

Many Members

Romans 12:3-8



Apostle Paul (~ 5 – 67 A.D.)
By Andrei Rublev (1410)

Many Members Introduction



Many Members Introduction

- In **Romans 1 – 11**, Paul described right belief.
- In **Romans 12 – 15**, he describes right conduct.

Many Members Introduction

- Key phrase: “the obedience of faith” (1:5, 16:26)
- Faith and obedience are *related* – *not rival* ideas.
- The gospel brings about **faith** which leads to **obedience**.
- This was Christ’s intention for Paul’s apostleship.

Many Members Introduction

- Key concept: God's grace
 - Unmerited favor, freely given to penitent sinners.
 - God's goodness toward those who deserve only punishment.

Many Members Introduction

Life Lived by Grace:

- A. Complete Transformation 12:1-2
- B. Many Members 12:3-8
- C. Love That Is Genuine 12:9-21
- D. Church and State 13:1-7
- E. Love Fulfills the Law 13:8-10
- F. The Day Is at Hand 13:11-14
- G. Working on Unity 14:1 – 15:13

Many Members Introduction

- Americans admire the rugged individualist.
- To assert your independence is a positive – the opposite of following the crowd.

Many Members Introduction

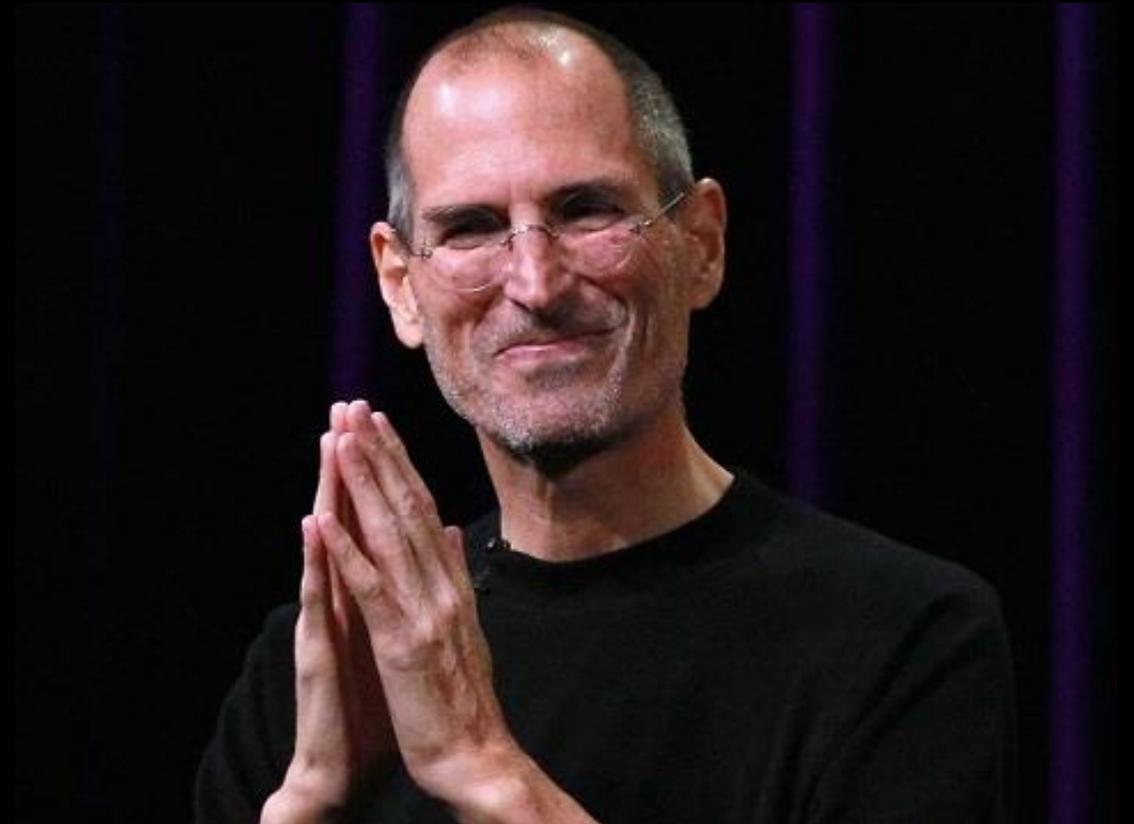


The Duke – John Wayne
(1907 – 1979)

Many Members Introduction

*It's more fun to be a pirate
than to join the navy.*

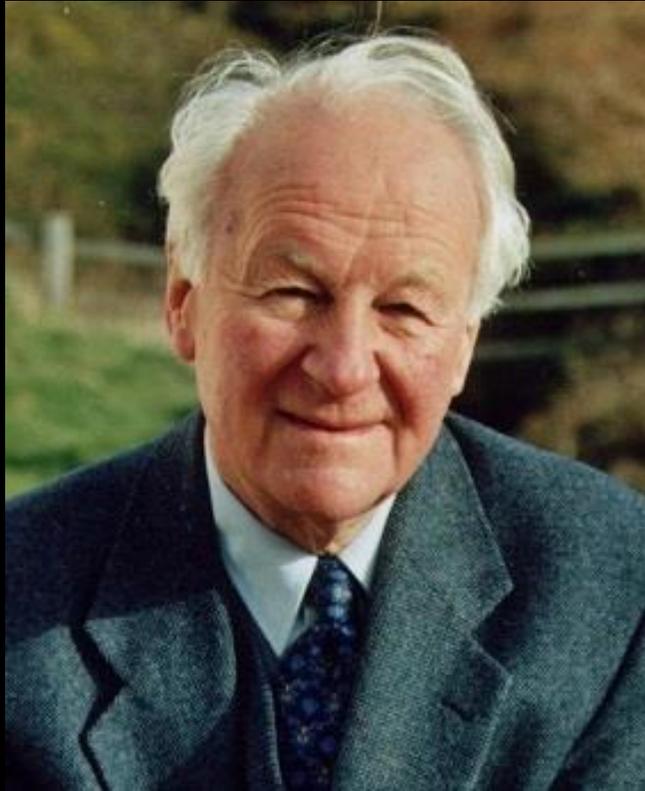
– Steve Jobs (1955 – 2011)



Many Members Introduction

- The Bible tells a somewhat different story.
- We see our value as part of a community.
- Our uniqueness is intended to serve the good of the group.

Many Members Introduction



Our renewed mind, which is capable of discerning and approving God's will, must also be active in evaluating ourselves, our identity and our gifts. For we need to know who we are, and to have an accurate, balanced and above all sober self-image. A renewed mind is a humble mind like Christ's.

*– John Stott (1921 – 2011),
All Souls Church, London*

Many Members Introduction

Our Topic Today:

1. Explanation 12:3-5
2. Examples 12:6-8 (7 Sample Gifts)

1. Explanation 12:3-5



1. Explanation 12:3-5

- There is humility in seeing ourselves as one member in the church that Christ is constantly building.
- If all of us are needed, then all of us are important and none of us is more important than anyone else.

1. Explanation 12:3-5



We must view ourselves not as isolated individuals but as parts of one organism. If we ... make the health of that organism a priority, then it will be ... difficult for us to think too highly of ourselves. We will think, rather, how best we can fit in ... and effectively carry out whatever function we might have in that body.

*– Douglas Moo,
Wheaton Graduate School*

1. Explanation 12:3-5



A good toe-nail is not an unsuccessful attempt at a brain: and if it were conscious it would delight in being simply a good toe-nail.

– C. S. Lewis (1898 – 1963),

1. Explanation 12:3-5

- So we should each be willing to serve, but in particular to do so in accordance with our gifts.
- We then fit in as part of a larger team, all under the headship of Christ.

1. Explanation 12:3-5

It is not just that believers are connected to Christ in a profound and spiritual way. They are also members of each other ... as members of the body of Christ, ... persons whom Christ loves and for whom he died. Each believer has one or more grace gifts, according to the grace given to them by God.

*– Ben Witherington III,
Asbury Theological Seminary*



1. Explanation 12:3-5

- Paul now gives us a list of seven sample gifts.

2. Examples 12:6-8



2. Examples 12:6-8

- 12:6 Gifts = *charismata*, from which we get charismatic
- We may use this about a person or a type of church in which the gifts of the Spirit are strongly emphasized.
- Paul encourages us to use our gifts.

2. Examples 12:6-8

- 12:6 ... if prophecy, in proportion to our faith
- Old Testament prophets had an authority something like the apostles in the New Testament church.
- New Testament prophets are not so authoritative.

2. Examples 12:6-8

- 1 Corinthians 14:3 (ESV)

On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.

2. Examples 12:6-8

- 12:7 Next on the list is *service*.
- All Christians serve – in one way or another.
- There are some, however, like the deacons (deaconesses), who especially fit into this category.

2. Examples 12:6-8

- 12:7 Next comes teaching.
- One might teach without being an elder or overseer, but “able to teach” is one of the requirements of an overseer.

2. Examples 12:6-8

- 1 Timothy 3:2.

Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach.

2. Examples 12:6-8



The role of the teacher and the importance of good teaching/sound doctrine were fundamental in Paul's understanding of Christian ministry. For him, the source of good teaching is to be found in the gospel tradition (1 Tim 4: 6; Titus 2: 10) ...

*– Colin Kruse,
Melbourne School of Theology*

2. Examples 12:6-8



... and in the Scriptures ... (15: 4; 1 Tim 4: 13; 2 Tim 3: 16; Titus 1: 9). Good teaching, backed up by the integrity of the teachers, saves both the teachers themselves and those who hear them.

*– Colin Kruse,
Melbourne School of Theology*

2. Examples 12:6-8

- 12:8 Next is the one who exhorts or exhortation.
- A better word for this might be “encourage” or “encouragement,” if only because we use it more today.

2. Examples 12:6-8

Encouragement or exhortation may relate to the activity of encouraging suffering Christians or those who are not living according to God's word.

– David M. Kasali, Bilingual Christian University of the Congo



2. Examples 12:6-8

- **12:8** Now we have the **one who contributes**.
- We don't always think of giving as a gift because, like serving, it is something we all should do.
- But also like serving, some people have the unique ability to give more, sometimes just because they have more.

2. Examples 12:6-8

Another gift is that of contributing to the needs of others (12:8b). This gift relates to helping needy members within or even outside the church community. The one who has this gift should exercise it generously, but without making a show of his or her liberality.

– David M. Kasali, Bilingual Christian University of the Congo



2. Examples 12:6-8

- 12:8 Leadership is a gift to be used.
- Not everyone is a born leader, or even made a leader through training or experience.
- Those who do lead are not allowed to be loafers.

2. Examples 12:6-8

- 12:8 the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.
- Some people are by nature highly compassionate.
- They carry on a special ministry to those in need, the hurting, the troubled, the suffering or the distressed.

2. Examples 12:6-8

Leaders are to act with zeal, and deeds of mercy are to be done with cheerfulness. Paul then is focusing to some degree on the attitude with which one exercises one's gifts. Dull, listless, grumpy, and overly somber saints need an attitude adjustment in order to exercise their gifts in a Christlike manner.

*– Ben Witherington III,
Asbury Theological Seminary*



Many Members Conclusions



Many Members Conclusions



As one scrutinizes this list, it becomes clear that although some of the gifts, such as prophecy, can come only as special endowments from God, most of them do not require a supernatural touch ...

*– Douglas Moo,
Wheaton Graduate School*

Many Members Conclusions



Serving, leading, teaching, encouraging, and showing mercy are functions that might reflect abilities that we have quite naturally. “Gifts,” therefore, may take the form of natural abilities that a person already had before coming to Christ, which God then uses through that person in serving the church.

*– Douglas Moo,
Wheaton Graduate School*

Many Members **Conclusions**

- We might think of many spiritual gifts as **natural abilities which are supernaturally empowered.**
- Consider **Psalm 139**, which implies that even our natural abilities are placed there by God.

Many Members **Conclusions**

- **Psalm 139:13-15** (ESV)

¹³ For you formed my inward parts;

you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works;

my soul knows it very well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you,

when I was being made in secret,

intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Many Members **Conclusions**

- The Bible does not advocate rugged individualism.
- We see our value as part of a community.
- Our uniqueness is intended to serve the good of the group.

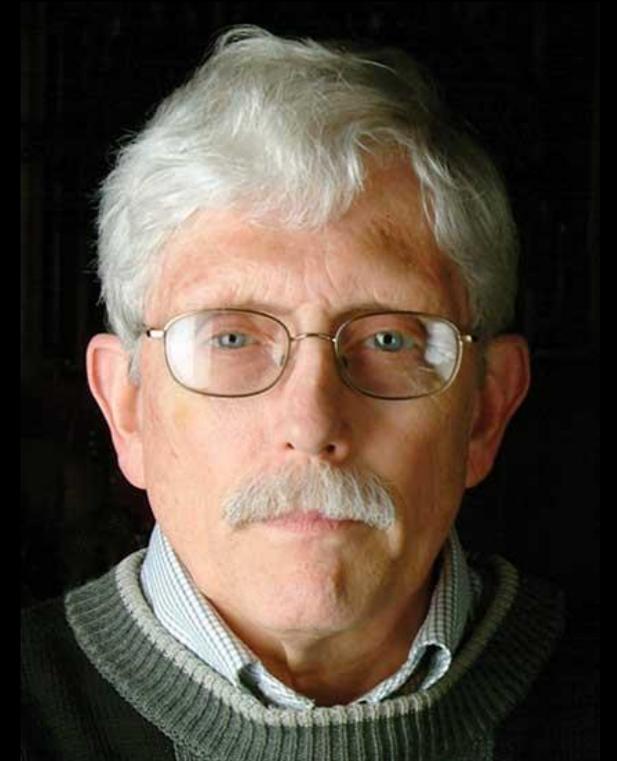
Many Members **Conclusions**

- We will also find that we are most fulfilled when we are able to serve in the way God intended.
- We each have needs, but we also have a need to be needed.
- This does not have to be a selfish thing, if we see it as part of how God has made us.

Many Members Conclusions

Vertically, we are “not our own” but belong to Christ. Horizontally, we belong to each other ... We are ... interdependent. Our different gifts are the way we blend into one body ... That is, each of us has a critical part to play in the oneness that is the church; we need each other ... for none of us can function properly without the whole.

*– Grant Osborne,
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School*



Many Members **Conclusions**

- Key verses: **Romans 1:16-17** (ESV)

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”