

The Gift of Helps

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith emphasizes the importance of the gift of helps and the unique role each member plays in the body of Christ.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12

Topics: "Unity in the Body of Christ", "Service"

Description

Chuck Smith emphasizes the significance of the gift of helps within the body of Christ, illustrating how every member has a unique role that contributes to the overall function of the church. He draws parallels between the human body and the church, highlighting that even seemingly insignificant parts are essential and deserving of honor. Smith encourages believers to recognize their calling to serve, regardless of the visibility of their contributions, and to do so joyfully and selflessly. He shares examples of individuals who embody the gift of helps, demonstrating that true service is done for the Lord and not for recognition. Ultimately, he calls the congregation to discover their place in the body and to serve one another with love and care.

Transcript

Shall we turn in our Bibles to 1 Corinthians 12? Paul is describing the gifts of the Holy Spirit as they operate within the church. He then likens it to a body, which is one, and yet has many members or many parts. Although there are many parts, it is only one body. So also is Christ.

For by the one Spirit are we all baptized into the one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into the one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which

lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way. (1 Corinthians 12:13-31)

So, as he likens the ministry gifts and the various members of the body, note that God has a place and a purpose for every part of the body. You are a part of the body of Christ. And as such, God has fit you for a particular place of ministry and service within the body. You are necessary for the function of the whole body. So many times there are parts that we think are not so important, but God has chosen to bestow upon them a greater importance. Some parts of the body that really do not get noticed very much (some of the more uncomely or not so beautiful parts of the body) God has chosen to bestow upon them a greater beauty.

Now your big toe is not really very beautiful. If you really just sort of look at it, it is really sort of funny looking. And yet how important it is for your balance. It is so important for the balance of the body. And thus, we all have a part and a place in the body of Christ and we are interdependent upon each other, functioning in that place in the body where God has chosen and is pleased to place us.

Now as he makes this analogy with the human body to the body of Christ, he then talks about some of the ministry gifts within the body. He makes mention of these in his letter to the Ephesians also. First of all, he said "apostles." Now they were the recognized leaders in the early church. They were the founders, you might say, of the church. You remember that there were many people following Jesus. There were main disciples, but of the disciples He chose twelve that they might be called "apostles." And the requirement for apostleship was that, first of all, a man be called of God. It is not something that you just make yourself or declare that you are. There were false apostles, but to be a true apostle required the call of God. So as Paul makes reference to his apostleship, over and over he said, "Paul, an apostle by the will of God."

Secondly, it was a requirement that they had seen the risen Lord. As Peter was talking about the necessity of choosing someone to take the place of Judas, he said, "We need someone who has been with us from the beginning, who can bear witness of the resurrection" (cf. Acts 1:22). And then finally, he must have the gift of miracles to be an apostle.

Now when Paul was defending his apostleship he said that he was an apostle by the will of God. And he said that he was an apostle to the Gentiles. He affirmed that he had seen the Lord when he was writing to the Corinthians and also he declared that the signs of an apostle were wrought by him. That is the gift of miracles and faith as it was exercised in the life of Paul.

I do not know that there are apostles today. I know some men who have claimed apostleship. Usually the reason why they claim to be apostles is that they want authority over people and they want to speak with apostolic authority. In other words: "If I say it is right, then it is right."

Now the Mormon Church declares that they are the only legitimate church today because they are the only church that is governed by the twelve apostles. And having the twelve apostles they are the only ones who can legitimately ordain someone for the ministry. And thus their big question is always, "Who gave you the

authority to preach? Or who gave you the authority to baptize?" These are the same kind of questions the Pharisees were asking John the Baptist. And they later asked Jesus when He had cleansed the temple, "Who gave You the authority to do these things?"

It was interesting that when we met one of the leaders of the Mormon Church there in Salt Lake City a few weeks ago, the question that he had was, "All of these men that are out pastoring these churches, who ordained them?" The thought was Who gave them the authority? And I said to him, "Well, we do not believe that any man can ordain another man for the ministry. We believe that only God can ordain a man for the ministry." And I said, "We seek to only ratify what we recognize God has ordained. So we really do not ordain anyone for the ministry. We do ratify what we recognize to be God's ordination."

There is no use beating around the bush. I do not believe that the twelve apostles of the Mormon Church are legitimate. I have known other men who have claimed to be apostles and those that I know who have made that claim, I do not think they are legitimate either.

When Paul wrote his second letter to the Corinthians, he said,

Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds. (2 Corinthians 12:12)

And Paul declared that he was a preacher, he declared that he was an apostle, and he declared that he was a teacher. So as he lists here, "First apostles..." he claimed that he was an apostle. And I accept his claim and believe it is true that he was called of God to be an apostle. But he was also a preacher (or an evangelist--because the evangelist is the preacher). But he also declared that he was a teacher. And he thus had all three of these ministry gifts: that of evangelist, that of an apostle, and that of a teacher in the body of Christ. And Paul did all three very well.

So the Holy Spirit divides to each man severally as He wills. And it is possible that you can have more than one office or one ministry within the church. We have several of our Calvary Chapel pastors that I believe are pastor-teachers, but I believe that they also have the gift of evangelism. Greg Laurie, of course, Mike McIntosh, Raul Ries, Brian Brodersen--many of these young fellows are pastor-teachers, yet they also possess the gift of an evangelist. And thus it is possible, as with Paul, to have more than one ministry gift.

Paul mentions the prophets here. Now they were those who were the exhorters and the encouragers of the church. In the New Testament we are told that there were prophets in the church of Antioch. We do know that Agabus had the office of a prophet within the church in Jerusalem. I believe that Billy Graham is a modern-day prophet. As much as Isaiah or Jeremiah was called by God to be a prophet to the nation of Judah, I believe that Billy Graham has been called by God to be a prophet to the United States.

There were teachers in the early church. Now they are down the line a bit, but I believe that God has called me as a teacher in the body of Christ. And the Bible says, "make your calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10). And I believe that God has called me and gifted me as a teacher. And I believe that the ability is from God. The teaching ability is a gift of God and I recognize it as such. And I believe that the teaching is anointed by the Holy Spirit. If I did not believe that, I would not be here. I would not presume to be here. And I think that one of the proofs that it is anointed by the Holy Spirit is the fact that I can listen to my own tapes and enjoy them and actually be fed by them. Sometimes I think, Did I say that? That is really good! I do not remember saying that but that is excellent!

And so, we do recognize that there are gifted teachers within the body of Christ. I believe that Pastor David Hocking is a gifted teacher in the body of Christ. I believe that we have many gifted teachers in Calvary Chapel. I believe that Skip Heitzig and Damian Kyle are gifted and there is just a long list of really gifted teachers. Larry Taylor is a gifted teacher. And I thank the Lord for the many gifted teachers that He has placed here in the body.

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he adds "evangelists" to this list that we have here of apostles and prophets and teachers. And then he couples pastors with teachers. I believe that to be a pastor the gift of teaching is an essential. Now when Paul adds evangelist to the list, of course I would put Billy Graham again in that category. Not only is he a prophet of God to our nation, but he is a gifted evangelist. In my opinion, he is one of the finest that the church has seen. As we mentioned, Paul had multiple ministries and so there are many today with multiple ministries within the body.

Now for every one of these gifts or gifted men with gifted ministries, there are gifts of the Holy Spirit that enhance and help in the exercise of that ministry. And again, I want to declare that I think that it is unfortunate that we have used the term "minister" to specify usually the man who is up in the front and has been called of God to minister to the church. And we say he is our minister. When in reality, all of you have been called to the ministry--not necessarily the pulpit ministry, not necessarily the teaching ministry, or not necessarily a pastoral ministry--but you have all been called into the ministry. You have all been called to serve God and that is what the word ministry actually means, "a servant." And you have all been called to serve the Lord. God has a place for every one of you in service here in the body of Christ. There is no one that is called into the body of Christ who does not also have the call to the ministry--for whatever God has ordained and gifted you.

So as we get to 1 Corinthians 12:28 Paul mentions these various ministry areas (the apostles and prophets) and then he adds to the listing of the nine gifts of the Spirit that we had in the earlier listing. He adds the gifts of helps and the gifts of government to the other list. And so Paul adds the gifts of healing, gifts of helps, gift of governments, diversities of tongues, and of course the interpretation, which are given here in the verse 28.

We would like to look at the gift of helps and those who help in the work of the Lord. There are so many things that need to be done in order that the church might have a full ministry to all of the needs of those within the body. And thus, I think that the gift of helps is one of the most important gifts in the body of Christ. I think perhaps that this is one of those gifts that we are prone not to place too much honor upon. But God puts on it the more abundant honor because oftentimes the gifts of helps are unnoticed. It is not recognized. And thus, we are prone to notice those who are up in front teaching. We are prone to magnify the gift of teacher or evangelist or whatever. And I believe God really places the more abundant glory and honor upon the gifts of helps.

I believe that when people have the gift of helps, they really do not wait to be asked to do things. They just see a need and they just plug in and fill that need. And we have those kinds of people here at Calvary Chapel and how grateful I am for them! They are exercising the ministry of helps and they do it quietly. They do not do it with a lot of flare and drawing attention to themselves. It is just a beautiful, quiet ministry.

We have a lady in our church who is involved in the Monday morning intercessory prayer group and her husband comes with her. And while she is in intercessory prayer with the ladies, he goes through the parking lot picking up all of the papers (paper cups and junk) that you left on Sunday. And I see him

walking through the parking lot and I just thank God for that man. Now no one asked him to do it. He just saw that on Monday there was stuff left in the parking lot from Sunday and since he had to drive his wife here for the prayer meeting, he figured, "Well, here is something I can do." And it is a ministry of helps, but I will tell you that our parking lot would look a lot worse if it were not for his ministry of helps.

We had a couple of retired men in the church who realized that these air conditioners all have filters on them which need to be changed regularly. And so, these two men would come down on a regular, scheduled basis and they would go through all of the air conditioners. There are over a hundred filters and they would replace them. And they had the schedule all worked out. They would order the filters and then they would go through on a regular basis and change the filters to help keep the air cleaner. What a beautiful gift! One of these men is already getting his reward for his exercise of his ministry. And the other one has moved away from the area, but it was always a blessing to see these fellows come down and they would go through the whole thing. They had placed charts up for which air conditioners needed new filters each week as they would go through the whole complex here changing the air conditioning filters. This is the ministry of helps. It is a very beautiful ministry.

I think of all of the ladies who are involved in the ministry of helps here at Calvary Chapel. Of course tomorrow we will see the Joyful Life Studies begin once more. But it would be impossible for these ladies to have such an extremely successful program if it were not for all of the ladies who are involved in the ministry of helps in getting the lessons together. They help in getting the groups together, in seeing that there are rooms for everybody--I mean it is just glorious to watch how God has gifted these women. Many of them have organizational skills and they are able to just come and offer themselves in service to the Lord in the ministry of helps.

There are many opportunities to exercise the gift of helps. If you hear of someone who has gone to the hospital or maybe a wife who has gone to the hospital, they will prepare a meal and take it over to the family. And they might go over and clean the house. If the wife is in the hospital for any prolonged period of time, you can be sure the house is going to get to be a mess. And they will go over and help, just showing the love of Christ in a very practical way.

In the Old Testament, Joshua had the gift of helps and he ministered unto Moses. He was there beside Moses. Moses could give him orders and he stood by to carry out the wishes of Moses. And we read, "So Joshua did as Moses said unto him" (Exodus 17:10). He was there just to be a right-hand man for Moses--just to help Moses. But it is interesting to me that he was a very faithful servant to Moses. He exercised the gift of helps. And being faithful in the ministry and the gift of helps, when Moses died, God chose and ordained Joshua to then take over the leadership of the people.

In the parable of the talents, Jesus commended the one who had increased the five and he received another five. And he said, "Lord I went out and I have ten here now." And the Lord said, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in the little things, now I will make you ruler over more things, or larger things" (cf. Matthew 25:21).

And the beautiful thing is that as we are faithful in the place where God has called us, it does not mean that I am going to forever be stoking the furnace. But if God has called me to do that, I need to be faithful in doing it. Whatever God has called me to do, I should do it with the best of my ability. I should do it with a willing heart, a ready heart, and a joyful heart because I should be doing it as unto the Lord, not as unto man.

Now the Lord has taught me some interesting lessons in this regard, because I want the grounds here to look clean and neat. I like to go on the grounds where it looks like somebody cares. I do not like going where it looks like people do not really care or they are not interested. If it is junky looking, I do not like that. And so as I walk around the grounds, when I see the papers on the ground, I usually pick them up. And of course with the school here of almost 2,000 students, these plastic sandwich bags blow all over the place and the kids are not the most tidy kids in the world. You know that probably better than I do because my kids for the most part are grown and gone. The school kids let their papers go and they leave their cans of pop or the empty cans everywhere around the grounds.

And so I often find myself, as I am walking back to one of the other offices, picking up these papers or picking up cans and depositing them in the trash can. And I found that I was resenting it somewhat. I began to say, "Trashy kids!" And I found that I was beginning to resent it, because it becomes one of those jobs like washing dirty clothes. It never ends.

I have a eucalyptus tree in my front yard that is dirty all year long. Now the trees that I plant are the deciduous type as a rule, so one part of the year I clean up leaves--sure--but that is it. With the eucalyptus every week it deposits a pile of dirty leaves. And I wrote the city and asked them to please remove the tree in the parkway because it is in their parkway, and thus, I do not have jurisdiction over it. And they like the looks of it but they do not have to sweep the sidewalk all the time. It is one of those things that just does not quit. It is always there. And thus, with those kinds of tasks you go through and do it, but then tomorrow at lunch--there it is again!

And so I found that I was resenting it and I was sort of picking up with force some of the pop cans and crushing them. And the Lord spoke to my heart and He said, "Who are you doing this for?" "You, Lord!" And He said, "Forget it. If you are going to do it with that attitude I would rather you not do it."

So what we do for the Lord we should do cheerfully. We should do it for the joy of knowing that we are doing it for the Lord. "Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all for the glory of God" (cf. Colossians 3:17). And so with the gifts of helps, you need to exercise them for the glory of God, realizing, "I am doing this for the Lord. And whatever I do for the Lord, He wants me to do joyfully as service unto God."

In the Old Testament, we find Gehazi was the servant of Elisha and he would do Elisha's bidding. He was helping Elisha. Elisha's ministry was greatly enhanced by having Gehazi there to help him. The problem with Gehazi is that he began to lust after the rewards that Naaman had offered to his master Elisha and coveted the wealth and went after it and was thus plagued with the leprosy that was once on Naaman.

In the New Testament, Timothy was Paul's servant. He went with Paul so many times and helped Paul. When Paul needed to move on, He said, "Timothy you stay here for a while." And then he would write and say, "Come on and meet me, Timothy. And when you do, bring some parchments and some of these other things" (cf. 2 Timothy 4:13). And he was a tremendous help to Paul.

Paul speaks of Priscilla and Aquilla as being his helpers in Christ Jesus. And when the early church had a problem with its welfare program, they chose seven men who were filled with the Holy Spirit, (men who had a good reputation) and they put them over the administering of the church's welfare program. They were given a position of the ministry of helps--helping in distributing the church's welfare. But as they were faithful in that ministry of helps, we find that Philip then was gifted as an evangelist and was given the gift of the working of miracles (the gifts of healing). And he went up to Samaria and brought Christ unto the Samaritans and there was a tremendous revival under Philip. He was one of the men who had the gifts of

helps and was administering the church's welfare program.

Another was Stephen, who also was one of those seven chosen to wait the tables. He was faithful in that ministry of works and God then used him to challenge the Jewish high council. And I believe as a direct result of his witness and his martyrdom that Paul the Apostle was touched in his heart and was fighting against the convictions of the Spirit until the day the Lord apprehended him on the road to Damascus. And the Lord said, "It has been hard for you, has it not, Paul, to kick against the pricks?" (cf. Acts 9:5). In other words, "Your conscience has been goading you because of what you heard from Stephen. You heard the truth and it struck but you have been fighting against it."

Paul, writing in Romans said,

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching. (Romans 12:6-7)

And I believe that he is here referring to the gifts of helps.

What a glorious and wonderful thing it is when God brings alongside of you those who have the ministry of helps or the gift of helps. They do not have to be asked to do things. They just see what needs to be done and they go quietly about doing it. They do not exercise the gift for public recognition and would be very embarrassed if someone praised them for the work that they did.

Now there are many people who are not that way and then it is not really the gifts of helps. But there are many people who do things for recognition. Though Jesus said, "Take heed to yourself that you do not your righteousness before men to be seen of men, because I say, you have your reward" (cf. Matthew 6:1). But that is the case many times.

I went to pastor the Los Serranos Community Church years ago and on the first Sunday there was a very beautiful floral piece on the table there in front of the platform. And I thought it was a beautiful arrangement. After the service the head of the board of elders came up to me and he said, "Now, Pastor Smith, I know this is your first Sunday. You are new here but," he said, "If you want to see those flowers there in front, you must make mention of them." And I said, "Well, you probably did not know what you were getting into when you voted for me as your pastor. I do not believe in giving public recognition to men because I feel that I would be robbing them from their heavenly reward." He said, "Well, if you want to see flowers there, you better, you know..." So there were flowers the following Sunday, which was a beautiful arrangement again but I did not make mention of it, and sure enough that was the last bouquet.

What you do, you do for the Lord and as unto the Lord and you look to the Lord for the recognition and the reward for what you have done. That is the true gift of works. Paul told them to do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men. It is a ministry gift that should be exercised, as we said, "with joy because you are doing it as a service to the Lord."

And the Lord loves a cheerful giver. It should never be exercised in the sense of duty or obligation, where you then feel the resentment for what you are doing. If you find yourself resenting the work that you are doing, then it would be best that you not do it. Because rather than it being a positive experience for you, it is a negative experience for you and it is not really going to produce any rewards. So you would be better off not to do it because it is really going against your record rather than for your record, if you are doing it

with a bitter heart or out of resentment. And you are upset because, "They have asked me to do this. I am going to do it." But God does not want our clenched-teeth kind of service. And so it is important that, in the exercise of this gift, it be exercised out of a heart of love and a heart of joy.

I have observed people with the gifts of helps who are always so excited and so thrilled that they can do something for the Lord. They are just bubbling over with excitement to think, "I have this service that I can offer to God and He will actually let me serve Him this way." That is the true gift of helps and it is an important gift. It is a necessary gift within the body, because there is just so much to be done. No one man can do it all. No ministerial staff can do it all. There is some way for everybody to serve the Lord.

And you might say, "Well, I do not have any gifts." Well, anybody can have the gifts of helps and by faith exercise that gift and be a blessing and a benefit to the whole body of Christ. Every one of you has a place in the body. That is what Paul taught us tonight.

Do you know your place in the body? Are you fulfilling your place in the body? Are you using your gifts?

Shall we pray?

Father, what a joy and blessing it is to be able to serve You. And how we thank You, Lord, for Your gifts and Your callings. And Lord, we pray that each of us will discover just that place that You have for us in the body of Christ. And we pray, Father, that we might see the body of Christ functioning as one body, unified together, ministering to each other, sensitive to each other and each other's needs. May we be loving one another, caring for one another and doing for one another. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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