

Romans 12:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

Analysis

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; The word **gifts** (χαρίσματα, charismata) derives from charis (grace)—spiritual gifts are grace-gifts, freely given by God, not earned abilities. They differ **according to the grace that is given to us** (κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν, kata tēn charin tēn dotheisan hēmin), reinforcing that diversity in the body flows from God's sovereign distribution. Paul lists seven representative gifts in verses 6-8, beginning with **prophecy** (προφητείαν, prophēteian), the inspired speaking forth of God's word for edification, exhortation, and comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3).

Prophecy must be exercised **according to the proportion of faith** (κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως, kata tēn analogian tēs pisteōs). This difficult phrase probably means 'in accordance with the faith'—the apostolic deposit of doctrine. Prophecy isn't private revelation but inspired application of revealed truth, always consistent with Scripture. Some interpret it as 'in proportion to one's faith'—speak only as far as God enables. Either way, prophecy is accountable speech, tested by the word and the community (1 Corinthians 14:29, 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21).

Historical Context

Prophecy in the early church wasn't primarily foretelling the future but forth-telling God's word—Spirit-empowered preaching and exhortation in corporate

worship. With the New Testament canon not yet complete, prophets played a vital role in applying apostolic teaching to specific situations. However, false prophets also threatened the church (Matthew 7:15, 1 John 4:1), requiring discernment. Paul's qualifier—prophecy must align with 'the faith'—protected the church from subjectivism while valuing the Spirit's ongoing speech through gifted members.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How do you distinguish true prophecy (Spirit-inspired application of Scripture) from personal opinion or manipulation?
2. If you have teaching gifts, are you exercising them 'according to the proportion of faith'—faithfully grounded in apostolic doctrine?
3. What role does prophetic exhortation (applying God's word to current situations) play in your church's worship and discipleship?

Interlinear Text

ἔχοντες δὲ χαρίσματα κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν
Having then gifts according G3588 to the grace G3588
G2192 G1161 G5486 G2596 G5485 G3588

δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν διάφορα εἴτε προφητείαν κατὰ τὴν
that is given to us differing whether prophecy according G3588
G1325 G2254 G1313 G1535 G4394 G2596 G3588

ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως
to the proportion G3588 of faith G4102

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 7:7 (Parallel theme): For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

Romans 12:3 (Faith): For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Romans 1:11 (Parallel theme): For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

Ephesians 4:11 (Prophecy): And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

1 Corinthians 13:2 (Faith): And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

1 Corinthians 14:1 (Prophecy): Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.