship leaders, wrote **Psalm 50** and **Psalms 73-83**. Likewise Bathsheba, David’s wife and mother of Solomon, wrote **Proverbs 31** which begins, “**The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him.**”

May we all discover what, if any, major prophecy giftings we have been given and then use them to glorify Jesus and build the Church. Amen!

THE 7 GRACE GIFTS

Lesson 4

New Testament Examples Of Prophecy Grace

Of the seven grace gifts of the Father, prophecy has easily been the least understood and therefore the most misinterpreted. The doctrinal error arises from the modern Christian's lack of understanding of the diverse applications of the 1st century Greek words *prophētēs* and *prophēteúō*. The modern understanding usually ecstasizes and highly specializes prophecy, relegating it to the realm of the mystical, thus limiting it to only the prophet's ministry. Therefore, according to some who believe that prophets no longer exist, prophecy is likewise defunct. This ignorance only hurts the Body of Christ and robs it of a vital grace gift designed to help the Church. The truth is prophecy is a lot more prevalent in the New Testament than previously realized.

The previous lesson offered a comprehensive review of the Greek family of words *prophētēs*, *prophēteúō*, *prophēteía*, *prophētikós*, etc. According to Gerhardt Kittel's exhaustive *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (of which 78 pages are dedicated to this family of words), the following words are either synonymous or have been equated with the 1st century understanding of *prophētēs*:

- Herald
- Adviser
- Interpreter
- Speaker
- Preacher
- Poet/writer
- Singer
- Testifier
- Scientist
- Spokesman
- Advocate

Perhaps most important for our understanding of the ancient Greek is the fact that a *prophētēs* was by the simplest definition a spokesman or a herald. But if he/she was speaking for a god, they were then referred to as an "oracle prophet." This is because when speaking for a deity, their communication was now a divine revelation and not simply a human proclamation. However, not all New Testament appearances of prophecy validate such an interpretation.

NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES OF PROPHECY *CHÁRISMA*

With such a wide definition and application of prophecy in the secular literature, and with similar uses also found in the New Testament, the Bible student is left using contextual clues to best interpret what type of prophecy is meant in each verse.

The premier example of the New Testament acknowledging a wide and often simpler understanding of *prophēteúō* is found in **1 Peter 4**. This passage very closely parallels the **Romans 12** grace gift discussion. It even references three of Paul's seven *charísmata*.

- ⁹Use hospitality one to another without grudging. ¹⁰As every man hath received the gift (*chárisma*), even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace (*cháris*) of God. ¹¹If any man speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister [serve], let him do

it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.
1 Peter 4:9-11

Like **Romans 12**, this passage directly addresses *chárisma* (affirming that each Christian has been given one), exhorts the believers to be good stewards of it, and also references three graces: hospitality, prophecy, and ministry. It is very helpful to our modern understanding to see Peter charge those gifted with the grace to speak to, in fact, speak as God's oracle. This intentionally invokes the common 1st century parlance and usage of *prophēteúō*—a divinely inspired proclamation. It also establishes the fact that speaking is a grace gift not given to everyone. But to those who are graced to speak, speak as God's oracle spokesmen.

1 CORINTHIANS 14 CLARITY ON PROPHECY

If we pay close attention to **1 Corinthians 14**, Paul reveals a great deal of the mechanics concerning New Testament prophecy.

- **¹Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy . . . ³But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation.** **1 Corinthians 14:1, 3 NASB95**

Christians are exhorted to earnestly desire to prophesy. This means it can be sought and obtained. Also, the purpose of this general type of prophecy is to edify, exhort, and console. It should be clear from this passage that this type of prophecy lacks any kind of foretelling or ecstatic trance-like behavior that is unnecessarily associated with prophecy.

- **⁵. . . and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying. ⁶But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what will I profit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of [doctrinal] teaching?** **1 Corinthians 14:5b-6 NASB95**

Interpreting tongues produces a prophecy—that is, an oracle that must be shared with the congregation. This is because one of the purposes of tongues is to declare spiritual mysteries (see **1 Corinthians 14:2**) that must then be interpreted. Recall that one of the secular translations for *prophēteúō* is “interpreter.” A *prophētēs* is someone who declares the message of the deity. This is what an interpretation of tongues accomplishes. So to interpret tongues is to act as a *prophētēs*. **Verse 6** reveals four different types of oracles the interpretation of a tongue can result in:

- A revelation (*apokálypsis*)—Generally speaking, “a manifestation of deity.” In this context, “the actual unveiling of intrinsically hidden facts.” The NT uses this term in a very wide sense, not in a specific or limited sense.
- A word of knowledge (*gnōsis*)—If this is to be understood as a “word of knowledge,” then this is God revealing a detail about a past or present event.
- A prophecy (*prophēteía*)—This is an edifying, exhortative, or comforting message.
- A doctrinal teaching (*didachē*)—There are times when the interpretation of tongues results in a necessary teaching.

This list of four oracles is not a complete list. Omitted interpretations of tongues could include spiritual songs, blessings/thanksgiving, and words of wisdom. Each of these serve a different and distinct purpose.

- ²²... **but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe . . .**
²⁴**But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted [*idiótēs*—unversed in *chárisma*] man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; ²⁵the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you. ²⁶What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. **1 Corinthians 14:22b, 24-26 NASB95****

Verses 22-26 further reiterate that “all” may prophesy, and prophecy is a sign for the believer. However, prophecy convicts and holds accountable the unbeliever. Paul then gives a list of five utterances nearly identical to the list in **verse 5**, three of which can be produced via interpretation.

- Psalm (*psalmós*)—“**I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.**”
- Teaching (*didachē*)—“**what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you . . . by doctrine?**”
- Revelation (*apokálypsis*)—“**what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you . . . by revelation [a general revealing of something divine or spiritual]?”**
- Tongue (*glōssa*)
- Interpretation (*hermēneia*)

Paul collectively refers to these utterances as “prophecy” because they are inspired oracles. Apparently, these assorted utterances were found among the entire church every time they assembled, demonstrating how common New Testament prophecy should be and how every believer should look to have an inspired utterance from God ready to contribute if/when needed. Paul continues the passage by instituting organizational rules in light of so many utterances. He addresses four of the above utterances: tongues, interpretation, prophecy, and revelation.

- ²⁷**If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at most by three, and each in turn, and one must interpret; ²⁸but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. (See also vv. 2-4.) **Corinthians 14:27-28 NASB95****

Everyone may have a tongue, but only two or three may be given publicly. This public tongue must then be interpreted in order to produce a prophecy—a public oracle. If there be no interpreter present—one who can interpret “the will of the gods” (in this case the only true God)—then the believer must remain publicly silent. However, they can continue to speak to themselves and to God. The same rule of three is applied to direct prophecy.

- ²⁹**Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. **1 Corinthians 14:29 NASB95****

Direct utterances are also limited to three and they are to be subject to public judgment.

- **³⁰But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent. ³¹For you can all prophecy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; ³²and the spirits of the prophets are subject to prophets; ³³for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.**
1 Corinthians 14:30-33 NASB95

Verse 31 appears to use “prophecy” in a very broad sense (e.g., tongues/interpretation, revelation, singing, blessings, etc.). Paul did not address all seven *prophēteúō* because these are general guidelines for all prophetic utterances. The purpose of these rules is fourfold: 1) everyone should be able to participate, 2) all may learn, 3) all may be comforted, and 4) they should maintain peace and harmony in the service. The bigger doctrinal take away is that time should be given for the Holy Spirit to move through the congregation.

SINGING AS A PROPHECY GRACE GIFT

Just as the original Greek usage of *prophētēs* applied to singers, so too does the New Testament recognize the same application.

- **¹⁸And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; ¹⁹speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; ²⁰giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.**
Ephesians 5:18-20

True to the secular Greek’s understanding that an oracle would be filled with spirit of a deity before he or she could speak, Paul invokes the identical image: **be filled with the Spirit**. The result would be that the believer could then prophesy to themselves in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, and giving of thanks.

- **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.**
Colossian 3:16

Colossians reveals that it is not just the Spirit that can inspire the oracle but also the Word of Christ indwelling the believer. The resultant prophetic music is not just for the believer’s self-encouragement; it is also for teaching and admonishing others. Here we see the manifestation of spiritual songs fulfilling several definitions of *prophētēs*: singer, poet, herald, spokesman, etc. In line with Paul’s teaching in **1 Corinthians 14:26** (“**each one of you has a psalm, a teaching**”), every believer is capable of producing a teaching psalm for the Body of Christ or just themselves.

EVANGELISM AS A PROPHECY GRACE GIFT

Finally, every Christian has been commissioned to testify of Jesus through evangelism. Evangelism (*euangelízō*) literally means “to proclaim glad tidings.” *Prophētēs* were heralds, declaring the message of the moment. The Gospel is the message of eternity, and we have all been authorized to proclaim it, though some tend to just be really, really good at it.

- **And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.** **Mark 16:15**
 - Preach (*kēryssō*): to herald, to proclaim, to publish

- **And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.** **Acts 1:8**
 - Witnesses (*mártys*): to be a witness; (*diamartoryomai*): to testify

Every Christian can manifest the spirit of prophecy and operate as a **prophētēs** (God’s herald) when they preach Jesus and testify of what He has done in their life. This does not make them a fivefold prophet, nor is their witness or testimony the “gift of prophecy.” It is a manifestation of the grace gift of prophecy and like the other six grace gifts, it can be developed. Amen!

THE 7 GRACE GIFTS

Lesson 5

Serving And Teaching

To review again, each member of Christ's Body has been given at least one special function with which we are to make increase of the Church. These special functions are called grace gifts. The seven grace gifts listed in **Romans 12** should be understood as general categories and not narrowly limited gifts. This was seen in the previous lessons where the original Greek definition for prophecy included the oracle, the poet, the speaker, the interpreter, the scientist, the herald, etc.

Other *chárisma* facts to remember include:

1. The **Romans 12** list of seven grace gifts is a list of categories, not specific abilities.
2. We don't get to select our graces (**1 Corinthians 15:9-10**).
3. *Charísmata* are different from natural talents in that they carry with them the anointing to help the Body of Christ. The use of them administers a grace the Church needs. Natural talents accomplish identical tasks but they don't minister God's grace.
4. Every believer is called to do all of them, but we will supernaturally excel at one or two of them.
5. Just because we enjoy one gift a great deal or are even talented at it, doesn't mean it is the gift at which we have been appointed to excel (e.g., singing). You can enjoy singing and even be good at it, but that doesn't make it your grace gift.
6. Graces can be imparted through the laying on of hands by the elders (**Romans 1:11; 1 Timothy 4:14**).
7. Even our graces to do our unique gift varies as God sees fit (e.g., not all givers give equally; not all teachers are gifted the same; not all servants are graced for the same area of service; not all mercy manifests the same, etc.)
8. Individual graces can be developed through prayer, practice, training, and impartation (see **2 Corinthians 8**). The grace you recognize in your life today is not as fully realized as it can be.

THE GRACE TO SERVE (MINISTRY)

Like many Bible words, we must make a distinction with the word *diakonía*, or "ministry." Those who perform a ministry are called a *diákonos*, or "servant." The root word *diōkō* means "to run errands." Today a "ministry" is understood to be a full-time job of a preacher spent promoting the Gospel. While there is that use of ministry in the New Testament, the general definition means "service" or "doing the will of another." And though all Christian ministry is a service, this category of grace gifts may be best viewed as a manual labor. We are all called to be servants and we are all called to bear one another's burdens (thus fulfilling the law of Christ), but some Christians absolutely thrive on manual service. Their service is no mere secular duty. It actually ministers grace to the people they serve.

Paul taught that there are diverse ministries (*diakonía*), but the same Lord (**1 Corinthians 12:5**) and that the Body of Christ has been called to do the work of ministry (**Ephesians 4:12**).

A disciple named Archippus was warned by Paul to “**take heed to the ministry**” which he had received from God, that he might fulfill it (**Colossians 4:17**). This is a timely exhortation for all of us, whether we are speaking of full-time Gospel ministry or a grace gift ministry. Finally, Paul said he was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God (**Ephesians 3:7**).

SERVICE GRACE EXAMPLES FROM THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

- God graced skilled workers to make the priestly garments (**Exodus 28:3 NIV**).
- Bezaleel and Aholiab and many others were filled with wisdom and understanding to complete the Tabernacle building project (**Exodus 36:1-2**).
- The wilderness Levitical Priesthood was divided into thirds and was appointed with the care and maintenance of the Tabernacle: the Gershonites, the Kohathites, and the Merarites (**Numbers 3:14-39**).
- The twelve disciples cut their teeth for apostleship by serving Jesus. They worked as ushers, crowd control, errand runners, chauffeurs, etc.
- Martha was known for being a hyper-zealous house servant (**Luke 10:40**). This was a demonstration of hospitality. This is echoed again in **Romans 12:13; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8; and 1 Peter 4:9**.
- Daily feedings of the early church widows were called a ministry (**Acts 6:1**).
- Running errands for the Antioch church was called a ministry (**Acts 12:25**). This is alluded to in *diōkō*.
- The house of Stephanas addicted themselves to serving the saints (**1 Corinthians 16:15**).
- Benevolence collection and distribution is called a ministry (**2 Corinthians 8:4; 9:1, 12-13**).
- The Lord commended the works and service of the church at Thyatira (**Revelations 2:19**).
- Sister Phebe was called a servant of the church at Cenchrea (**Romans 16:1**).

SERVICE GRACES

Some Christians are absolutely addicted to serving. What follows are what I judge to be modern manifestations of service graces. Since every church, culture, and peoples will have different needs, I believe God’s *charísmata* will rest upon individuals to accomplish a necessary work.

- **Church Facility Maintenance**—God will always grace people to care for His tabernacle. He did this in the wilderness, and He did it with Solomon’s Temple. The New Testament Church is no less important. God’s people are responsible for the care of His House. This grace is the heartbeat of the ministry of helps.
 - **In-house construction team.** The local church always needs a coat of paint, a wall moved, or a bathroom remodeled.
 - **Grounds team.** Churches often need grass cut, flowers watered, sidewalks cleared, and weeds removed.
 - **Maintenance team.** The house of God is always needing something repaired.
 - **Cleaning crew.** Sheep leave droppings. Sometimes they even have a runny tummy.
 - **Kingdom gopher (go-for this and go-for that).** Things must always be acquired and brought to the local Tabernacle.

- **Sunday service crew.** These people open and close the church. They run the technology. They care for children.
- **Hospitality**—As referenced above, this service is mentioned several times in the Epistles. Peter’s reference to this critical Kingdom building grace begins his discussion on grace gifts. Paul exhorts all believers to “**always be eager to practice hospitality**” (**Romans 12:13 NLT**).
 - Caring for widows (e.g., not just food but yard maintenance, home repair)
 - Caring for new mothers
 - Hosting guest ministers. Opening your home, running errands, meal prep.
 - Housing guests and hurting saints. Some people always seem to have a guest living in their home.

TEACHING GRACES

Every Christian is called to make disciples. This requires some degree of teaching. Parents are required to teach their children. Even the church’s elders must be “**apt to teach.**” Yet this is neither the grace to teach nor the office of teacher. Just as there is some confusion behind prophecy/prophet, so it is with the office of teacher and the grace to teach. There are three degrees of teaching:

1. There is the teaching every Christian is called to do in obedience to the Great Commission and Christian discipleship.
2. The teaching grace bestowed upon certain members of Christ’s Body that would be of great help with congregational education and lay leadership.
3. The teacher’s office, which is an anointing given only to the full-time minister to perfect and equip the saints at a level the teaching *chárisma* cannot.

The *chárisma* to teach does not make you a *dóma* teacher. But a *dóma* teacher does have a tremendous grace to teach. Civilization has advanced because of society’s ability to teach skills and culture. This is not the teaching *chárisma*. Like all other *charísmata*, the teaching *chárisma* is unique because it ministers grace to God’s people. It helps build the Kingdom and strengthen the Body of believers.

The Bible acknowledges there is a natural teaching ability. The Pharisees and scribes were teachers (**Mark 7:5-7**). Nature is a teacher, but it lacks *chárisma* (**1 Corinthians 11:14**). There are countless false teachers. They certainly lack God’s *chárisma*. Paul warned of vain talkers and deceivers who teach false doctrine (**Titus 1:10-11**). The Jezebel of **Revelation 2** was successful but did not minister grace.

TEACHING GRACE EXAMPLES FROM THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

- God gave Bezaleel and Aholiab the ability to not only build but also to teach others the same skills (**Exodus 35:34 NIV**).
- Parents are graced to disciple their children in the Word (**Deuteronomy 6:6-9**).
- Instructors of the foolish (**Romans 2:20**)
- A teacher of little children (**Romans 2:20 NIV**)

- Bishops and elders must be apt to teach (**1 Timothy 3:2**).
- Faithful servants are able to obtain a grace to teach the Gospel (**2 Timothy 2:2, 24**).
- A teacher of the Gentiles (**1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:11**), as opposed to a teacher of the Jews. Ironically, Paul was naturally far more equipped to teach the Jews than was Peter.

NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING GRACES

Some Christians absolutely love teaching the Bible. They can see, understand, and relate the Bible's doctrine with the greatest of ease. Yet, the teaching grace is multifaceted with some teachers being drawn towards children, others being drawn toward the belligerent, and still others being gifted with convincing the intellectual. What follows are what I judge to be modern manifestations of the teaching *charismata*:

- **Children's teachers.** Teaching the Word of God to children requires a special grace that can get down on the child's level, keep their attention, and advance their understanding of God. Not every children's worker has this teaching grace.
- **Youth leaders.** By my judgment, this grace combines both the leadership and teaching graces. This grace teaches the Gospel at a higher level, challenging the young adults while also meeting them where they are in life. Not every youth leader has this grace.
- **Subject teachers.** There are some who are graced to teach on certain Bible subjects. This is seen with Titus and his grace to teach on generosity. His ability to do this was greater than Paul's, which explains why Paul requested the junior minister return to Corinth and finish that teaching. See **2 Corinthians 8**.
- **General teachers.** God has always been faithful to give to local church bodies good congregational teachers. These aid the pastor in discipling the saints through Sunday Schools, sermons, Bible studies, etc.

A PAULINE WARNING FOR TEACHERS:

- **¹⁹If you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, ²⁰an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of little children, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—²¹you, then, who teach others, should you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? ²²You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? ²³You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law?**
Romans 2:19-23 NIV

May God continue to grace us to serve and teach for His glory and the Church's growth. Amen!

THE 7 GRACE GIFTS Lesson 6 Exhortation And Giving

- **Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity.** **Romans 12:8**
- **If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously.** **Romans 12:8 NLT**

The fourth and fifth grace gifts are encouragement and giving. As with the previous three, these special functions fulfill **Ephesians 4:16 NLT**, “**As each part to does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.**” As with all *charísmata*, these cannot be selected by the individual. They are given by God as He sees fit. And once discovered, they must be further developed. As **Romans 12:6 NLT** describes, “[**He**] **has given us different gifts for doing certain things well.**” God has graced some believers to excel at exhortation and giving.

EXHORTATION GRACE

The *chárisma* to exhort is the Greek *parakaléō*. Its definition grants insight into the mechanics and manifestations of this grace.

- **Parakaléō**—exhortation; to entreat, comfort, instruct, beseech, console, encourage
- **Paraklesis**—to call near, summon; admonition, solace, that which affords comfort or refreshment, a persuasive discourse or stirring address

Like all *charísmata*, every believer is called to comfort, encourage, console, and exhort one another (see **Romans 15:5**; **2 Corinthians 1:4-5 NLT**; **1 Thessalonians 4:18**; **5:11, 14**; and **Hebrews 3:13**), but there are those saints who have been graced to do it as their special function. This appears to be the case with Barnabas, whose original name was Joseph. Barnabas was his apostle-given nickname—the son of consolation. He is as much an exhorter as Agabus was a prophet.

Generally speaking, an exhorter/encourager tends to demonstrate several qualities:

- They are ever mindful of the condition of those around them. Their heart is always wondering how someone is doing, not for gossip’s sake, but out of genuine concern. They are ever ready to breathe the life of God into them via a word, a card, a text, a voicemail, or even a meal. Barnabas quickly took to the newly converted Paul as an encourager.
- They stay comforted by God so that they can comfort others. They seem to be immune to the heaviness of this world. Their disposition is often one of almost constant sunshine. Stressed and fretful exhorters will fail to exhort and comfort at their full potential.
- They tend to be extroverts. The grace to be a Kingdom encourager produces a courageous extroversion, after all, it would be impossible to encourage someone without reaching out to them. Comforting someone may also require you to leave

your own comfort zone. Barnabas certainly appears to have been outgoing in many respects: selling property to give big offerings, helping Paul when everyone else feared him, running errands, serving churches, etc.

Exhortation is demonstrated in several ways. It can be a simple one-on-one encouragement.

- **Therefore encourage one another with these words.**
1 Thessalonians 4:18 NIV
- **... encourage the disheartened ...**
1 Thessalonians 5:14b NIV

It can be in the form of a sermon.

- **And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.**
Luke 3:18
- **After the usual readings from the books of Moses and the prophets, those in charge of the service sent them this message: “Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, come and give it.”** Acts 13:15 NLT

Exhortation can come in written form as in a letter or scripture.

- ³⁰**The messengers went at once to Antioch, where they called a general meeting of the believers and delivered the letter. ³¹And there was great joy throughout the church that day as they read this encouraging message.**
Acts 15:30-31 NLT
- **And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said, “My child, don’t make light of the LORD’s discipline, and don’t give up when he corrects you.”**
Hebrews 12:5 NLT (quoting Job 5:17 and Proverbs 3:11)
- **I urge you, dear brothers and sisters, to pay attention to what I have written in this brief exhortation.**
Hebrews 13:22 NLT

The exhorter is always thinking about others. They are always looking to give a word of encouragement, write a card, send a text or email, make a phone call, or give a hug. These people make you feel important and hopeful on your worst day. They cause you to want to go another mile in life. Thank God for the exhorter’s grace.

GENEROSITY GRACE

Like the other graces, every Christian is called to be a giver (see **Luke 6:38**), yet there is a special grace that God gives to some believers that causes them to absolutely thrive at generosity. It even appears from **2 Corinthians 8:1** that whole churches can be endowed with a *chárisma*.

- ¹**And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. ²In the midst of a very severe trial,**

their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. ³For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, ⁴they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. 2 Corinthians 8:1-4 NIV

This brief passage provides a brilliant framework to aid in understanding the *chárisma* to give. Seven points can be taken from these four verses.

1. God appoints a supernatural grace for giving.
2. The grace works regardless of circumstances (trial or poverty).
3. The thought of the performing the graced task brings joy.
4. The grace produces the compulsion of rich generosity.
5. The *chárisma* enables a supernatural ability to give, drawing money from seemingly nowhere.
6. The generosity-graced individual sees giving as a privilege.
7. This grace is given to provide for the Lord's people.

Paul further reveals that giving and generosity is a grace that can and should be developed.

- **But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. 2 Corinthians 8:7 NIV**

The graced giver is very attentive to the financial needs of the people with which they are in close fellowship. They are always looking for ways to get “seed in the ground.” They are ever mindful that to have a perpetual harvest, they must constantly sow seed. Oddly enough, money doesn't matter much to them. They know God is their supply and there is always more money where the previous money came from. They will even regularly set aside money while they wait for just the right person or ministry to give it to. In a word, money comes easy for them. They live by the wisdom of **Proverbs**:

- **²⁴One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. ²⁵A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed. Proverbs 11:24-25 NIV**

This is a God-fueled generosity. It is a grace that helps build the Kingdom. As such it is intended to be aimed at the Church's cause, not the world's endeavors. Any believer that misuses this grace to financially support worldly causes will see this gift dry up.

If you recognize either of these two gifts on your life, please obey God in them and help build the Kingdom! Amen!

THE 7 GRACE GIFTS Lesson 7 Leadership And Mercy

- . . . he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.
Romans 12:8b
- . . . If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.
Romans 12:8b NLT

The final two grace gifts are leadership and mercy. Once again, we must all demonstrate some ability to lead, be it leading someone to Christ, leading our children in life, or leading ourselves into self-discipline, but there are those who will absolutely flourish as leaders. Likewise, we are all called to demonstrate mercy, but there are those whose hearts seem to be supernaturally enlarged to help those in the direst situations.

LEADERSHIP GRACE

Leadership is necessary if we are to accomplish anything in life, not to mention in the Kingdom of God. The verb in **Romans 12:8** is *proístēmi*. In classical Greek, it was used of military officers who “stood before” a troop to lead them. It was also said of government officials that they “stood over” the government to organize it. In general, it means “to rule, to manage, to govern, to give attention to.” While we must all rule, manage, govern, and give attention to our private lives, this particular *chárisma* equips the believer to lead the Body of Christ in Kingdom affairs. Certainly, if you fail at this in private, you will fail worse at it in public. That is why we must perfect our Christianity at home. This sentiment is shared by Paul in his estimation of episcopal qualifications:

- **⁴He must manage (*proístēmi*) his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. ⁵(If anyone does not know how to manage (*proístēmi*) his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?)**
1 Timothy 3:4-5 NIV

A husband/father has been graced by God to be just that: a husband and a father. This is a special grace to lead his family. If he fails to care for and manage his own family well, he has proven himself to be a poor steward of the *chárisma* already given him. God will never entrust him with more responsibility. The husband that fails at the familial level will not be promoted by God to lead at the ecclesial level. This example confirms that graces must be stewarded and developed beyond their infancy level.

As with the other *charísmata*, leadership is a category that sees this grace manifest differently. As is revealed in the definition of *proístēmi*, the heart of this grace is that the individual is anointed to “give attention” to the matter at hand. Paul ties the bishop’s *proístēmi* to “**tak[ing] care of the church of God,**” (Gr. *epimeléomai*). This word is only used here and in describing the actions of the Good Samaritan (see **Luke 10:34-35**). It denotes “the direction of the mind toward the object cared for.” Thus, the grace to lead or rule confers upon the individual a heart for that which needs leadership or organization. In a sense, this grace causes the leader to be

ever mindful of the thing they have been given charge over. No one has to remind them to care for their stewardship. Graced leaders are not forgetful of their charge.

The grace to lead or rule manifests as follows:

- **Leadership/rulership:** The grace to lead sees the big picture of where an organization (e.g., a family, church, platoon, business, nation, etc.) is, where it needs to be, and how it's going to get there.
- **Governments/administrations:** This *chárisma* allows someone to see what rules and roles are lacking and must therefore be created and implemented to improve a company of people.
- **Organization:** This grace allows someone to see how to bring organization to a church, a ministry, a household, a department, a computer, a closet, etc.
- **Management:** This *chárisma* allows an individual to oversee and maintain previously established systems of governments, administrations, and organization. Managers don't necessarily create; they maintain what has already been established.

It is possible for a leader to be graced at each of these, or only at one or two of them. However, they are all critical to a ministry's success. There are also different measures of the leadership grace necessary for a local church (e.g., one for children's departments, worship teams, evangelism, Bible school, local church departments, etc.).

Since full-time ministers are Kingdom leaders, any true fivefold ministry calling will see this *chárisma* appear very early on in their Christian walk. The first symptom of this grace will be a constant concern for the local church or ministry and what needs to be done there. As an old minister once said, "Show me what someone is doing, and I'll show you who's really called to the ministry." Like the Good Samaritan, the graced leader puts his time, money, and focus on the thing that needs care and attention.

MERCY GRACE

Mercy and compassion are touchstones of Christianity. Jesus Christ performed many of His mightiest miracles when He was moved with compassion and had mercy on the broken. As disciples of Christ, we too must walk in mercy and compassion. Jesus said that there is a judgment awaiting those who do not demonstrate acts of mercy (see **Matthew 25:40-46**). Freely we have received mercy and acts of mercy; freely we should give. This is also evident from the commandment to "**let your *epiekēs* (mercy, sweet reasonableness) be known to all men**" (**Philippians 4:5**).

The word for mercy in **Romans 12:8** is *eleéō*. It is an emotional reaction to seeing someone suffer from an undeserved affliction. More specifically, it is a sympathy that must act. It includes the demonstrator of mercy having both "awe" and "mercy" in the sense that they can both feel what the victim is going through and have pity upon them. *The Complete Bible Library* observes: "the word [*eleéō*] focuses upon acts of kindness between individuals who have a mutual relationship. The closer the relationship, the more mercy is expected when needed." (As a side observation: modernists seem to have perfected acts of mercy towards animals, but

not towards humans, unless the humans are in a distant land, in a military conflict, and only if they are on a favored side of the conflict.)

The noun conjugate for *eleéō* is *eleēmosúnē* and is translated as “kind act,” “alms,” and “almsdeeds.” This reveals that biblical mercy must be demonstrated, not just felt. These are the kind of acts Jesus spoke of when He said:

- **¹Take heed that ye do not your alms (*acts of mercy*) before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. ²Therefore when thou doest thine alms (*acts of mercy*), do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.**
Matthew 6:1-2

Almsdeeds are not just financial gifts. If that were the case, mercy and giving would be the same *chárisma*. Since they are not, there must be a distinction between the two. Almsdeeds can involve money, but it is not giving money for giving’s sake. It is giving to relieve the burden of someone in pain. While we are all called to relieve one another’s burdens and “**so fulfil the law of Christ,**” there is a special grace to do so. Those with the gift of mercy are always looking to do something for someone in need, they don’t *just* feel something. It is this compulsion to perform acts of mercy that signifies this *chárisma*.

That being said, God gives the mercy *chárisma* to His servants to help “**the other parts grow**” (**Ephesians 4:16b NLT**). Why is mercy set among the grace gifts? Because there is always a member of Christ’s Body in pain. And because one person can’t do it all. As Paul also said,

- **If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?**
1 Corinthians 12:17

Mercy is a necessary function in the Body of Christ, because if everybody was focused on teaching or serving, where would the mercy be?

We see a church-wide mercy grace being demonstrated with the feeding of widows in **Acts 6**. While the “**daily ministration**” of food to feed the church’s widows was no doubt funded by the giving grace and distributed by the service grace, it was compelled by the mercy grace. The Law of Moses required the believers to care for their widows and the early church continued to obey this commandment. What might be observed in this story was the lack of New Testament mercy since the Grecian widows were intentionally neglected. True mercy neglects no need in the church. The deacons responsible for neglecting the Grecian widows were replaced with deacons who demonstrated mercy toward the entire Body, not just the culturally favored group.

The mercy *chárisma* moves to care for believers and relieve their burden. Modern acts of mercy will manifest in several ways. It might manifest as:

- Always looking out for the visitor or new believer, inviting them to fellowship with you at dinner or coffee.
- Always attentive to help care for the church’s infirm, shut-in, or new mother.



- Being drawn to care for the recovering addict or parolee. Often full-time recovery ministries evolve from this mercy.
- Watching out for the backslider who needs extra encouragement or motivation (especially after a hard service).
- Grief care in time of loss. The local church is to mourn with those who mourn and rejoice with those who rejoice.
- Homeless ministry. This need is exploding around the world and our governments only seem to exacerbate the problem.
- Widow and orphan care. This isn't needed everywhere today, but where it is needed, it is a great ministry.

Mercy doesn't just sympathize; it acts! And its actions manifest the presence and grace of God upon those it is serving. The mercy *chárisma* is not concerned with creation care or rescuing animals. This grace is specifically given to care for those of the household of faith. If this is your grace, do it gladly! Why would you be commanded to do it gladly? Cleaning up peoples' messes isn't always the pretty or praiseworthy. So be joyful in your grace! Amen.

THE 7 GRACE GIFTS

Lesson 8

Charísmata Review

- The seven grace gifts of God the Father are:
 - Prophecy
 - Service
 - Teaching
 - Exhortation
 - Giving
 - Leadership
 - Mercy
- These are different from the ministry gifts of Jesus (**Ephesians 4**) and the manifestation gifts of the Spirit (**1 Corinthians 12**). This demonstrates how the entirety of the Trinity works to help the Body of Christ accomplish its divine assignment. With so much help, why do we still fail so often?
- These seven abilities have been classified as “creation endowments” by some, asserting that they are abilities given to all of mankind in general. We reject that assessment since the Apostle Paul clearly described them as “special functions” within the Body.
- **Charísmata** are different from a similar natural talent in that they carry with them the anointing to help the Body of Christ. The use of them administers a grace the Church needs. Natural talents accomplish identical tasks, but they don’t minister God’s grace. In all actuality, to try and use a naturally talented person where the equivalent grace gift is needed would only grieve the Spirit of God.
- Jesus manifested all seven of these graces regularly. They defined His supernatural, Spirit-empowered ministry on earth.
 - He prophesied every time He spoke.
 - He served by laying down His life.
 - He taught everywhere He went.
 - He exhorted in His sermons.
 - He gave to those in need.
 - He led His disciples in paths of righteousness.
 - He had mercy upon the broken, healing their infirmities.
- He was given the Spirit without measure (**John 3:34**), so it should not surprise us that He excelled at all of these, not just one or two of them.
- Now, as a local body, when each member finds their grace gifting, we can collectively be the Body of Christ in His absence, manifesting all seven graces as necessary, thus ministering grace to those in need.
- We have specifically evaluated the **Romans 12** list of seven grace gifts as a list of categories, *not specific abilities*. As such, we have looked at the numerous abilities within each category.
- Grace gifts perform a work. They *do* something for the Body of Christ. The **Ephesians 4** ministry gifts perfect the saints “**for the work of the ministry**.” Ministers help saints discover and develop their giftings so that the Body may be edified.

- Every believer is called to do all of them, but we will only be supernaturally endowed to excel at one or two of them. Those will be “our graces.”
- We don’t get to select our graces. As an example, Paul wanted to go to his people the Jews, but God graced him to go to the Gentiles. His natural training had better equipped him for the Jews. (See **1 Corinthians 15:9-10**; **Ephesians 3:8**; and **Philippians 3:4-6**.)
- Just because we enjoy one gift a great deal or are even talented at it, doesn’t mean it is the gift at which we have been appointed to excel (e.g., singing). You can enjoy singing and even be good at it, but that doesn’t make it your grace gift. Likewise, you might fancy yourself a great Bible teacher, but that doesn’t make it so.
- Even our graces to do our unique gift varies as God sees fit (e.g., not all givers give equally; not all teachers are gifted the same; not all servants are graced for the same area of service; not all mercy manifests the same, etc.).
- **Charismata** can be imparted through the laying on of hands by the ministers and elders.
 - **For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift (*chárisma*), to the end ye may be established (*strengthened*).**
Romans 1:11
 - **Neglect not the gift (*chárisma*) that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.**
1 Timothy 4:14
 - **Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift (*chárisma*) of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.**
2 Timothy 1:6
- Individual graces can be developed through prayer, practice, training, and impartation (see **2 Corinthians 8**). The grace you recognize in your life today is not as fully realized as it can be. And it may not be the last **chárisma** the Lord grants you. What is the best gift? The one needed the most at that moment.

HOW TO DETERMINE YOUR GRACE

We have said that your grace will often be something you never suspected. This doesn’t mean you can’t discover it as a young person, given proper discipleship. The epistles reveal the fruit of true grace gifts.

- **For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift (*chárisma*), to the end ye may be established (*strengthened*).**
Romans 1:11
- **⁷However, he has given each one of us a special gift (*cháris*) through the generosity of Christ . . . ¹⁶He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.**
Ephesians 4:7, 16 NLT

A true grace gift will accomplish several things:

1. It will strengthen you and the Body.
2. It will help the other members to grow.
3. It will bring health to the Body.
4. It will bring a flow of love to the Body.

Other indicators of the true *chárisma* on your life include:

- An inexplicable ease at a task.
- Others bear witness at the grace of God (and not just grandma or your wife. Those two will always cheer you on at everything you do.)
- It manifests the presence of God.
- You don't have to constantly promote yourself or your gift to get it to work. It makes room for you.
- It's where or what you seem to be doing in the Kingdom.

Imagine a local church where almost every member has discovered their grace gift and is regularly operating in it. Imagine the power, the ease, the grace flowing to that local body and all it could accomplish for the glory of God. Now envision another kind of church, one where 90% of the members simply attend and spectate for a single one-hour service each week and the other 10% of the people do all of the work (and some of them are on staff). Now you can see why God the Father has given the Church His seven grace gifts and the importance of every member being content in being used as God sees fit! Amen.