

Romans 12: Differing Gifts
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Paul tells us in three places about the nature of the gifts of God:

Romans 13:6-8	1 Corinthians 12:8-10	Ephesians 4:7,11
<p><i>Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.</i></p>	<p><i>For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.</i></p>	<p><i>But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.....and He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,</i></p>

These three passages provide us with merely an example of the various gifts and abilities given to members of the church for service to God and one another. Here is a list taken from these examples:

Listing of Gifts	
Prophecy	Faith
Service	Healer
Teacher	Miracle worker
Exhortation	Distinguishing spirits
Leader	Speaking in tongues
Showing mercy	Understanding tongues
Giving	Elder
Word of wisdom	Deacon
Word of knowledge	Preacher

From this list we can see three types of gifts: (1) those which were miraculous of the Holy Spirit and are no longer with us; (2) those which are natural abilities; (3) those which are created or added abilities.

Gifts that are gone: the list of gifts from 1 Corinthians 12 is a list of supernatural gifts from the Holy Spirit. In the next section of the text, Paul tells us that these gifts will cease: *Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away* (1 Corinthians 13:8). We know why they ceased; in Hebrews 2:3-4 we are told why they came (*After (the Word) was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was **confirmed** to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will*), and then we are told in 2 Peter 1:19 that this purpose has been met; the Word has been confirmed (*So we have the prophetic word **made more sure**, to which you do well to pay*

attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts). The Greek word for “confirmed” in Hebrews 2:3 is the same as the word for “made more sure” in 2 Peter 1:19.

Gifts that are natural: some gifts are natural talents that we have and use day to day. The “gift of gab”; the ability to find a good deal; the natural ability to lead others; a mechanical inclination. These gifts have a usefulness in serving God and others, although they may not be what we think of when we think of gifts from God.

Gifts that are developed: some gifts require effort to obtain. They are created or learned. For example: becoming a teacher - Hebrews 5:12; Becoming a speaker – Exodus 4:10-12; Becoming a caregiver – 1 Timothy 5:4; Becoming content – Philippians 4:11. These are all things we must learn.

The Greatest Gift: in each of the passages that Paul lists gifts, his ultimate gift in the end is love:

1 Corinthians 13:13	Romans 12:9	Ephesians 4:16
But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.	Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.	from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Love is the ultimate ability that we must develop in service to God and one another. When we neglect this gift, all others are pointless. It is the final step in 2 Peter 1:5-7 of spiritual growth.