

12:4-6 - 4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith;

- a. If you know your function and are able to perform it, you are blessed and the body is blessed. Not everyone is an encourager, but those who are encouragers are a valuable necessity. Not everyone is a teacher, but those who are teachers are valuable. Not everyone is good at cleaning the building, but those who do are valuable. Not everyone sends cards. The list can become quite long, but having all the members performing their function contributes to the well-being of the body.
- b. The first gift, prophecy, was among spiritual gifts at that time, but not necessarily a spiritual gift. Speaking a message from God through scripture is included, and bound to continue beyond the time of spiritual gifts. The gifts that follow prophecy are definitely natural gifts.
 - a. Paul longed to see the Romans to impart some spiritual gift (1:11), which may indicate that spiritual gifts were not present in the church at Rome prior to Paul's visit.
- c. There were prophets, not only in the O.T., but for a time in the N.T.
 - a. O.T. prophets spoke what the Lord directed them to speak.
 - b. Some words of the prophets were foretelling a future event, such as Jesus' birth.
 1. Much more often it was for instruction, correction, or admonition of kings, priests, and people.
- c. N.T. prophets had a special gift of the spirit for a time.
 - i. Acts 21:8-9 - 8 On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. 9 He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied.
 - ii. Acts 21:10-11 - 10 While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"
- d. Paul prophesied that such special gifts would come to an end.

- i. 1 Cor. 13:8 - Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.
 - ii. But the function remains of speaking a message from God. The manner of getting the message changed – to the inspired, written word of God.
- e. If faith is man's response to God, *and it is*, it is difficult to explain God's assignment of it. If, by measure of faith, spiritual gifts are meant, such difficulty disappears. If not, then a principle may be understood - in the same way that God does not allow temptation greater than we can bear (1 Cor. 10:13), so also God's does not bless us beyond our ability to bear it and function well. A hand is not very useful for walking, and a foot is not useful for picking things up or writing.
- f. Prophecy is not based upon one's own impulses or independent thoughts. It must be a message from God.
- g. 2 Peter 1:20-21 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, [21](#) for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.
 - i. private – (ἰδίᾳς *idias*) - one's own.
 - a. The next verse explains that prophecy never came be the will of man.
 - ii. will – (θέλημα *thelēma*) – purpose, design.