

God's Toolbox

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Ruling (Leadership). Too many want to be boss, but God does not give this gift of ruling the local flock of believers to everyone. With this gift, a leader can lead and encourage the work of God to grow and accomplish much. He also has wisdom in the administration of the church and other ministries.

Mercy. In a very angry world, this special tool can soothe and aid those in hard times. It is because of this gift that some have been given, that many lives have been changed.

God loves His people, and wants to help us. He also wants us to help ourselves. With the tools He has given all believers, if they are used the way God intends, the body of believers can be strengthened, encouraged and able to accomplish much for the glory of God.

Today, pray and study the gifts found in Romans 12:6-8. Ask the Lord to help you realize what gift or gifts are yours. When He shows you, use that special tool. We are saved not just to sit, but to serve. We believers would be much stronger and able to accomplish more, if we would use our spiritual gifts.

God Uses the Faithful

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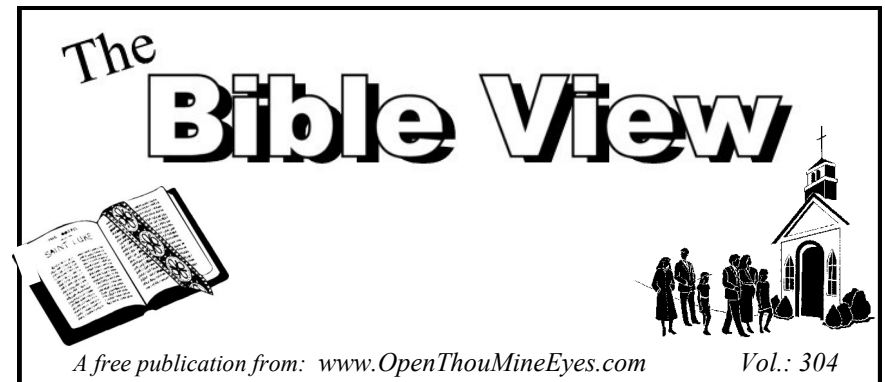
next be a witness the same way in Rome. For Paul's faithful,

non-teetering service, the Lord was rewarding Paul with more opportunities to serve Him. Paul had shown himself faithful in the tasks he was given, and God was going to use him further.

Many need to understand that God will usually use a person for more and greater things, if he has first done all he was previously required to do. There are some sitting around waiting for the Lord to call them to be a minister in a faraway land, but refuse to do anything for the Lord while they are waiting. Some have grand ideas of preaching heart-rending sermons to jam-packed stadiums, but will not take the time or the opportunity to preach to a Sunday school class of just one child. Others will go to years of Bible college to learn more wonderful truths of the Word of God, but will not share what biblical knowledge they have now with those around them. Many will never be used any further for the cause of Christ, because they have failed to obey God's command in baptism, tithing, or church attendance.



God will use a person that has proven himself faithful in what he has already been shown to do. The next time the Lord needs something done for His cause in your area, will the Lord automatically think of you; as you have always done what He has asked you to do? Or will he look for another that has already obeyed His commandments?



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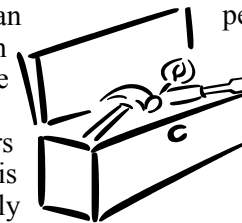
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God's Toolbox

Bill Brinkworth

Every handyman has a toolbox in which his tools are stored. Since maintenance repairs are varied, so are his tools. The box usually does not contain just hammers or screwdrivers. It is filled with all kinds of different tools to help fix whatever may be broken. Most likely, there are wrenches, saws, screwdrivers, hammers, sockets, and a host of others. There is much to be maintained.

Just as man maintains what he has, or at least should, God also has tasks around His creation that also need attention. He has angels, and other heavenly creatures that do His bidding. On earth, He often uses man to meet the needs of mankind. To accomplish what the Master requires, God gives His workers certain tools to get His job done. No, the tools are not hammers, wrenches, or saws. The tools given to each of His born-again family members are special,



spiritual gifts. When God meets a need of a person or group of people, He often selects a person to complete the task utilizing the gift God has given him, to accomplish what needs to be done.

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Despite previous warnings (Acts 23) not to go to Jerusalem, where it was prophesied he would face trials and tribulations, Paul went. The fearless evangelist had a burden to give out the message that had transformed his life. He endured beatings, near assassinations, and cruel treatments. He was not going to quit or turn back.

After a day when Paul was beaten, accused by hypocrites, and almost pulled to pieces (vs. 10) by an angry mob, the Lord verbally encouraged the preacher (vs. 11). In the encouraging remarks, the Lord told the evangelist that as he had testified for the Lord in Jerusalem, he must

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The tools to meet man's every day needs, both spiritual and physical, have changed as church ages have progressed. Before God had man compile the complete Word of God we have today, God handled man's needs differently. Since the early church did not have His guidelines, He presented man with other gifts; many of them are referred to as sign gifts. They were "signs" that God was with man. The nine spiritual gifts included: words of wisdom and knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:8-10). Many of these gifts stopped or changed when "that which is perfect is come" (1 Corinthians 13:10), the Bible. When the Bible was made available to man, man was to live by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7, Galatians 3:1), and no longer needed to live by sight. He no longer needed the "proof" of miracles.

God is not done with man yet. He still has big plans for those who are willing to turn to and heed Him. Although God still does miracles, the believer no longer has need of the sign gifts of the early church, because he has God's written instructions. Instead of "sign gifts" to do the tasks God desires accomplished,

He equips the born-again child of God with at least one of seven gifts (Romans 12:6-8), that he has provided for this church age. These gifts are the tools God knows will be necessary to do the tasks He requires. These "tools" include:

Prophecy. This gift of prophecy is not the same as the early church had. They were able to foretell the future; we no longer need to foretell the future; as God has recorded all He desires us to know about it in His preserved Word. That ability to predict the future has stopped (1 Corinthians 13:8).

Prophecy also can mean, as Webster's 1828 dictionary defines it, "to preach; to instruct in religious doctrines; to interpret or explain Scripture or religious subjects ..." This is a very important gift still used amongst today's believers. This gift from God enables certain believers, who have read and studied the Word of God, to help other believers by sharing its meaning. These people can shed light on a dark situation in a person's life, and can tell a troubled person God's solution to the problem, according to God's Word.

Ministry. Another essential tool needed to support the needs of God's people is the gift of meeting the needs of and ministering to others. Many times the service to others does not get the

spotlight it should, but the body of Christ surely suffers when the possessor of this gift does not exercise it. The gift of ministry has no limits as to what it can encompass. When a need is seen, service can be rendered by feeding those that cannot feed themselves, bringing children to church that cannot get there themselves, pushing an invalid in a wheelchair, helping a sick person recover, helping the deaf "hear" the Gospel by signing for them, cleaning the church's restrooms, and on and on. People's needs are so many.

Teaching. Just as a student in school needs guidance to understand required subjects, so does the child of God need a teacher that has the gift of teaching the truths of the Bible. God has given some the gift to teach the principles, doctrines, and facts found in His Word. As the eunuch told Philip when he could not understand the scriptures, "... How can I, except some man should guide me? ..." (Acts 8:31).

Exhorting. Exhorting is an important tool that God has given certain believers. This gift is used to encourage and comfort fellow-believers. Many more would be encouraged and still be fruitful in the ministry, if more spiritual cheerleaders were urging Christian soldiers onward.

Giving. Anyone can get and take, but with the tool of giving God has for some, they have the desire to give and give. They give of themselves, their time, and often their finances. Most church-

es physically would not exist, if givers had not provided for their existence. Many are encouraged to serve and live for God, because someone thought them important enough to give of their time and energy to help them.

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Do What You Can

Author Unknown

*We cannot all be heroes,
And thrill a hemisphere,
With some great daring venture
Some deed that mocks at fear;
But we can fill a life time
With kindly acts and true;
There's always noble service
For noble hearts to do.*

*We cannot all be preachers,
And sway with voice and pen,
As strong winds sway the forest,
The mind and hearts of men;
But we can be evangelists
To souls within our reach;
There's always Love's own
gospel
For loving hearts to preach.*

*We cannot all be martyrs,
And win a deathless name
By some Divine baptism,
Some ministry of flame;
But we can live for truth's sake,
Can do for Christ and dare;
There's always faithful witness
For faithful hearts to bear.*

"Service is not a list of things to do — it is a way of life."

"Service is the rent we pay for the space we occupy."