

Romans 12:3-8 Humility And Spiritual Gifts

Memory Verse

Romans 12:1-2 NKJV

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Revision for Romans 12:1-2

These two very important verses show us how to grow in our relationship with God and our relationships with each other. Here is a brief summary of what we learned previously:

1. **By the mercies of God:** The correct motivation to love and serve God is because of what He has first done for us. We must also remember that any change is only by His power
2. **Present your bodies a living sacrifice:** “As an act of intelligent worship, decide to yield your entire self to Him” (David Guzik)
3. **Do not be conformed to this world:** Resist being conformed to the ways, attitudes, and thinking of this world system
4. **Be transformed by the renewing of your mind:** Learn to meditate on God’s word and spend more and more time alone with God and in fellowship with other believers
5. **Prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God:** A changed way of life, attitude, and thinking is the evidence of a mind in the process of being renewed

Overview of the four “therefores” in the book of Romans

1. Romans 3:20: **Therefore** *by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin (NKJV)* — This is the “therefore” of condemnation, Paul declares that the whole world is guilty before God.
2. Romans 5:1: **Therefore**, *having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (NKJV)* — This is the “therefore” of justification, that we can be made right with God by faith in Him.
3. Romans 8:1: *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus (NKJV)* — This is the “therefore” of assurance, sin will never again be able to separate us from God in a positional sense; God will always consider all believers as being perfect like Christ and so favour them accordingly for all eternity.
4. Romans 12:1: *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service (NKJV)* — This is the “therefore” of dedication, a life submitted to and dedicated and consecrated and separated unto God.

Overview of Romans 12-13

Romans 12-13 describe different four kinds of relationships believers experience.

- Romans 12:1-2 — The believers relationship with God
- Romans 12:3-16 — The believers relationship with other believers
- Romans 12:17-21 — The believers relationship with their enemies or unbelievers
- Romans 13:1-14 — The believers relationship to the state

Always remember that our dedication to God (Romans 12:1-2) is measured by what follows in the rest of chapters 12 and 13. If I am really dedicated and submitted to God and so laying down my life on God's altar, if I am really keeping myself from unavoidable worldly influences so am not being conformed to this world, if I am really spending more and more quality time in God's word and so am being transformed into God's image, then it will show in my relationships with others. It's not so much "the proof is in the pudding", but "the proof is in the relationships".

Outline for Romans 12:3-8

1. The most important ingredient in any good relationship—Humility (v 3)
2. The next most important ingredient in any good relationship—valuing and respecting people's different gifts and abilities (vs 4-5)
3. How to use our God given gifts for the benefit of others (vs 6-8)
4. How do I know what spiritual gift I have? (an application)
5. The danger of false prophets and the modern NAR movement (a warning)

Romans 12:1-8 NKJV

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

³ For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. ⁴ For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. ⁶ Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; ⁷ or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; ⁸ he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

1. The most important ingredient in any good relationship—Humility

Romans 12:3 NKJV

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

Romans 12:3 NLT

Because 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.

Romans 12:3 AMP

For by the grace (unmerited favour of God) given to me I warn everyone among you not to estimate and think of himself more highly than he ought [not to have an exaggerated opinion of his own importance], but to rate his ability with sober judgment, each according to the degree of faith apportioned by God to him.

v 3 **To everyone among you:** Every believer is included in this warning for pride, no exceptions. Why? Because every believer has been given many things by God, including gifts and talents, and so are very susceptible to pride. Also, in the context of the chapter as it talks about spiritual gifts, those who seem to have greater or more impressive gifts are also in greater danger of falling into the pride trap, of having a superiority complex.

Also, there is a tendency today, both in the world and unfortunately also in the church, to give more praise and adulation to those whose gifts are more visible, regardless of whether or not they are actually mature, responsible individuals. “We should remember that spiritual *giftedness* does not equal spiritual *maturity*. Just because a person has substantial spiritual gifts does not mean they are necessarily spiritually mature or a worthy example.” (David Guzik)

v 3 **Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly:** We need to have an honest or **sober** evaluation of ourselves. There are at least four dangers that we must avoid in forming our view or opinion of ourselves:

- not exaggerated or overrated so we think that we are better than we really are
- not diminished so we don't recognise or accept and use the gifts and talents that God has actually given to us
- pretending to be humble just so we can be proud of just how humble people will think that we are (false humility)
- not relying on what other people think of us (listen to what people say, but discern what is true and what is false)

Pride is simply an inaccurate view of ourselves where we think we are either better or worse than we really are.

James Montgomery Boice tells a story, “Some time ago I came across the story of a man who imagined himself to be quite spiritual. He was talking with a more mature friend, and he asked his friend to pray for him that he might be humble. “Pray for me that I might be nothing,” he said.

His friend replied with some wisdom, probably thinking of 1 Corinthians 1:28, “You *are* nothing, brother. Take it by faith.”

v 3 **God has dealt to each one a measure of faith:** Simply put, we don't have anything that we didn't first receive from God, so no-one is better than anyone else; *no-one has gained anything by his own efforts—we can't boast about receiving a gift*. God in His wisdom and sovereignty decides what and how much each person gets so that they can fulfil their role the body of Christ in a way that glorifies God.

1 Corinthians 4:7 AMP

For who separates you from the others [as a faction leader]? [Who makes you superior and sets you apart from another, giving you the preeminence?] What have you that was not given to you? If then you received it [from someone], why do you boast as if you had not received [but had gained it by your own efforts]?

Also, remember that we all live by faith, and some people have been given more, and so more is expected of them. “When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required” (Luke 12:48b NLT).

“Neither should we be envious of others. Rather, we should realize that each person is unique and that we all have an important function to perform for our Lord. We should be happy with the place **God has dealt to** us in the Body, and we should seek to exercise our gifts with all the strength that God supplies.” (Believers Bible Commentary)

Summary for verse 3

In Romans 12, Paul is giving us three steps for right relationships with others.

1. Right relationship with God (vs 1-2)
2. A proper evaluation of ourselves (v 3)
3. A right relationship with other people (vs 4-21)

“Much of what follows is indeed about the church, but it is important to see that in starting this discussion Paul focuses first on the Christian’s estimate of himself alone, *since he knows that none of us will ever properly evaluate and esteem other Christians within the fellowship of the church if our pride is in the way.*” (James Montgomery Boice)

2. The next most important ingredient in any good relationship— valuing and respecting people’s different gifts and abilities

“The will of God (v 2) is identical for all believers in respect to holiness of life and completeness of dedication. But what that will involves for each one with respect to special service in the church may be considerably diverse.” (Expositors Bible Commentary)

Romans 12:4-5 NKJV

For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

Romans 12:4-5 NLT

Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, ⁵ so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

Romans 12:4-5 AMP

For as in one physical body we have many parts (organs, members) and all of these parts do not have the same function or use, ⁵ So we, numerous as we are, are one body in Christ (the Messiah) and individually we are parts one of another [mutually dependent on one another].

v 4 **For as we have many members in one body:** The church is made up of Christ’s **body**. Christ being the head of the church (Colossians 1:18) is the source of our unity; it’s what every believer has in common. It’s only when we are all submitted to the same Lord that this very strange mix of individuals will all work together in harmony. Think of the disciples and how they were so different to each other—tax collector, fisher man etc—and how they used to argue between themselves about who was the greatest.

Luke 9:46-48 NLT

Then his disciples began arguing about which of them was the greatest. ⁴⁷ But Jesus knew their thoughts, so he brought a little child to his side. ⁴⁸ Then he said to them, “Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me also welcomes my Father who sent me. Whoever is the least among you is the greatest.”

v 4 **But all the members do not have the same function:** Believers are all distinct individuals, with distinct gifts and callings, and distinct roles. God has created His bride, His body, the church, with great diversity. We should celebrate this diversity in personalities, gifts, natural talents, and not seek to put everybody into the same mold; this is not unity, but rather uniformity, and it is spiritually and emotionally very destructive and suffocating.

v 5 **Individually members of one another:** “We all belong to each other” (NLT), and we are all “mutually dependant on one another” (AMP). This is what makes life in the body of Christ so difficult and why we must be walking according to the Spirit. As individuals the natural temptation is to do things our own way, to think our own way, and go our own way. *But despite being individuals we need to work together, why?, because we belong to each other and we need each other. This is why we need to think soberly or honestly about ourselves so that we realise that we need each other, and that we really do depend on each other.*

“The basic idea is that each believer is a living part of Christ’s body, and each one has a spiritual function to perform. Each believer has a gift (or gifts) to be used for the building up of the body and the perfecting of the other members of the body. In short, we belong to each other, we minister to each other, and we need each other.” (Warren W. Wiersbe)

Here’s an application from Jon Courson that helps us to put our differences in perspective:

“Brother Hammer was appointed to preside over the Master Tool Convention. Brother Screwdriver objected, saying, “Brother Hammer, you’re too noisy to preside over this meeting. You’re always driving home your point, always nailing people. I call for your resignation immediately.”

Brother Hammer responded, “Well, what about you, Brother Screwdriver? All you ever do is spin around in circles.”

“That may be true,” said Brother Screwdriver, “but at least I’m not like Brother Plane. His work is so surface, so shallow. What right does he have to even be here?”

“If you’re going to kick me out,” protested Brother Plane, “what about Brother Ruler? He thinks he’s always right, measuring everyone else by his standard.”

“Well, if you’re going to come down on me,” argued Brother Ruler, “what about Brother Pliers? He needs to get a grip!”

“At least I don’t rub people the wrong way,” said Brother Pliers, staring at Brother Sandpaper.”

Just then, the Master Craftsman walked in. And, as He used each tool at the perfect time, He created an object of great beauty.

A lot of times, we look at the gifts of other people and the way God made them, and we think, *She’s shallow, or, He rubs me the wrong way, or, They’re too noisy*—until we finally come to the point where we understand that there are many members in the body—each one with a part to play, a function to fulfill.”

3. How to use our God given gifts for the benefit of others

Romans 12:6-8 NKJV

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; ⁷ or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; ⁸ he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

An introduction to Spiritual gifts

There are two important things to remember about spiritual gifts:

- Firstly, they come from, and are empowered by, the Holy Spirit; *“All these [gifts, achievements, abilities] are inspired and brought to pass by one and the same [Holy] Spirit, Who apportions to each person individually [exactly] as He chooses”* (1 Corinthians 12:11 AMP). This means that when we do have a gift, the credit should go to the Holy Spirit Whose power is at work in us.
- Secondly, their purpose; *“A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other”* (1 Corinthians 12:7 NLT), and similarly, *“for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying [building up] of the body of Christ”* (Ephesians 4:12 NKJV). We are like tools in the hands of the Master Builder who are used to build His church, His bride.

“Spiritual gifts are tools to build with, not toys to play with or weapons to fight with. In the church at Corinth, the believers were tearing down the ministry because they were abusing spiritual gifts. They were using their gifts as ends in themselves and not as a means toward the end of building up the church. They so emphasised their spiritual gifts that they lost their spiritual graces! They had the gifts of the Spirit but were lacking in the fruit of the spirit—love, joy, peace, etc. (Gal. 5:22–23).” (Warren W. Wiersbe)

v 6 Having then gifts according to the grace that is given to us: The ancient Greek word for **gifts** is *charismata*, which means, “a gift of grace”, or “a gracious gift”. Paul is emphatically saying that the gifts that God gives us have nothing to do with merit; they are all given by grace. Whether from this list here in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, or Ephesians 4, they are all gifts given purely by grace. Obviously, a gift by definition is underserved, but here Paul doubly emphasises this by first calling them “gracious gifts”, and then reiterates that they are given by grace. Why? Again, because of the human nature tendency to become puffed up, proud, and take credit for things that have nothing to do with us. This is just another example of putting an amazing treasure in a broken and cracked clay pot—*“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us”* (2 Corinthians 4:7).

The gift of prophecy

v 6 If prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith: **Prophecy** in the New Testament sense of the word is defined in 1 Corinthians 14:3, *“But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men”* (NKJV).

“Prophecy means more than foretelling. It primarily means “forth-telling”—expounding the Word, declaring truth. The Word burns within the heart of those with the gift of prophecy. They know what should be shared and feel a pressing need to speak out” (Jon Courson).

“We are reminded that **prophecy**, in the Biblical understanding, isn’t necessarily “fore-telling” in a strictly predictive sense. It is more accurately “forth-telling” the heart and mind of God, which may or may not include a predictive aspect.” (David Guzik)

Here are some examples of those who had the gift of prophecy in the New Testament and how the gift works. We will see the difference between prophecy and teaching later.

Acts 13:1-3 AMP

Now in the church (assembly) at Antioch **there were prophets (inspired interpreters of the will and purposes of God) and teachers:** Barnabas, Symeon..., Lucius..., Manaen..., and Saul. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Separate now for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. ³ Then after fasting and praying, they put their hands on them and sent them away.

Acts 15:32 AMP

And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets (inspired interpreters of the will and purposes of God), urged and warned and consoled and encouraged the brethren with many words and strengthened them.

v 6 **In proportion to our faith:** If you have the gift of prophecy, but are not sure if what is on your heart is from God, that God has truly spoken to you, then don't say anything at all—keep your mouth shut. There are too many today who are quick to say, "Thus says the Lord", but they haven't spoken in the name of the Lord at all, and have caused much harm and deception in the body of Christ. We will talk about false prophets at the end.

The gift of ministry

v 7 **Ministry:** Ministry can be defined as the gift of having a very strong desire and ability to serve others. While prophecy is a declaration of truth, ministry is a demonstration of truth. It is serving others in practical ways which glorifies God. Dorcas in Acts chapter 9 is an example of someone who had the gift of ministry and who used it to serve others in a way that glorified God.

Acts 9:36-40 NKJV

At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. **This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did.** ³⁷ But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. ³⁸ And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them. ³⁹ Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. **And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.** ⁴⁰ But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up.

The gift of teaching

v 7 **Teaching:** What is the difference between the gifts of prophecy and teaching? Someone with the gift of prophecy will usually speak sporadically as they are led by the Lord, declaring the truth that needs to be shared at that time to meet a particular need in the body of Christ. In contrast, a person with the gift of teaching has been given the ability to teach systematically through the Word of God; they naturally have the desire and ability to explain truth so people can be equipped to live a godly life. In summary, prophecy declares truth, with its purpose being to encourage and motivate people, while teaching explains truth consistently over time, instructing people to understand the truth. It is possible to have both gifts at the same time.

The gift of exhortation

v 8 **He who exhorts, in exhortation:** The ancient Greek word for **exhort** means to "call to one's side, appeal to, encourage, request, implore, entreat, comfort, and encourage." While **prophecy** helps us to know the will of God, and **teaching** helps us understand the will of God, **exhortation** motivates us to *do* the will of God. The following quote from David Guzik shows how the the gifts of teaching and exhortation should work together.

“Those who are taught but not exhorted become “fat sheep” that only take in and never live the Christian life. Those who are exhorted but not taught become excited and active, but have no depth or understanding to what they do and will burn out quickly or will work in wrong ways.”

The following are two examples of exhortation in the New Testament:

Acts 14:22 NKJV

Strengthening the souls of the disciples, **exhorting** them to continue in the faith, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”

Titus 1:9 NKJV

That he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to **exhort** and convict those who contradict.

The gift of giving

v 8 **He who gives, with liberality:** “This refers to someone who is a channel through whom God provides resources for His body. This is an important *spiritual* gift that must be exercised with **liberality**. When someone who is called and gifted to be a giver stops giving liberally, they will often see their resources dry up—having forgotten *why* God has blessed them.” (David Guzik)

A good example of generous and cheerful giving is Barnabas, who sold a piece of land and gave all of the proceeds to the Church.

Acts 4:34-37 NLT

There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them ³⁵ and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need.

³⁶ For instance, there was Joseph, the one the apostles nicknamed Barnabas (which means “Son of Encouragement”). He was from the tribe of Levi and came from the island of Cyprus. ³⁷ He sold a field he owned and brought the money to the apostles.

The gift of Leadership

v 8 **He who leads, with diligence:** Leadership is a tough job. It is very easy for a leader to become discouraged and want to give up. This is why they need to be **diligent**, and persevere, because as Pastor Chuck Smith responded to another pastor who was listing all the problems that he was having with many people in his congregation, “Well, people will be people”.

A good example of leadership is Jesus when He instructed the people to sit in groups of 50 so He could feed them (see Luke 9:14)

The gift of mercy

v 8 **He who shows mercy, with cheerfulness:** These are those who naturally have a lot of compassion for those who are hurting and traumatised, for whatever reason. It’s hard to show compassion to people because it can be so draining, but the person with the gift of mercy can do it **with cheerfulness**. Many hospital chaplains and believing nurses are a good examples of people who have the gift of mercy. A good example is Jesus as he showed mercy to the woman caught in the act of adultery in John 8:1-11.

4. How do I know what spiritual gift I have?

Jon Courson has a great way of helping us to understand or discover what our spiritual gift might be. Imagine that you suddenly became the pastor of the church—what changes would you make?

If you would grab the microphone and call the fellowship to activism, if you would try to get folks fired up to share the gospel, if you have a burden to speak forth God's Word to a hurting society, chances are yours is the gift of prophecy.

If, on the other hand, you would divide the fellowship into small groups in order that members of the body might serve one another and meet one another's spiritual needs, yours is most likely the gift of ministry.

If, given the opportunity, you would lead the fellowship in a study of Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic, of homiletics and hermeneutics, of eschatology and ecclesiology, yours is probably the gift of teaching.

If your primary concern would be funding worthy causes for needy people, if your energy would be spent organising bake sales and car washes, yours is the gift of giving.

If your heart would go out to hurting people, if your passion lies in hospice ministry, jail evangelism, or crisis hotlines, yours is the gift of mercy.

If, however, the first thing you would do would be to head for the church office and straighten things out in order that the fellowship would operate more smoothly and effectively, yours is the gift of ruling [leading].

What would you change, what would you do if you were in charge? Your answer will give you a good clue as to what your spiritual gift is. The problem is, I have a tendency to analyse others in light of my gift, wondering why they're not functioning as I do. Great is the day and mature will be the church family who will simply say, "She's different," or, "He's different"—and that's as it should be because they're functioning the way God made them." That's the point Paul is making here. Find your gift, develop it, and let others function in theirs.

5. The danger of false prophets and the modern NAR movement

The danger of false prophets

False prophets have always been around, and they are very dangerous. Jeremiah 23:9-32 explains why they are dangerous and just how much God hates them:

⁹ My heart is broken because of the false prophets, and my bones tremble. I stagger like a drunkard, like someone overcome by wine, because of the holy words the Lord has spoken against them.

¹⁰ For the land is full of adultery, and it lies under a curse. The land itself is in mourning—its wilderness pastures are dried up. For they all do evil and abuse what power they have. ¹¹ "Even the priests and prophets are ungodly, wicked men. **I have seen their despicable acts right here in my own Temple,**" says the Lord.

¹² "Therefore, the paths they take will become slippery. They will be chased through the dark, and there they will fall. For I will bring disaster upon them at the time fixed for their punishment. I, the Lord, have spoken!

¹³ "I saw that the prophets of Samaria were terribly evil, for they prophesied in the name of Baal and **led my people of Israel into sin.** ¹⁴ But now I see that the prophets of Jerusalem are even worse! **They commit adultery and love dishonesty. They encourage those who are doing evil so that no one turns away from their sins.** These prophets are as wicked as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah once were."

¹⁵ Therefore, this is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says concerning the prophets: "I will feed them with bitterness and give them poison to drink. **For it is because of Jerusalem's prophets that wickedness has filled this land.**"

¹⁶ This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says to his people: "**Do not listen to these prophets when they prophesy to you, filling you with futile hopes. They are making up everything they say. They do not speak for the Lord!**

¹⁷ **They keep saying to those who despise my word, 'Don't worry! The Lord says you will have peace!' And to those who stubbornly follow their own desires, they say, 'No harm will come your way!'**

¹⁸ "Have any of these prophets been in the Lord's presence to hear what he is really saying? Has even one of them cared enough to listen? ¹⁹ Look! The Lord's anger bursts out like a storm, a whirlwind that swirls down on the heads of the wicked. ²⁰ The anger of the Lord will not diminish until it has finished all he has planned. **In the days to come you will understand all this very clearly.**

²¹ **"I have not sent these prophets, yet they run around claiming to speak for me. I have given them no message, yet they go on prophesying. ²² If they had stood before me and listened to me, they would have spoken my words, and they would have turned my people from their evil ways and deeds.**

²³ Am I a God who is only close at hand?" says the Lord. "No, I am far away at the same time. ²⁴ Can anyone hide from me in a secret place? Am I not everywhere in all the heavens and earth?" says the Lord.

²⁵ **"I have heard these prophets say, 'Listen to the dream I had from God last night.' And then they proceed to tell lies in my name. ²⁶ How long will this go on? If they are prophets, they are prophets of deceit, inventing everything they say. ²⁷ By telling these false dreams, they are trying to get my people to forget me, just as their ancestors did by worshiping the idols of Baal.**

²⁸ **"Let these false prophets tell their dreams, but let my true messengers faithfully proclaim my every word. There is a difference between straw and grain! ²⁹ Does not my word burn like fire?"** says the Lord. "Is it not like a mighty hammer that smashes a rock to pieces?"

³⁰ **"Therefore,"** says the Lord, **"I am against these prophets who steal messages from each other and claim they are from me. ³¹ I am against these smooth-tongued prophets who say, 'This prophecy is from the Lord!' ³² I am against these false prophets. Their imaginary dreams are flagrant lies that lead my people into sin. I did not send or appoint them, and they have no message at all for my people. I, the Lord have spoken! (NLT)**

The danger of the modern NAR movement

A warning is needed. Being a prophet in the Old Testament meant that you held a very important *office* or *position of authority* in the nation of Israel. However, in the New Testament, it isn't so much an office or position, but rather simply someone who has been blessed by being given this particular gift. Beware of the many false prophets around, and the false and dangerous NAR (New Apostolic Reformation) movement, which claims that there are modern day apostles with the same authority as the 11 apostles and Paul, and modern day prophets like those in the Old Testament who had great authority and received many new revelations from God. Got questions has a good article on it. Here is a quote from it:

“The New Apostolic Reformation, or NAR, is an unbiblical religious movement that emphasises experience over Scripture, mysticism over doctrine, and modern-day “apostles” over the plain text of the Bible. Of particular distinction in the New Apostolic Reformation are the role and power of spiritual leaders and miracle-workers, the reception of “new” revelations from God, an over-emphasis on spiritual warfare, and a pursuit of cultural and political control in society. The seeking of signs and wonders in the NAR is always accompanied by blatantly false doctrine.

Growth in the New Apostolic Reformation is driven primarily through small groups and church planting, often completely independent of a parent congregation. The movement is not centrally controlled, and many of its followers will not self-identify as part of it or even recognize the name. All the same, thousands of churches and millions of believers adhere to the teachings of the New Apostolic Reformation. Popular teachers associated with the New Apostolic Reformation include Bill Johnson, Rick Joyner, Kim Clement, and Lou Engle.

The New Apostolic Reformation teaches that God’s intended form of church governance is apostles and prophets, holding leadership over evangelists, pastors, and teachers. However, this has not been the case for the vast majority of Christian history. So, according to the New Apostolic Reformation, God began to restore prophets and apostles over the last thirty to forty years. Only now, as the church is properly guided by the appropriate spiritual leaders, can it fulfill its commission. This commission is seen as more than spiritual, as it includes cultural and political control.

In the New Apostolic Reformation, apostles are seen as the highest of all spiritual leaders, being specially empowered by God. True maturity and unity, per the New Apostolic Reformation, is only found in those who submit to the leadership of their apostles. According to this teaching, as the church unifies behind the apostles, these leaders will develop greater and greater supernatural powers. Eventually, this will include the ability to perform mass healings and suspend the laws of physics. These signs are meant to encourage a massive wave of converts to Christianity. These apostles are also destined to be recipients of a great wealth transfer (in the end times), which will enable the church to establish God’s kingdom on earth.

Prophets in the New Apostolic Reformation are almost as important as apostles. These people have been empowered to receive “new” revelations from God that will aid the church in establishing dominion. According to the New Apostolic Reformation, only prophets, and occasionally apostles, can obtain new revelations. Evangelists, pastors, and teachers cannot. The prophets’ new revelations are crucial to overcoming the world, and the success of the church depends on the apostles following through on the information prophets provide. Most of their prophecies are extremely vague and easy to re-interpret, and the New Apostolic Reformation is willing to modify them, since they set no standard of infallibility for themselves.”

Summary and conclusion

1. The most important ingredient in any good relationship is humility (v 3)
2. The next most important ingredient in any good relationship is valuing and respecting people’s different gifts and abilities (vs 4-5)
3. We are called to use our God given gifts for the benefit of others in the body of Christ (vs 6-8)