

Give the Gift of You! Romans Chapter Twelve

Judy Hartman's August 2017 Teaching

God tells you in Romans Chapter 12 to commit all that you are to Him, that you please Him by doing so. What a joy to please God! This exercise is a way to worship God each day. Then God tells you to check every area of your life to see if the ways of evil have slithered into your mind. He tells you to be changed as a caterpillar becomes a butterfly, for you to be changed by the power of God and His living Word so that you live God's will for you. Exchange any ways of the world for the fulness of God Himself to flood your heart. (Ephesians 3:16-19)

God's will for you includes knowing that He created you to love Him and to serve others with the faith that He has given you. Know that your faith is not something you drummed up or gritted your teeth to create. God gave you your faith! He gave it to you for the purpose of completing the unique plan He has for you. He loves you so much!

You are part of a family, the family of God. Every gathering of God's children is a family getting together. If you are not in a small group or a home group, run, don't walk, to find one! The glorious plan of God is for His children to be a family. You can find a church or fellowship where you live where there are small groups that meet weekly. Being a member of a small group is essential for you today to be able to function optimally as a child of God in today's world. I will also say that you have a responsibility to be in a group weekly. You have so much to give that only you can give. Life is so much easier when you have a family who really cares about you and is there for you. Your biological family also can meet every day as the family of God in prayer and Bible study.

God tells you that He has given you a gift that is especially designed for you (Romans 12:3). He explains that you have a special part to play in the family of God and that every part is equally important. So, the one who is the leader is no more important to the family than the one who prepares the church for the service. Every part is needed and essential.

God's grace is your receiving what you do not deserve. Jesus Christ took your place on the cross at Calvary. He took your sin upon Himself, so that God would see you as righteous through the blood that Jesus shed for you. Jesus' shed blood gave you

direct access to God. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for your sin, one time for all of your sin. (I John 1:7) God's grace was given to you by God sacrificing His Son on the cross for you. When Jesus rose from the dead, He overcame death and provided eternal life for you. (John 11:25)

With God's grace comes responsibility. You may think that becoming part of a local gathering of brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus is just something you can do when you feel like it, go or not go. Going is not a legalistic rule. Participating in a local family of God is a privilege and an honor, but also a direction from God to you. You are in the family of God! God tells you to gift your gift that He has given you. Gift the gift of you.

Read through the following seven gifts. Note which one rings a bell for you. You most likely will be strongest in one of them. You may be very comfortable in more than one of them. Remember that Jesus Christ is all of these gifts. He will be in you whatever gift you need. Expect Jesus Christ to bless others through you with whatever gift is needed. In an area where you are weak, ask Jesus to flood you with Himself to strengthen you to be stronger. In our weakness His strength is made perfect. (II Corinthians 12:9) Every day become more like Jesus by inviting Him to be through you whatever is needed in each situation.

Your special gift is a gift you can give to others wherever you go, but especially when you gather with other believers, at a fellowship or at church. What kinds of ways can you serve with your gift? At the end of each gift are some possibilities. You will notice even more doors open to you once you start looking for places to give the gift of you

1. Are you someone who immediately discerns right from wrong. You don't have any problem finding the answer to an issue between two people. You can ask each one to tell his or her side of the situation. You can then quickly determine who is guilty and call the person on it. If restitution needs to be made, you will let the guilty person know when and how to make the situation right again. Your personality is not one that draws people to you easily. You will learn to hear God's voice and even deliver messages to people from God, to encourage them and perhaps to deliver them from great harm or destruction. If you identify with this description, God has given you the gift of prophecy. (I am not focusing on gifts used in worship services in this

lesson, just on gifts used as family members of the body of Christ.) I took longer on this gift because it is easily misunderstood. People may think you are stern or that you lack tenderness. Every gift needs to be softened by all the rest of the gifts, which Jesus has, and makes available to you exactly when you need them. I will say that truth again. All of the gifts are in Christ Jesus. Whatever gift you need, you will have exactly when you need it. Be ready to receive what is not natural or normally comfortable for you to do. God will provide exactly what you need at the moment you need it.

Ways you can serve:

'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' says God,
'THAT I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT UPON ALL MANKIND;
AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY,
AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE [divinely prompted] VISIONS,
AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM [divinely prompted] DREAMS; (Joel 2:28 AMP
and repeated in Acts 2:17 AMP)

We are there, friends. Ask God for words of prophecy to be spoken through you. Small groups are a perfect place to start.

Be ready to be an arbitrator when issues come up between people or groups.

Note: The Bible is 27.8 percent prophecies. That is, 27.8 percent of the Bible foretells of a specific event often centuries before it occurs and tells it with 100 percent accuracy. Of the 2500 prophecies in the Bible 2000 of them have been fulfilled to the letter. Prophecy is very important to you.

2. Are you someone who prefers to stay in the background? Are you the one who volunteers when the chairs need to be arranged, the tables need to be set up, or friends need help when they are moving? Are you the one who is always available to help when someone requests it? When you help someone, you actually are blessed yourself. You express yourself through helping others. God has given you the gift of serving. (NOTE: Everyone must be ready to bless others with this gift, when the need arises!)

Ways you can serve:

Volunteer to clean the church

Volunteer to set up the church before the service

Tell your pastor that you will help him any time he needs it

Volunteer when food is served

Volunteer to help with special events

Look for places where help is needed

3. Are you someone who really enjoys teaching? If there was a group of people waiting for the teacher to arrive and the teacher could not come that day, you would be able and willing to teach the class if the subject was something you knew. You are usually a perpetual learner. You have the ability to take a subject and break it down into pieces that someone who knows nothing about the subject can understand. You will make a great leader in the children's, youth, young adult, or adult Bible class. You will find that you like to be a Bible teacher because your relationship with God grows deeper every time you teach. Both the preparation and the teaching are glorious experiences for you.

Ways you can serve:

Volunteer to teach in the children's ministry

Volunteer in the nursery and bring ideas about teaching even the youngest children to know and love God in Christ Jesus

Volunteer to teach a Bible study

Volunteer to teach a home group

Volunteer to teach new volunteers to have fun and be effective teaching

4. Are you someone who always has a word of encouragement for everyone you meet. You are almost always smiling and full of joy. You transfer the joy all day long. You look at each person and find something positive to say to encourage him or her. When someone is facing a difficult situation, you are there to lift the person to a place of joy even in sadness. You are usually comfortable with strangers, with people you have never met. You are not self-conscious. You naturally think of the other person more than yourself and always give a word of blessing to whomever you meet. God has given you the gift of encouragement or exhortation.

Ways you can serve:

Stand at the back of the church and ask God where He wants you to sit.

Look for a new person, someone alone, or sit wherever God nudges you to sit.

Become a friend of the new person. At the end of the service offer to pray with the person. If you are able, take the person to lunch.

Arrive at church early and introduce yourself to any new people, letting them know about the small groups your church has and any other activities that might interest them.

Be a greeter at the door when people first arrive at the church
Encourage your pastor every time you meet. Mention specific truths that he gave that especially will make a difference in your life
As you meet people during the week, share Jesus Christ with them, every one! You might say when someone asks you how you are: "I'm blessed in the Lord Jesus Christ and I trust that you are, too" or "I'm so blessed in Christ Jesus today and I pray His blessing upon you as well!" Look right into people's eyes and love them as you bless them.

5. Are you the one who at the checkout stand if the person in front of you is short of money, you just naturally offer to make up the difference, very quietly and without drawing attention to yourself? Are you the one who when you notice someone does not have what is needed, offer to provide it or share what you have? Do you naturally have a generous nature? Is giving a part of what you think about doing and do every day? You prefer that no one else knows about your acts of kindness in giving to others. God has given you the gift of giving.

Ways you can serve:

Ask your pastor if you can teach the curriculum that goes with Jack's book, *Trust God for Your Finances*, as a Bible study in your church or in a home group. The curriculum is free for downloading on our website, www.lamplight.net Everyone who takes this class is transformed by God to understand that He owns everything and that all that you have is a gift from Him. Giving becomes a joy, the same joy that you already have. Once you have taken the class, you have a responsibility to pass the truths to others and begin a group of your own

Study the ways your church serves the community. There may be more ways that you can give: food, clothing, counseling for jobs

Carry money with you to give away when God gives you the unction.

Pray for the people of your church to understand God's principles of finance and to receive financial freedom: having exactly what you need to carry out God's will for your life as you live His principles of finance that are always working, just like gravity.

Grow in your "live to give" nature every day.

6. Are you the one who naturally takes the lead in any situation? Do you often find yourself in a leadership role wherever you are? Do people look to you

for leadership? Are you comfortable leading a group of people? Are you comfortable in delegating to others different jobs and having them accountable to you for completion? Do you have the ability to help people find where they fit the best in any situation and give directions about what needs to be done? God has given you the gift of leadership.

Ways you can serve

Get to know your pastor well. Allow him to see your leadership qualities. Be aware of leadership needs in the church. Volunteer when you see a need.

If there is an outreach you would like to develop in the church, pray about it and present it to the pastor

Teach a class on leadership skills, such as John Maxwell's. You can even become certified by John Maxwell.

7. Are you the one who naturally hurries over to anyone who is hurt and offer to help? Are you the one who immediately feels compassion for someone who is in deep sorrow or deep disappointment? Do you feel drawn to help anyone who is hurting emotionally or physically? Do you have a really great feeling when you help someone who is hurting? You help cheerfully not out of duty. Do you cry easily in sad or happy cry movies? God has given you the gift of mercy.

Ways you can serve:

Arrive at church early. Ask God who is hurting. As the Holy Spirit leads you, speak to the person and offer to pray for the person after you have opened the door to friendship. Ask the Holy Spirit what to pray for the person. You don't need to know anything about the person's issue.

Pray often for husband/wife relationships in your church. Pray for jobs for people. Pray for restoration of relationships in family. Keep a journal. Note when prayers are answered. Ask God for His heart each day. Ask God for you to love others as He loves them.

Volunteer in the food pantry if you have one. Be there to minister to people as they come in, asking God how to minister to them.

Be on the prayer chain in your church or start one. Pray fervently for each situation. Keep a journal. Let people know you are praying for them.

Notice when someone seems especially shy. Give the person the gift of you who are so full of mercy.

Then God gives you directions about how to gift your gift to others. He tells you to hate all that is evil. Hate evil with a passion. Be known for

hating evil. Hold tightly to what is good. Be known for always choosing good. Be known for your godly ways. Have a reputation of godliness. Be there for your brothers and sisters in Christ. Be certain that they know that you love them and that you will be available for them in time of need (never to be used wrongly or dominated by someone else's demands. Always keep your boundaries safe from intrusion. Pray before every decision.)

Let others see that your passionate hope is in Christ Jesus. Serve the Lord with all of your heart. Let others see that when you are in distress that your trust is in the Lord, that you know that He will see you through to the other side of the storm in your life. Be a prayer warrior. Participate regularly in prayer meetings. Be faithful in your own appointment with God every day. Be hospitable to others whether it is comfortable for you or not. God instructs us to live in His Spirit, be controlled by His Spirit and not to be controlled by our flesh. (Romans 8:5) In no way could you carry out His instructions without His power. (I Corinthians 4:20)

Then God tells you to do what appears impossible. He tells you to bless those who are persecuting you or who are taunting you in any way. (Romans 12:14) God tells you to repay evil with good. (Romans 12:17) Who could ever bless his enemies without the grace and power of God? When you especially feel that someone should reap the evil he has sown, remember that God says He will handle it. Know that He will do it much more effectively than you ever could. Watch and see what God does.

Allow the love of God that you receive each day, that you receive so freely, flow through you to others. Let others experience the love of God through you. You may be the only expression of God that certain people will see that day or maybe that they have ever seen. I cannot emphasize this point enough! One of the greatest proofs that Jesus Christ is in your life may be the way you treat someone who has wronged you. The person knows how you would behave in the natural. When you behave in the supernatural and choose to bless that person, anyone who sees what you are doing knows that you are not acting in a human manner. You are behaving supernaturally! I will accentuate this truth again and again! Jesus Christ is seen clearly when you return good for evil. I know that God says in Malachi 3:10 to test Him in the area of giving, but I guarantee that you can test Him also in this area of returning good for evil. You will feel awkward at first. In fact, you will probably always feel awkward. What you are doing goes against everything

you know. God said to return good for evil. Just do it. Let me know what happens!

Use wisdom. There are people who would use you and abuse you. Ask God for His wisdom. Do only what the Holy Spirit gives you the go ahead to do. People with the gift of prophecy are great in this area. They can spot a fake or a con artist immediately. Find a friend whom you know is straight forward in decision making and ask for counsel when you are in doubt about what to do.

I will say that our nation, the United States, is used and abused by others because of our biblical principles. We are known for tolerance. Therefore, we can be overrun by those whose end goal is to destroy or enslave us. We have an extreme version of the gift of mercy and take care of people who could take care of themselves. There are plenty of people for whom we need to provide. Biblical principles can be abused. Don't let that happen in your life. Be discerning in your returning good for evil. There are boundaries. There must be a balance in living in all of God's principles which include being wise as a serpent as well as gentle as a dove. (Matthew 10:16).

Think of your brothers and sisters in Christ as your family. Be excited about seeing them! Honor them. Serve the Lord together with them with excitement! Keep before you the hope that you have in Christ Jesus. New Jerusalem is your hope in Him. You are a citizen of heaven. You are a traveler, a sojourner, on earth. Earth is not your home.

Celebrate with those who are rejoicing. Weep with those who are weeping or just sit quietly and be there as a source of God's strength, compassion, and love. Discern how to live in peace with those around you. That takes prayer, listening to God especially, and asking for God's wisdom. (James 1:5-8) You will find that the closer you come to God, the less conceited and impressed by yourself you will become. You will know who you are apart from God. You will know who you are in God and be very humbled by it, especially by the comparison.

Well, we have completed Romans, Chapter 12. Please go over and over the chapter. Live in it for a time. Carry it with you. Put verses that stand out to you on three by five cards. Write the verses on your heart by praying them to God. Ask God to anoint you to give the gift of you to others each day. I eagerly await to hear from you!