

Stewarding the Body

Gifts, Humility, Interdependence

Honor Each Members Contribution

For by the grace given to me I say to every one of you not to think more highly of yourself than you ought to think, but to think with sober discernment, as God has distributed to each of you a measure of faith. For just as in one body we have many members, and not all the members serve the same function, so we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually we are members who belong to one another. And we have different gifts according to the grace given to us. If the gift is prophecy, that individual must use it in proportion to his faith. If it is service, he must serve; if it is teaching, he must teach; if it is exhortation, he must exhort; if it is contributing, he must do so with sincerity; if it is leadership, he must do so with diligence; if it is showing mercy, he must do so with cheerfulness.
(Romans 12:3-8)

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Shared Mission

Stewarding the Body

Text: Romans 12:3-8

Objective: Honor each member's contribution.

Key Themes: Gifts, humility, interdependence.

Discussion:

How do we balance humility and calling?

What causes "gift envy" in the church?

Application: Affirm someone else's gift this week.

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Exegetical Insights

"By the grace given to me" (v.3): Paul reminds us that authority and gifting both come from grace, not self-achievement.

Humility first: *"Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought"* anchors the teaching. Before speaking of gifts, Paul deals with pride.

One body, many members (vv.4-5): The body image conveys unity-in-diversity. Every member belongs to the others.

Grace-gifts (vv.6-8): Prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, generosity, leadership, mercy. These aren't exhaustive but representative of the Spirit's distribution.

The gifts are not about *status* but *stewardship*. Each is given to serve others, not to elevate self.

Discussion Questions

How can we discern the difference between humility and self-neglect?

Where do you see "gift envy" in yourself or in the church?

What happens when one gift is overvalued and others ignored?

Biblical Examples

Faithful vs. Poor Stewardship of God's Gifts

Faithful Stewardship (Humility and Interdependence)	Poor Stewardship (Pride and Envy)
Moses (Numbers 12:3): Called "the most humble man on earth," he reluctantly accepted leadership, depending on God's strength.	King Saul (1 Samuel 13–15): Took priestly duties into his own hands, jealous of David's favor, leading to rejection.
Barnabas (Acts 11:22–26): Sought out Paul, gave him platform, and encouraged the Antioch church.	Diotrephes (3 John 9–10): Loved to be first, rejected apostolic authority, spread malicious talk, excluded others.
Priscilla & Aquila (Acts 18:24–28): Humbly corrected Apollos privately, equipping him for greater gospel impact.	Cain (Genesis 4:1–8): Envied Abel's offering, ignored God's warning, murdered his brother.
The Macedonian Churches (2 Corinthians 8:1–5): In poverty, gave generously and joyfully to support others.	Ananias & Sapphira (Acts 5:1–11): Lied about their giving, seeking reputation without sacrifice—judged by God.
Jesus (John 13:1–17): Washed His disciples' feet, modeling servant leadership.	Pharisees (Matthew 23): Sought honor, neglected justice, mercy, and faithfulness, burdening others instead of serving.

Key Takeaways

Humility recognizes gifts as grace—not possessions to boast in (Romans 12:3).

Interdependence values every member—seeing others' contributions as essential (1 Corinthians 12:22–26).

Pride twists gifts into platforms—leading to exclusion, division, or arrogance.

Envy poisons stewardship—turning gifts into comparisons rather than contributions.

Healthy stewardship brings unity, maturity, and gospel fruit. **Poor stewardship** fractures fellowship and dishonors the Giver.

1Co 12:18-27 But as a matter of fact, God has placed each of the members in the body just as he decided. (19) If they were all the same member, where would the body be? (20) So now there are many members, but one body. (21) The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you," nor in turn can the head say to the foot, "I do not need you." (22) On the contrary, those members that seem to be weaker are essential, (23) and those members we consider less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our unpresentable members are clothed with dignity, (24) but our presentable members do not need this. Instead, God has blended together the body, giving greater honor to the lesser member, (25) so that there may be no division in the body, but the members may have mutual concern for one another. (26) If one member suffers, everyone suffers with it. If a member is honored, all rejoice with it. (27) Now you are Christ's body, and each of you is a member of it.

Apostolic Pattern

(1)

How to deal with pride, envy, and poor stewardship

Call to Humility and Service

Philippians 2:3–5 — *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves... Have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.”*

Remedy for pride is to **imitate Christ’s humility**.

1 Peter 5:5–6 — *“Clothe yourselves... with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”*

Elders and members alike are reminded that **pride brings God’s opposition**.

Confront Envy and Factionalism

1 Corinthians 3:3–5 — Paul rebukes the Corinthians for jealousy and quarreling, calling it a sign of immaturity.

The cure: Remember that all leaders are “servants through whom you believed” — Christ alone is the foundation.

James 3:14–16 — Warns against bitter envy and selfish ambition, which lead to disorder. Instead, seek wisdom from above, marked by **peace and gentleness**.

Corrective Discipline for Persistent Pride

Titus 3:10–11 — *“Warn a divisive person once, then a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them.”*

If pride leads to **division** and there’s no repentance, separation protects the body.

3 John 9–10 — John confronts **Diotrephes**, who “loves to be first,” refuses authority, and spreads malicious talk.

Apostolic response: expose and confront unrepentant arrogance.

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How to deal with pride, envy, and poor stewardship

Restorative Discipline and Accountability

Galatians 6:1 — *“If someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.”*

Leaders are to act in **gentleness and humility**, aiming for restoration.

2 Corinthians 2:6–8 — After discipline, Paul urges forgiveness and reaffirmation of love for the repentant.

Discipline is not the end—restoration is the goal.

Stewardship Reframed

1 Corinthians 4:1–2 — Apostles describe themselves as *“servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God”*.

The only requirement: **faithfulness**.

Pride and envy betray stewardship by making it self-centered.

Summary of Apostolic Counsel

- **Teach humility** as Christ’s example.
- **Name and confront envy and pride** when they appear.
- **Warn and discipline** those who persist unrepentantly.
- **Restore gently** when repentance occurs.
- **Remind all believers** that gifts, roles, and authority are a **trust from God**, not grounds for boasting.

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A Cultural Plague

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Romans 12:3 – Don't think more highly of yourself than you ought to...

Understanding Narcissism in the Church Context

Narcissism defined: A persistent pattern of self-centeredness, lack of empathy, need for control/admiration, and resistance to accountability. In the church, this may look like:

Attention-seeking during gatherings.

Manipulating relationships for influence.

Undermining leadership or sowing division.

Inability to repent when corrected.

Dealing with Narcissistic Tendencies

Confront in Truth & Love:

Matthew 18:15–17 — Begin with private correction, then with witnesses, then before the body if necessary.

Galatians 6:1 — Restore gently, but remain watchful.

Discern Fruit, Not Just Words:

1 John 4:1 — Test the spirits, because appearances can be deceptive.

3 John 9–10 — John exposes Diotrephes, who “loves to be first.”

Protect the Flock:

Titus 3:10–11 — Warn a divisive person twice, then separate if unrepentant.

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2. Biblical Counsel on Dealing with Narcissistic Tendencies

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Practical Steps for Elders

Assess the Pattern: Is this a one-time conflict, or a recurring pattern of self-centered disruption?

Private Dialogue: Meet with the individual to name the behavior, using specific examples.

Set Boundaries: If the person dominates, manipulates, or harms others, elders may limit their platform or influence for a season.

Provide Accountability: Pair them with a mentor or elder for discipleship.

Escalate if Needed: If pride and division persist, discipline may be necessary for the sake of the church's unity.

Signs of Healthy vs. Unhealthy Response

Healthy: The member accepts correction, shows repentance, and takes steps to grow in humility.

Unhealthy: The member denies wrongdoing, shifts blame, recruits "allies" to oppose leadership, or escalates conflict.

When unhealthy patterns persist, leaders must **protect the body** by limiting influence, even if that means formal discipline (1 Corinthians 5:6–7).

Encouragement for Elders

Dealing with narcissistic tendencies is exhausting. Elders must:

Stay grounded in prayer (James 1:5).

Act in plurality - never one elder alone (Acts 20:28).

Keep Christ's model of servant leadership central (Mark 10:42–45).

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