

## **A Renewed Mind: Thinking about Ourselves**

How we think about ourselves matters a lot. We are called to think accurately about ourselves, which can be very difficult. Ultimately it is a work of God when we begin thinking about ourselves the way God does. But if we begin thinking rightly about ourselves, we will have a newfound freedom to live the life God calls us to live. Specifically if we understand our God-given roles in the body of Christ, we will have freedom to be used by Him in the lives of others. And when we all do this AND do it together, the ministry of Christ will be expressed in this world in powerful ways to the glory of God!

**Opening Question:** Speaking of thinking, what has been occupying your thoughts this week?

### **Read Romans 12:3-8**

1. Verse 3 begins with “for” indicating that this passage in some way is a further explanation of what Paul just said in 12:1-2. How does this passage connect to what he said in verses 1-2?
2. What does it mean to think more highly of oneself (in the church) than a person ought to think? What would be some examples of this?
3. How would you summarize verse 3?
4. How does Paul describe the body of Christ? What theology of the body can we develop from this passage (vv. 4-5)?

Steve said:

In verse 6 Paul writes that since it's actually the case that "we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us," each of us needs to exercise them accordingly if the body is going to function properly. As we individually use our God-given gifts, we corporately represent Christ well. The goal isn't merely to have individual Christians who are used by God. The goal is to have a fully functioning body of Christ. Unless we understand God's design we won't think accurately about ourselves. We will have an individualistic approach to the Christian life; we will either think too highly of ourselves or too lowly of ourselves.

5. What's the difference between having an individualistic approach to the Christian life and a corporate approach? And what does it take to really live out a corporate approach to the Christian life?

Steve said:

There's a huge difference between thinking, "I'm pretty good at showing mercy to people who need it," and "The triune God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - has given me the gift of mercy because through me He wants to show people just how merciful He is!" If you really believe that the triune God has specifically gifted you to fulfill a role in the body of Christ, you will have a sense of **stewardship** for that gift and a sense of **anticipation** about how God wants to use you in the lives of others.

6. How would it affect how you think about serving if you really did believe that the triune God has gifted you to fulfill a role in the body of Christ?

7. At this point in your life do you have any sense about how God has gifted you?