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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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## Every Member Ministry

In light of the 2009 Stock Market crash, many Americans are asking this question:

What is the wisest investment you can make?

Most people mean by this question,

“What will give me the most return on my investment?” but others, looking for security will ask, “What is the wisest long-term investment I can make looking at BOTH overall return AND short-range security”

The science of investment is not something I have studied very much, but recently I was reading an article on one investment some Dutch men made a long time ago:

In the Algonquian language, it was known as Manahatin which meant “Hill Island.” It was a rich land teeming with wildlife and game like beaver, deer, bison and bear. The river had sturgeon and oyster beds were common on its shores. The northern 2/3 part of the island was occupied by an Indian tribe called the Weckquasgeeks. The smaller remaining southern portion was where the Canarsees called home.

On May 4, 1626 the director-general of a new Dutch colony arrived on the shores of the island with instructions from home that, if the land was occupied by Indians, they were not to be forced off. Instead, they be persuaded by giving them something or with kind words. Well, the folks that occupied the island never claimed to own the land as they didn't have the sense of ownership in their culture like the Europeans. And if they did, the Canarsees would have less claim than the Weckquasgeeks. Well, the Dutch didn't know all of this and, **on this date in 1626**, gave the Canarsees what amounted to 24 American dollars in exchange for an island they didn't own.

So, the Canarasees took the money and the Dutch thought they had a good deal. But, of course, the Dutch certainly didn't hold on to the Island long enough to see the Hudson River polluted so that there are no more sturgeon and no more oysters. They never saw the hills flattened and the rich soil

covered in concrete nor the disappearance of the bison, deer, beaver and bear. Nope...the Dutch paid \$24 for an Island to people who didn't even own it and then didn't stick around to see it become all that it would become.

Meanwhile, the Indians...if they had taken that \$24 and invested it at 6% interest compounded annually they'd be sitting on \$35 Billion by 1988. If they continued that return on investment, it would be nearly \$70 Billion by 2000. Now, if they had been really smart, then they would have put that \$35 Billion (or perhaps a bit less) in 1986 at the initial public offering in a then-new company called Microsoft. If they had sold it at its peak just prior to 2000, they would have nearly \$21.4 Trillion. Then, if they had invested it at 6% interest compounded annually for four years they would have just over \$27 Trillion. If they took that money and invested it in 2004 in Google and then sold it at its peak in 2008, then they could have lived quite nicely on \$189 Trillion. That is more than 14 times the entire US economy...I'm not sure if the government could tax that money since Indian Nations are considered to be sovereign nations, which is why they are allowed to have Casinos in states where they are otherwise prohibited.

So, the purchase of Manhattan for \$24 ranks as one of the all-time greatest investments... but even it would be dwarfed by supernaturally wise investment since then

Amazingly, though, the Bible presents a different investment plan... a plan of wise investing of the minutes of your life in the Kingdom of Christ, with the promise of ETERNAL REWARDS for small actions done in this life:

## I. What is "Every Member Ministry"

### A. First, what are "Members"?

1. Here we are addressing "members" of FBC Durham
2. To be a church member means that you have covenanted together with this local church, that this will be your church home and this local church will care for you as well
3. I have often looked at it like "The Three Musketeers" slogan: "All for one and one for all"

4. The individual members of the Church should be concerned for and look after the health of the whole church, and the whole church should be concerned for and look after the needs of each individual member

B. Is “Church Membership” Even Biblical?

1. Once I was speaking at a conference and the question came up from one woman, “Is church membership even a biblical concept?”
2. I answered from 1 Corinthians 5, a chapter on church discipline... Paul’s “inside outside” language

***1 Corinthians 5:12-13 What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? <sup>13</sup> God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."***

- a. Church discipline like that would be impossible if there were no clear line of demarcation between those “inside” and those “outside” the church
  - b. Clearly Paul cannot be speaking about the church building... it is not clear that the Corinthian church had their own building... that’s not what Paul is talking about anyway: when he says “**Expel the wicked man from among you**”, he is surely meaning far more than the church having a bouncer and picking some offending sinner up by the back of his collar and throwing him down the stairs out the front of the church building
  - c. The issue is church membership... being seen to be a member of that local body; covenant identification, that man’s sin was a tremendous threat to the purity, ministry and reputation of that local church... so also it was an eternal threat to himself
3. Better proof of the biblical truthfulness of membership: the word “member”

***Romans 12:4-5 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.***

***<sup>ESV</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.***

Paul actually goes on at great length about the members of that local church:

***1 Corinthians 12:14-21 For the body does not consist of one member but of many. <sup>15</sup> If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup> And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense***

*of smell? <sup>18</sup> But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. <sup>19</sup> If all were a single member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. <sup>21</sup> The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."*

4. To me, this proves the concept of membership... if we are members of the Body of Christ, we need to assemble and relate to one another, not be isolated from one another

#### C. What Then is "Every Member Ministry"?

1. The concept is that every single member of a local church should have a regular pattern of ministry to help build up the body
2. No one is exempt, no one is irrelevant
3. More than that, we will discuss how God has equipped every member for ministry, and how God will reward each member for the ministry he does
4. AND we will discuss how this is essential to the health and ministry of the church

#### D. What is the Problem this Seeks to Address?

1. The so-called "80-20" rule... I learned it in seminary...
2. It is a standard in many churches... "80% of the work is done by 20% of the people"
3. This principle is adapted from the business world

**The Pareto principle** (also known as the 80-20 rule, the law of the **vital few**.) states that, for many events, roughly 80% of the effects come from 20% of the causes. ... named after Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto, who observed that 80% of the land in Italy was owned by 20% of the population.

Other applications:

The Pareto Principle also applies to a variety of more mundane matters: one might guess approximately that we wear our 20% most favored clothes about 80% of the time, perhaps we spend 80% of the time with 20% of our acquaintances

4. The danger for churches
  - a. The church isn't able to do all of the good works God has ordained for us to walk in... we miss ministry both inside the church and outside by not having all the team playing the game

- b. It is in doing ministry that we personally grow to be more and more like Christ... so people who don't have any ministry are not growing as Christ would have them to
- c. Those individuals also frequently tend to feel isolated and disconnected, maybe even claiming the church is unfriendly and cold, lacking compassion

“No one called, no one came, no one cared...”

- d. Those individuals will regret their missed ministries on Judgment Day when the time comes to give Christ an account

## II. Key Passages on Spiritual Gifts

### A. Ephesians 4

***Ephesians 4:7-16 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. <sup>8</sup> This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." <sup>9</sup> (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? <sup>10</sup> He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) <sup>11</sup> It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. <sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. <sup>15</sup> Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. <sup>16</sup> From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.***

- 1. Spiritual gifts and the ministries that flow from them are called “grace from God”

***Ephesians 4:7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.***

- a. It is an incredible gift of God's grace to allow us to do fruitful ministry for His glory
  - b. God could have saved us and set us aside, in effect telling us the rest of our lives are worthless
  - c. Instead, He includes us in work of eternal consequence
- 2. Grace is given to EACH and EVERY Christian

***“To EACH ONE OF US, grace has been given...”***

- a. No one is exempt... there is no class of Christian that has been left out of the giving of this grace of a spiritual gift ministry
  - b. You must not excuse yourself from living daily in a pattern of ministry for the glory of God
3. Spiritual gifts come by the sovereign plan, wisdom, and will of God

***Ephesians 4:7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.***

- a. Greek... literally “according to the measure of Christ”
- b. Christ considers each of us and gives each of us a measure of His grace
- c. In 1 Corinthians 12, the gifts are ascribed to the Holy Spirit

***1 Corinthians 12:11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.***

- d. Not everyone receives the same gift, nor does everyone with a certain gift receive the same measure of that gift... some with the gift of teaching have a better gift than others with that same gift; so also those with other gifts like administration or faith or giving
  - e. PAUSE: Isn't it awesome to have Christ through the Spirit considering you personally and fitting you and equipping you with a spiritual gift ministry??
4. These gifts are related to Christ's death and resurrection

***Ephesians 4:8-10 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." <sup>9</sup> (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? <sup>10</sup> He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)***

- a. The concept is that all of Christ's gifts flow from His central work of crucifixion and resurrection
- b. That includes this spiritual gift ministry
- c. Because Christ descended to earth, because He died on the cross, because He rose from the dead, and because He ascended to heaven to fill the universe, He is able to lavish generous gifts to His people

Image: Roman conquerors coming back from their conquests would have triumphant victory parades through the streets of Rome, and they would parade before the populace the

spoils of the military victory... some small gifts would be thrown out to the people as tokens of the richness that has now entered the Roman coffers because of the conquest

5. Some of the gifts named in the NT

***Ephesians 4:11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers***

- a. There are many lists of spiritual gifts in the NT
- b. These lists are clearly not meant to be exhaustive but suggestive
- c. You can go to the internet and get a composite list of the gifts
- d. The point here is that these are specific ROLES filled in the church...  
people in this case who are called on to minister the word of God to the church
- e. As you look at this list, and couple it with the one in Romans 12 and 1 Cor. 12, you can get a sense of the kind of ministry God may be calling you to do

6. The PURPOSE of the gifts

***Ephesians 4:12-13 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.***

- a. Again, I believe that the list here is a specific one having to do with the ministry of the Word of God
- b. Apostles and prophets spoke directly for God saying "Thus says the Lord"
- c. Evangelists preached the word to the lost to bring them to initial saving faith
- d. Pastor-teachers minister the revealed word over a long time to bring people to full maturity
- e. But the goal of all the spiritual gift ministries is the final maturity of the Body of Christ
- f. In the statement here, those ministering the word of God "PREPARE GOD'S PEOPLE FOR WORKS OF SERVICE..." those works of service are essential to building the Body of Christ up to full maturity

- g. Those are the works of service I want to see done here in this church...  
works of giving and prayer and administration and faith and service and  
teaching and exhortation and encouragement and music and sacrifice...
- h. These works BUILD UP THE BODY OF Christ to full maturity
- i. Maturity = conformity of all the elect to Christ... through evangelism,  
discipleship and general ministry over the years

7. Note how Paul concludes the thought

***Ephesians 4:14-16 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. <sup>15</sup> Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. <sup>16</sup> From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.***

- a. Notice the issue of sanctification... growth from immaturity to maturity
- b. At first infants, blown and tossed by the waves of doctrine
- c. In the end, fully grown up in the pattern of our Head, Jesus Christ
- d. Verse 16 shows that it is as EACH PART DOES ITS WORK that the whole body grows up to maturity

That is why each and every one of you must make your ministry to the Body of Christ a central priority to your life

B. Romans 12: How to discern your gifts, and how to use them

***Romans 12:1-8 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will. <sup>3</sup> ¶ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. <sup>4</sup> Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. <sup>6</sup> We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. <sup>7</sup> If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; <sup>8</sup> if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.***

1. A view of God's mercy in Christ
2. Living sacrifices: bodies presented for service
3. Transformed mind: allowing the word of God to protect you from worldly thinking
4. Test and approve God's will: specifically in the all-important issue of how to spend your life...Spiritual gifts come next
5. Humility: do not think too highly of yourself
6. Think of yourself: what has God put in you???
7. Basic concept: USE YOUR GIFT

***Romans 12:6-8 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. <sup>7</sup> If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; <sup>8</sup> if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.***

8. As you get active in general patterns of ministry, you'll learn what your specific "gift ministry" will be

### C. Summary

1. Spiritual gifts are special abilities given by God through Christ by the Spirit to Christians
2. Each Christian has some spiritual gift package—arrangement of gifts—that enable him/her to play a role in the Body of Christ
3. Spiritual gifts are essential to the growth of the Body of Christ from immaturity to maturity
4. Spiritual gifts must be used by Christians or they are of no benefit to the Body
5. Each of us will be held accountable for the way we use our gifts

## III. Avenues of Ministry at FBC

### A. A Pattern of Ministry

1. Like much in the Christian life, this has to be a matter of developed habit
2. We desire to see each member in a regular pattern of ministry, so they can develop their spiritual gifts more and more fully

3. Also this enables the Body of Christ to know you, to rely on you, to build on you

4. Temptation: a FORAY into ministry

## B. Two MAJOR Avenues

### 1. Deacon Ministry Teams

- a. Missions
- b. Urban
- c. International Student
- d. Host
- e. Family and Youth
- f. College
- g. Corporate Worship
- h. Counseling
- i. Women's
- j. Encouragement
- k. Senior Adult
- l. Facilities
- m. Church Planting

### 2. Home Fellowships

- a. Hospitality: open your home
- b. Teaching: teach the study
- c. Worship: plan and lead a worship time every week
- d. Prayer: organize prayer time of home fellowship; keep track of prayer needs and organize the follow-up throughout the week
- e. Encouragement: come to each home fellowship with a plan to encourage certain members as the Lord leads; OR be aware of birthdays in the group and organize cakes, cards, gifts, etc.

- f. Service: be aware of service needs in the church (e.g. senior adult, parents of newborns) or outside the church, and organize the home fellowship group to take an active role
- g. Missions: organize your home fellowship to adopt and support one of our missionary units overseas

C. Initiative Ministries: What is your Calling???

1. Frank Tillapaugh: Unleashing the Church
2. Recent very encouraging conversations
  - a. Baptist Men's Disaster Relief, coupled with a desire to use that for urban ministry
  - b. Men's ministry, specifically in the area of Men's retreats: father-son, husband-wife, etc.
  - c. Woman's bible study

IV. Eternal Rewards

***Matthew 25:14-30 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. <sup>15</sup> To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. <sup>16</sup> The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. <sup>17</sup> So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. <sup>18</sup> But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. <sup>19</sup> "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup> The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' <sup>21</sup> "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' <sup>22</sup> "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.' <sup>23</sup> "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' <sup>24</sup> "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. <sup>25</sup> So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' <sup>26</sup> "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? <sup>27</sup> Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it***

*back with interest. <sup>28</sup> "Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup> For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. <sup>30</sup> And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*