

What can I do?

1 Corinthians 12:1-12

Online Sermon: http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

Has God ever made a mistake? When He created the heavens, and the earth were they not a product of divine perfection (Genesis 1)? Do not the infinite complexities of this universe (Job 38) constantly point to the eternal power and divine nature of God (Romans 1:20) to do infinitely more than we could ever ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20)? When it comes to justice has God ever wronged anyone? After all, who better to judge than the Alpha and Omega



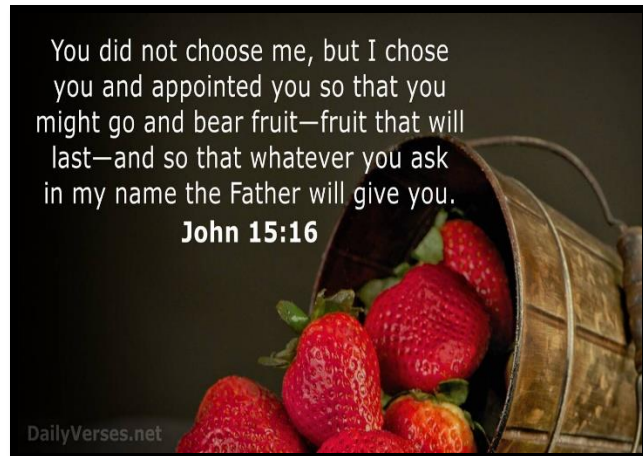
(Revelation 22:13) who knit us in our mother's womb, and knows every word, thought and deed everyone will ever do (Psalms 139)? Are not injustices a product of a fallen world that serves multiple gods the chief of which is self that never stops coveting all that is seen? And even when God allows us to go through tribulations does, He not promise that if we persevere our spiritual maturity will increase (James 1:2-4)? And even if God allows us to die early how can this be an injustice when the wages of our sin deserve death (Genesis 3:19; Romans 6:23), and in considering eternity that is in our hearts (Ecclesiastes

3:11), is not going home early to be with the Lord a blessing? And has not God demonstrated perfect love by sending His one and only Son Jesus to die once and for everyone (John 3:16; 1 Peter 3:8)? In being slow to return does not Christ demonstrate infinite mercy by offering the Fallen a lifetime of chances to repent, have faith in Him and become eternal, masterpieces of His grace (2 Peter 3:9)? Surely those who were created in God's image (Genesis 1:27) and a little lower than the angels (Psalms 8:5), who are only righteous (Romans 3:9-20) because of faith in the atoning sacrifice of the Son, dare not be like Job (chapter 40) and suggest God has done injustice or ever made a wrong decision! Today's sermon is going to be about gifting and the divine call of God in your life but before I review today's passage, please establish in your minds that Gods' ways and decisions are infinitely higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9) and as such He alone can guide us into ways everlasting with perfection!

Each Believer has a Divine Role

When God saved you, He did so with a divine task in mind to be assigned specifically to you! Even when God's eyes saw your body yet to be formed your days were ordained and

written in His book (Psalms 139:16).¹ While God does not need human hands to serve Him (Acts 17:25) out of love He invites His own to be His hands and feet, living sacrifices that through the power of the Holy Spirit can know and obey His good and perfect will (Romans 12:2)! The answer to the opening question is that God does not make mistakes and therefore one need not worry that one's life is a product of luck, chance, or fate² but is the design of a loving



Creator who in His justice, mercy and grace has gifted you to do unspeakable and glorious things in His name! You are fearfully and wonderfully made³ not to explore any broad path your heart desires but to travel the narrow road (Matthew 7:13-14) and fulfill the spiritual reason⁴ and divine purpose in which you were formed!⁵ “God made you with your initials stamped on your heart as a custom made saint” perfectly designed to do His will in your life!⁶ For example, Isaiah 42:2 says that “God made you and will keep you for His purpose.” Ephesians 1:2 says

that God has chosen you for a purpose in which Psalms 138:8 says the Lord wants to fulfill.⁷ To spend one's entire life trying to “find oneself” by trying out every desirable path possible leads to tension⁸ and frustration within one's soul for until one strives to fulfill one's divinely appointed role one is simply not “living up to the reason for one's existence!”⁹ God did not make you for you but in love to fulfill a divine role in His kingdom!¹⁰

¹ Tony Evans, [“Custom Designed for His Purpose,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Co 12:4–11.

² Tony Evans, [“Custom Designed for His Purpose,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Co 12:4–11.

³ Tony Evans, [“Custom Designed for His Purpose,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Co 12:4–11.

⁴ Tony Evans, [“Custom Designed for His Purpose,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Co 12:4–11.

⁵ Tony Evans, [“Custom Designed for His Purpose,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Co 12:4–11.

⁶ Tony Evans, [“Custom Designed for His Purpose,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Co 12:4–11.

⁷ Tony Evans, [“Custom Designed for His Purpose,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Co 12:4–11.

⁸ Tony Evans, [“Custom Designed for His Purpose,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Co 12:4–11.

⁹ Tony Evans, [“Custom Designed for His Purpose,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Co 12:4–11.

¹⁰ Tony Evans, [“Custom Designed for His Purpose,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Co 12:4–11.

The Assignment of Spiritual Gifts and Roles

While God assigning the “dust” of the earth to accomplish divine roles might seem like an exercise in futility it certainly is not for what is asked the “indwelling Christ enables!”¹¹ The moment a person becomes born again¹² he/she receives from the Holy Spirit supernatural gifts of



various kinds.¹³ Just like no one would be expected to use a hockey stick in a tennis game, a watermelon for a football, a golf club in a rifle competition, a tricycle in a car race; God does not expect us to accomplish divine goals without the right spiritual giftings! These gifts are intended to be used in a Christ-like attitude of servanthood, are a result of God’s powerful working in a person’s life, and are to be used for mutual edification of the church body (Ephesians 4:1-13).¹⁴ They are not to be confused with natural abilities¹⁵ but are the manifestation of the Spirit to enable a person to do uncommon or “supernatural” things in the kingdom of

God!¹⁶ As one finds diversity and unity within the Triune Godhead¹⁷ so one also finds diverse gifting inside a unified church. The great news is that no one needs to worry about being left out or that they will receive lessor or the wrong gifting for the same Spirit that distributes the gifts and service¹⁸ to each person does so that they might excel at the divine goals God has assigned them! While the Bible gives a “variety of partial lists” of spiritual giftings (1 Corinthians 4:7-10;

¹¹ Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 7, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 164.

¹² Tony Evans, [“Custom Designed for His Purpose,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Co 12:4–11.

¹³ Tony Evans, [“Custom Designed for His Purpose,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Co 12:4–11.

¹⁴ Craig Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 243.

¹⁵ Tony Evans, [“Custom Designed for His Purpose,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Co 12:4–11.

¹⁶ Tony Evans, [“Custom Designed for His Purpose,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Co 12:4–11.

¹⁷ Craig Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 242.

¹⁸ Marion L. Soards, *1 Corinthians*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 257.

Rom. 12:6–8; Eph. 4:11 1 Pet. 4:11)¹⁹ none of them are meant to be exhaustive. Even though it might offend our individualistic tendencies the truth is that we were not given all the spiritual gifts nor are we to do all the divine activities inside the church!²⁰ It is only in what God has gifted you that you can do greater things than you could ever ask or imagine! So whatever role God has assigned you do not be afraid of serving Him in this manner for God has not made a mistake, He has enabled and has guaranteed your success for His honor and glory!

Divine Role for the Common Good

Spiritual gifts are not given for “personal privilege or glory”²¹ but to honor and glorify God and for the good of the church!²² Paul said in 2 Corinthians 3:18, “We all with unveiled face



beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”²³ So above all our gifts are to be used in obedience and to point to the glory of God the Father (Matthew 5:16)! When we publicly praise God by doing the divine tasks, He assigns us we acknowledge our debt²⁴ and His right to rule over our lives!²⁵ Also, it is essential for the spiritual health of the church for all believers to use their God-given gifts to accomplish the diversified roles of a healthy church!²⁶ “The gathering of the church for worship is not

merely a matter of a group of human beings coming together to practice certain traditions or liturgy, but entails the presence and activity of God himself in and through his people as they

¹⁹ Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 573.

²⁰ Tony Evans, “[Custom Designed for His Purpose.](#)” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Co 12:4–11.

²¹ Marion L. Soards, *1 Corinthians*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 257.

²² John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1990–1999)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

²³ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1990–1999)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

²⁴ Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 569.

²⁵ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1990–1999)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

²⁶ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, ed. Ned B. Stonehouse et al., Revised Edition., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 646.

worship and build each other up in his presence.”²⁷ If you really want to manifest God to the world then one must show them the love of God is not a superficial or worse yet a hypocritical word that rolls off your tongue but never hits your heart. They will only know you are a Christian and see God’s love in your life through the manifest power of the Spirit²⁸ to love Him and to do good to one another! If everyone in the church used their spiritual rather than their natural giftings and sought God’s will rather than that of their own²⁹ would not the church cease to void of power and barren of fruit³⁰ but instead become a true beacon of light and many more see God in her presence and bow down and worship Him (1 Corinthians 14:24)?³¹ We simply cannot and must not try to do accomplish great things in God’s kingdom without His help for that would be mere “dust building upon dust,”³² pure vanity!

Examples of Spiritual Gifts and Roles

Let us briefly look at some of the exciting spiritual gifts/divine roles Paul mentions are available once a person becomes born again. While all that are born again have the kind of faith that believes in a risen Savior,³³ those who receive the spiritual gift of faith can “move mountains” and help the church through exceptional times (Matthew 17:20, 1 Corinthians 13:1-3).³⁴ Some believers are given not so much the ability to understand the deeper things or mysteries of God³⁵ but insight into the “mysterious purposes and working of God”³⁶ in a timely

²⁷ Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 570–571.

²⁸ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1990–1999)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

²⁹ Tony Evans, “[Custom Designed for His Purpose,](#)” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Co 12:4–11.

³⁰ Taken I believe from A. W. Tozer.

³¹ Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 570.

³² Taken from Dallas Willard.

³³ Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 7, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 166.

³⁴ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, ed. Ned B. Stonehouse et al., Revised Edition., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 658.

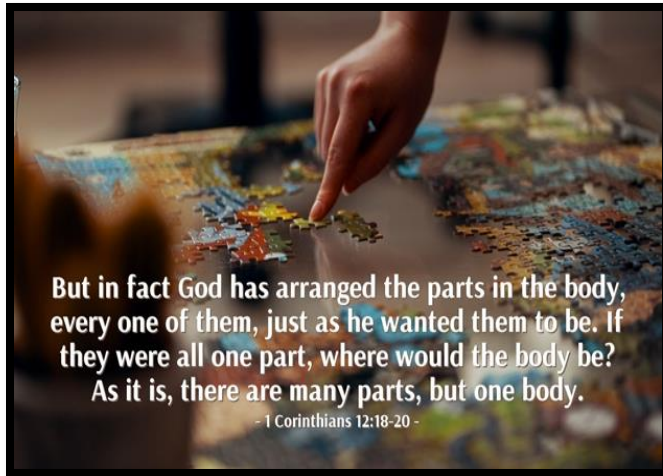
³⁵ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, ed. Ned B. Stonehouse et al., Revised Edition., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 656–657.

³⁶ Marion L. Soards, *1 Corinthians*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 258.

getting us to think about the many possible gifts one has received and the obligation to use them for the glory of God and to build up the church.

Every Role is Important and of Equal Value

No matter what spiritual gift God gives you, faith, knowledge, wisdom, prophecy, physical healings, speaking in tongues or discernment; the divine role assigned to you is perfect in God's sight!⁴⁶ Just because one member is gifted to preach while another to heal does not



make one of them more important than the other. “If one were to trivialize or marginalize the contribution made by any member of the community, one would be trivializing something which God Himself was doing in and through that person.”⁴⁷ Neither do “divergent gifts point to divergent divine purposes”⁴⁸ for there is but one Lord and the workings of the church aim to glorify but one Father by doing His will for the body of Christ!⁴⁹ Since each member of the church is interconnected and dependent upon all other members (verse 12) no one has the right to claim

superiority nor has anyone the right to look down upon their gifts as “though they were bestowed by some lesser power or authority”⁵⁰ and foolishly state their God-assigned role is beneath them!⁵¹ Since God does not make mistakes and each of us are fearfully and wonderfully made with a divine purpose in mind we are to rejoice that in His mercy and grace we have been divinely enabled to do greater things than we could ever ask or imagine in His kingdom. Above

⁴⁶ Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 569.

⁴⁷ Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 570.

⁴⁸ Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 7, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 168.

⁴⁹ Mark Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, vol. 28, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), 287.

⁵⁰ Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 570.

⁵¹ Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 570.

all never forget that one is obligated to serve He who purchased one at the price of His very life (1 Corinthians 6:20) without taking individual credit for His works in and through you!⁵² We are to humbly perform our divine tasks of holy service by always pointing to God as the source of any success we experience!

Passion to do God's Will in Your Life

Since God has created humanity in His image and gifted everyone to do great things in His kingdom and to edify the church then why are so many of Christians not serving Him? The answer is that many have an abundance of passion to serve self but not God! How can one say



they love the Lord with all their heart, soul and mind and their neighbors but lack any passion to “fulfill what God has called them to do?”⁵³ “Proverbs 4:23 says that out of your heart flows the springs of life.”⁵⁴ Passion burns, sets you aflame, ignites desires and a sense of urgency⁵⁵ that is so profound that one wilfully and in great rejoicing will submit to whatever is ruling one's heart. The problem many Christians face are that while they have been freed from the entanglement and power of sin their continued love of the ways of this world⁵⁶ keeps them motivated

to gain the evil desires still lurking in their hearts (Romans 7). This is why so many of believers are living lives that are void of power and baren of fruit! If only we would fully submit to our Creator's will⁵⁷ and have faith that He will help us take care of our family, time, and money⁵⁸ then their would-be room in our hearts to gladly bow our knees and be living sacrifices of holy service unto Him! If we continue to allow our “excuses” to reign us, then we will undoubtedly go

⁵² Craig Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 244.

⁵³ Tony Evans, [“Custom Designed for His Purpose.”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Co 12:4–11.

⁵⁴ Tony Evans, [“Custom Designed for His Purpose.”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Co 12:4–11.

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to our graves with nothing to show in eternity!⁵⁹ If we want to honor God, then we must refuse to merely go through the “religious motions” of our “one-hour services” without embracing the divine role God gave us 24/7 with all our hearts! Since the clock is ticking only in one direction, forward, the opportunity to have God “supernaturally manifest Himself”⁶⁰ through our God-ordained ministry is closing fast! I wonder if God gave you the opportunity to write on your own tombstone what you did from the time of your conversion unto death would there be anything God-honorable you could write? I implore you to learn what your gifts are and use them to honor God and build up the church for this is the reason God created you!

⁵⁹ Tony Evans, [“Custom Designed for His Purpose,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Co 12:4–11.

⁶⁰ Tony Evans, [“Custom Designed for His Purpose,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Co 12:4–11.