

**Devotional Thoughts :: No Room for Envy in the Church - Theodore Epp**

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Romans 12:6-16

What a shame when there is a spirit of envy among the members of the Body of Christ. Instead, there should be praise for the way God is using each one. One translator paraphrases Romans 12:3: "Now I have a warning for you, prompted by the divine grace bestowed on me--and I address it to all who are among you:--do not be uplifted with unjustifiable notions of your importance. Let your thoughts tend to sober views, proportioned to the measure of faith which God has allotted to each man" (Way).

When we become lifted up with feelings of importance because of the particular gift we have, we should remember that it is a gift. The Holy Spirit sovereignly bestows gifts on believers as He chooses (1 Cor. 12:11), not according to what the individual wishes. So when we criticize a person who is exercising another gift, we are actually criticizing the Lord who gave that gift to the person. The other Christian is also part of the Body of Christ, and we need him just as he needs us. All of us who have accepted Jesus Christ as personal Saviour are members of the Body of Christ (v. 27).

A person should not aspire to be something that is not in the will of God for him, because God has made him what he is and has a particular place for him in the Body. Frequently people are dissatisfied with the gift, or gifts, they have. They wish they had another gift or wish they were like someone else. But each gift, no matter how insignificant we may think it is, is useful and worthy in the Body of Christ. That's why God has given each particular gift to someone. We need to realize that God knows what He is doing when it comes to the distribution of gifts.

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love in honour preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10).