

Romans 12:3-8, SERMON 3:

**TITLE: "PRESENTING YOURSELF TO CHRIST FOR GIFTED SERVICE
IN HIS BODY"**

SPEAKER: Dr. Wesley G. Rowe

Calvary Bible Church

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For every person who is a Christian, the Christian life began with God making a choice to bring the lost sinner into a relationship with the living God.

Rom. 1:7, "To those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ."

Gal. 1:15, "But when it pleased God to reveal His Son in me"

For those of us who are Christians, when God made that choice to bring us into a relationship with Himself, God freely extended to us some wonderful eternal blessings that can never be lost.

-God graciously made atonement for our sins-His Son paid for them (Rom. 3:25).

-God freely gave us a righteousness that was not our own-the righteousness of Jesus (Rom. 3:21-22).

-God graciously lifted from off our heads the eternal damnation in Hell that was due us for our sins (Rom. 2:8-9).

-God has made us NOW to be sons/daughters of His-we have been adopted into His family (Rom. 8:16).

-God has promised glorification in heaven with Him throughout the eternal ages following our departure from this life (Rom. 8:29-38).

-God has given us His Spirit to teach, guide, inspire, motivate and empower for living our lives to please Him (Rom. 5:5).

-In saving individuals, God's objective was to place each one and all into a body of believers-called in the Scriptures, a church-and in and for that Body of believers, God freely gifts each one and all to serve and make a difference in one another's lives (Rom. 12:3-8).

In response to all of these blessings from God to those of us whose eyes and hearts He opened to embrace His Son as our Savior and Lord, God tells us how He wants us to live our lives for Him:

He says:

-Give yourself back to me as a living, holy sacrifice

"I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God that you offer yourselves to God as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God" (Rom. 12:1).

-Don't conform any longer to the patterns of this evil age

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world" (Rom. 12:2)

**-Be willing to let me transform you through renewing your minds with my truth-give me your minds and I (God) will change you.
"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind"
(Rom. 12:2)**

**-Wherever you live, there associate with my people-a body of believers-the church.
Jesus promised His disciples, "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18).
Following Jesus' ascension back to heaven, the Apostles spread out to plant churches.
Paul says, "In Christ, we (all who are Christians) form one body" (Rom. 12:5).**

-Through the church-in that body of believers-make faithful, regular use of the spiritual gifts that I freely give by grace to one and all to serve me and my people.

- A. Every Christian has been given gift(s) to serve in and for the body of Christ.
I Cor. 12:7, "Now to each one (each Christian) the manifestation of the Spirit (spiritual gifts) have been given FOR THE COMMON GOOD"
I Cor. 12:11, "All these (gifts) are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to EACH ONE, just as He determines."
I Cor. 12:18, "But in fact God has arranged the parts IN THE BODY, every one of them, just as He wanted them to be."
I Peter 4:10, "Each one of you should use whatever gift he has received TO SERVE OTHERS, faithfully using God's grace in its various forms."**
- B. The spiritual gift(s) that each person has is life our salvation-it is not earned or deserved-but spiritual gift(s) are "GIFTS OF GRACE."
I Peter 4:10, "Each one of you should use whatever GIFT he has received . . ."
Romans 12:6, "We have different GIFTS ACCORDING TO THE GRACE GIVEN US"
Ephesians 3:2, "Surely you have heard about GOD'S GRACE that was given to me FOR YOU . . . to preach and to make known (teach) everyone . . ."**
- C. Our spiritual gifts don't belong to those who possess them, but they belong to everyone else in the body.
Rom. 12:5, "So in Christ (Christian who belong to Christ and make up the body of Christ), we who are many form one body, AND EACH MEMBER BELONGS TO ALL THE OTHERS".
Eph. 3:2, ". . . God's grace given to me FOR YOU."**

Any of us who don't make regular, faithful use of our spiritual gift(s) are guilty of stealing from Christ and His body. As an individual Christian, I am not allowed to choose if I am going to faithfully make use of my spiritual gift(s) to serve in the body of Christ.

D. God warns us that we can be discontent with our spiritual gift(s), hide/disuse/hoard our spiritual gift(s), be selfish with them, be lazy with them, all of which lead to squandering them.

(1.) DISCONTENT:

"The foot cannot say, 'Because I am not a hand, I am not important to the body'; and the ear cannot say, 'Because I am not an eye, I am not important to the body'" (I Cor. 12:14-16).

(2.) HIDE/DISUSE/HOARD:

"Each one of you should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, FAITHFULLY ADMINISTERING God's grace in its various forms" (I Pet. 4:10).

"If any man's gift is prophesying . . . serving . . . teaching . . . encouraging . . . giving . . . leadership . . . showing mercy . . . LET HIM DO IT, LET HIM, LET HIM, LET HIM, LET HIM, LET HIM" (Rom. 12:6-8).

(3.) BE SELFISH:

". . . excel in gifts that build up the church" (I Cor. 14:12).

"Everything must be done for the strengthening of the church" (I Cor. 14:26).

(4.) BE LAZY:

"But by the grace of God I am what I am (an apostle, preacher and teacher), and His grace to me was not without effect. No, I WORKED HARDER than all of them (the other Apostles)-yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me."

Don't squander God's gift(s) of grace to you. God tells us to work hard with our spiritual gifts and we will find a highly rewarding life here and now and He will reward us in the life to come.

Related Questions To Serving Christ In A Body Of Believers Through Using My Spiritual Gift(s).

1. How Do I Discover My Spiritual Gifts?

A. Don't take an inventory where you evaluate yourself! It won't work until much later in your Christian life.

B. Your place in the body (your spiritual gifts) will become apparent as you commit yourself to faithfully, regularly serve in and for the body (I Cor. 12:4-6). Choose a ministry and start serving regularly and God will show other members of the Body of Christ what your spiritual gift(s) are.

Rick Warren ("Purpose Driven Church") rightfully says:

"The Bible clearly teaches that God gives each believer certain spiritual gifts to be used in ministry. . . . Most churches say, 'Discover your spiritual gift and then you'll know what ministry you're supposed to have.' This is backwards. I believe the exact opposite: Start experimenting with different ministries and then you'll discover your gifts! Until you actually get involved in serving, you're not going to know what you're good at. You can read all the books in print and still be confused about what you are gifted to do. . . . I do not place much stock in the many 'spiritual inventories' or tests that are available today."

- (1.) Enthusiastically, faithfully plug into opportunities for acquiring knowledge, growth, discipleship that is structured and offered for all members/attenders.**
- (2.) When you hear of needs, step forward and volunteer.**
- (3.) If you don't understand the various ministries, email or phone and ask questions.**
- (4.) The members who already make use of their spiritual gifts through serving faithfully, look for those who aren't yet making use of their spiritual gifts and lead them into service in some ministry.**
- (5.) When you begin serving in some ministry(ies), stay with them through completion (till they end). Ask leaders and others questions like: "How did I do?", "Was I a blessing to others?", "Do you see other gifts that I have?" "Would I be a better fit somewhere else in the body of Christ?" Don't be offended if others in the body (especially leaders of various ministries) inform you that you don't fit in that specific ministry.**
- (6.) Don't interpret difficult times, opposition, frustration, lack of interest in others to mean, "God doesn't want me serving in this way." Remember the example of the Apostle Paul (and all servants of Christ for that matter!).**

2. How Can I Serve In This Body Of Believers?

- (A.) First of all, give yourself back to Christ with ALL YOUR HEART. Without that, your service to the body won't last.**
- (B.) Ask God to show you how He wants you to serve Him. Ask Him how you can best use your the gift(s) He has given to you.**
- (C.) We have about 30-50 ministries going full time!**

(D.) Opportunity To Serve In And For This Body Of Christ

(1.) Public Sunday Ministries

- Sound system
- Worship teams (singing, playing instruments)
- Choir
- Special music
- Lighting
- Projection Ministry (video/slides)
- Video taping Sunday School classes
- Video taping Sunday morning worship services
- Making tapes/cd's
- Videoring Sunday services for cable TV
- Teach Sunday School
- Teach Jr. Church
- Helper in Sunday School
- Helper in Jr. Church
- Ushers
- Offering ushers
- Nursery workers
- Toddler workers
- Offering counters
- Homeless ministry
- Pick up homeless
- Help with meals
- Purchasing and obtaining Smarties for little children

(2.) Sunday Evening Ministries

- Communion (Lord's Table)
- Volunteer home for Lifeline ministry
- Volunteer part of meal for Lifeline

(3.) Public Wednesday Ministries:

- Awana (40+ workers)
- DYLM leaders/workers
- Teen worship band/singers
- Teen sound personnel
- Teen slides for worship
- Devotion Cell Groups
- Homes (10 minimum)
- Discussion Facilitators
- Accountability Partners
- Nursery workers
- Toddler workers
- Food providers

(4.) Private Behind The Scenes For Sunday/Wednesday

Ministries:

- Setting up auditorium on Saturdays (chairs, etc.)
- Weekly cleaning of facilities
- Floor cleanings
- Purchasing of cleaning supplies
- Printing bulletins, inserts
- Folding bulletins
- Running off Xerox copies
- Record keeping for Sunday/Wednesday ministries
- Delivering videos of Sunday services to Cable TV station
- Help make contacts for College Career/International Student ministries

(5.) Private Behind The Scenes Ministries For Sustaining And

Growing All Ministries:

- Trustees (to repair and maintain facilities)
- Administration throughout week
- Clerical
- Secretarial
- Computer data processing
- Updating church mailboxes
- Updating church directory
- Official record keeping for church.
- Wedding Coordinator
- Wedding meals
- Meals for families with mother in hospital
- Library workers
- Decorating of facilities/rooms
- Hospital Visitations
- Visitor visitations
- Evangelism

(6.) Leaders

- Elders
- Deacons
- Trustees
- Worship leaders
- Awana leaders
- DYLM leaders
- College Campus Ministry
- International Student Ministry
- Wednesday evening Discussion Facilitators
- Ushers
- Homeless ministry
- Nursery/Toddler leader

- Sunday School teachers
- Jr. Church leaders
- Sound System leader
- Projection leader
- Missions leader
- Sports leaders
- Basketball
- Softball
- Golf
- Soccer
- Volleyball
- Women's ministries leader
- Prison ministry Leader
- Vacation Bible School/Back Yard Bible Club
- Communion (Lord's Table) leader
- Lifeline leader
- HOMES (for home-schoolers)
- Email prayer chain
- Birthday/Anniversary lists
- Counseling/Discipleship leaders
- Library leaders
- Treasurer
- Financial secretary
- Church clerk

7. Periodic and Miscellaneous Needs:

- Baby recognition coordination/planner
- Graduation recognition planner
- Spring cleaning coordinator
- Fall cleaning coordinator
- Repairs to buildings/facilities/property
- Secretarial/typist
- Special events planner/developer/decorator
- Cooking/baking/preparing meals
- Ordering various supplies
- Making phone calls for the pastoral staff

