

# What are the characteristics of the gift of prophecy?

## Gift

## Characteristics

## Misuses

### Prophecy



Who in Scripture best illustrates the motivational gift of prophecy?

#### PETER

What guidelines are given for the gift of prophecy in Romans 12:9?

- LOVE WITHOUT HYPOCRISY
- ABHOR EVIL
- CLING TO GOOD

What basic principle does the prophet most need to exercise?

#### CLEAR CONSCIENCE

A clear conscience allows the prophet to speak the truth boldly with love.

#### • NEED TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES

Prophets need to express their thoughts and ideas verbally, especially when matters of right and wrong are involved. In the written account of the Gospels, Peter spoke more often than any other disciple. He also became the spokesman for the early Church. (See Acts 2:14, 3:12, 4:8, 11:4.)

#### • QUICK IMPRESSIONS OF PEOPLE

Prophets tend to make quick judgments about what they see and hear. They also tend to express their views before others speak. In the Gospels, Peter spoke first more than any other disciple did. (See Matthew 14:28; 15:15; 16:16, 22; 17:4; 19:27; John 6:68, 13:6.)

#### • ALERTNESS TO DISHONESTY

Prophets have an amazing ability to sense when someone or something is not what it appears to be. They react strongly to any form of deception or dishonesty. Peter must have sensed deception in Ananias and Sapphira since he was prompted to question them about it. His condemnation resulted in their deaths. (See Acts 5:3–10.)

#### • DESIRE FOR JUSTICE

Prophets tend to cut off those who sin so that justice will be done and others will be warned. Peter desired to cut off his offenders, and he asked Jesus how often he would have to forgive them. (See Matthew 18:21.) A prophet knows that “a little leaven leavens the whole lump.”

#### • EXPOSING WITHOUT RESTORING

A prophet's primary concern about stopping the spread of evil tends to motivate him to expose a sinner rather than restore him. In so doing, the prophet will fail a test of spirituality. (See Galatians 6:1.) The prophet, however, believes that exposure of sin is the first step of restoration.

#### • JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

Prophets tend to draw conclusions from a few known facts. Once a hasty conclusion has been made, prophets tend to look for confirming evidence. This action can result in their taking words and actions of the accused out of context in order to prove their points.

#### • REACTING HARSHLY TO SINNERS

When a prophet sees sin, he tends to denounce it so strongly that it appears to others as “overkill.” After exposing the sin, the prophet tends to expect immediate repentance regardless of whether his rebuke was given in love or was even fully accurate. His motive in magnifying sin is to promote repentance.

#### • BEING UNFORGIVING

It is difficult for a prophet to make a separation between sin and the sinner. Therefore, he tends to reject them both with equal vigor. Those who hear his harshness interpret his denunciations as angry tirades. Peter's epistles provide a balance of truth and love.

## Characteristics

### • OPEN ABOUT THEIR OWN FAULTS

Prophets are as open about their own failures as they want others to be about theirs. When Christ appeared to the disciples, Peter fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8).

### • WHOLEHEARTED INVOLVEMENT

Once prophets are committed to a cause, they are wholeheartedly involved in it. Within the context of their commitment, they are quick to respond to situations and opportunities. When Peter recognized Jesus walking on the water, he asked Jesus to bid him to come. (See Matthew 14:28.)

### • LOYALTY TO TRUTH VS. PEOPLE

Prophets are loyal to truth even if it means cutting off relationships. When Jesus asked the disciples if they were also going to leave Him, Peter replied that he would stay because Christ had the words of eternal life. (See John 6:67-69.)

### • WILLINGNESS TO SUFFER FOR RIGHT

Prophets are eager to suffer when it comes to standing for the truth or doing what is right. Peter rejoiced that he was counted worthy to suffer shame for Jesus when he was beaten for obeying God rather than men. (See Acts 5:29-42.)

### • PERSUASIVE IN DEFINING TRUTH

Prophets have a special ability to be articulate in defining what is right and what is wrong. Great conviction was brought to thousands on the Day of Pentecost when Peter pointed out, "... Ye have taken [Jesus], and by wicked hands have crucified and slain [Him]" (Acts 2:23).

## Misuses

### • CONDEMNING THEMSELVES

The harsh judgments that prophets have for others, they also have for themselves. They tend to be extremely self-critical and feel worthless when they fail. After Peter denied Jesus, the heavenly messenger who proclaimed the Lord's resurrection knew Peter's need for extra reassurance of God's love and said, "... Go ... tell his disciples and Peter ..." (Mark 16:7).

### • BEING IMPETUOUS

Because of his tendency to make quick decisions, a prophet can be impulsive and can vacillate between extremes. At first Peter refused to allow Jesus to wash his feet; then, he asked Jesus to wash his whole body. (See John 13:6-10.)

### • CUTTING OFF PEOPLE WHO FAIL

Whenever prophets see or hear something that is wrong, they feel responsible to speak out against it. It does not occur to them to ask: "Whose responsibility is this? Do I have all the facts? Do I need to take action at this time?"

### • LACKING TACTFULNESS IN REBUKE

Prophets tend to be painfully direct when correcting others, regardless of who they are. This bluntness can cause the prophet embarrassment, as when Peter rebuked Jesus. (See Mark 8:31-33.)

### • DWELLING ON THE NEGATIVE

Prophets tend to divide everything into two classes—right or wrong. Once they label a person or activity, that judgment tends to be fixed in their minds, and they often feel compelled to persuade others to agree with them.



# What are the characteristics of the gift of serving?

## Gift

## Characteristics

## Misuses

### Serving



Who in Scripture best illustrates the motivational gift of serving?

#### TIMOTHY

What guidelines are given for the gift of serving in Romans 12:10?

- **KIND AFFECTION**
- **BROTHERLY LOVE**
- **HONOR TOWARD OTHERS**

What basic principle does the server most need to exercise?

#### AUTHORITY

Being under authority gives the server needed protection as he manages his time.

#### • SEES AND MEETS PRACTICAL NEEDS

Important needs that seem insignificant to others catch the eye and the attention of the server. These needs are usually physical; however, the server knows that by meeting them he will bring spiritual encouragement and strength to those who receive his help.

Timothy's serving ability is noted by Paul: "For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state" (Philippians 2:20).

#### • FREES OTHERS TO ACHIEVE

The joy of the server is not just found in initiating tasks but in knowing that through them he is bringing peace of mind to another person, which will allow that person to be more productive in the tasks God has called him to do.

Timothy served Paul so that Paul could carry out his ministry. His serving was "as a son with the father" (Philippians 2:22).

#### • DISREGARDS WEARINESS

Because the server sees the importance of the tasks that he has begun, he will freely use up personal assets of time, money, and strength. His focus is not on himself but rather on the completion of the tasks, which he knows will benefit the individual and bring joy to himself.

#### • FINDS IT DIFFICULT TO SAY "NO"

As the server effectively meets one need, others may ask for similar help, not realizing the inner motivation of the server. These requests,

#### • GIVING UNREQUESTED HELP

Sometimes the tasks that the server sees appear to be more important to the server than the one being served. It may even be that the one who has the needs is not aware of them to the degree that the server is aware of them. In either case, a server who uses his initiative to meet these needs may be judged as pushy or intrusive.

#### • LETTING THINGS BE TOO IMPORTANT

In order to meet the needs of others, servers will often neglect their own homes and personal responsibilities. They will meet others' needs, but leave their families' needs unmet. This transfer of attention may cause reaction by the server's family and the feeling by the one being served that too much attention is being put on physical things.

#### • WORKING BEYOND PHYSICAL LIMITS

Inner tension that often results in physical ailments, especially stomach problems, frequently occurs in servers. This condition is the consequence of overextending themselves on one job or taking on too many jobs.

We know that Timothy had physical ailments. Paul instructed Timothy to take "a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (1 Timothy 5:23).

#### • NEGLECTING GOD-GIVEN PRIORITIES

Servers are often placed in positions of responsibility because they are diligent workers. It is then easy for them to volunteer a helping hand or become involved in tasks that they



## Characteristics

however, are difficult to turn down because they represent needs, and the server feels obligated to meet the needs, since he was asked to do so.

### • ALERT TO LIKES AND DISLIKES

Those with the gift of serving have an amazing ability to find out and remember the special interests of the people they serve. Thus, birthdays and anniversaries tend to be special occasions for them. They can often recall an individual's favorite foods, special colors, types of home furnishings, and favorite activities and use this knowledge in making occasions special.

### • NEEDS APPROVAL

Appreciation confirms to the server that his work is necessary and that it is being blessed by the Lord. The server also desires clear direction. Paul gave Timothy more praise and precise instructions than he gave any other assistant. (See I and II Timothy.) Servers prefer working *with* a person rather than *for* a person.

### • LIKES SHORT-RANGE PROJECTS

The tasks that attract a server are usually immediate needs. The server often becomes frustrated with long-range planning or an ongoing task that seems to make no obvious progress. Timothy was urged to maintain endurance as a good soldier and to continue in the calling that he was given of God. (See I Timothy 4:16 and II Timothy 2:3.)

### • PUTS EXTRA TOUCHES TO JOBS

The server knows that by doing more than is expected he not only will delight the one being served but will demonstrate that he is doing it unto the Lord. For a server, "going the second mile" may be trimming and sweeping after mowing the lawn or putting a bow around a lunch box.

### • MEETS NEEDS QUICKLY

In an effort to complete tasks, a server will try to avoid committees and what to him appears to be unnecessary "red tape." In order to avoid delays, the server will use personal funds.

## Misuses

should be delegating to others. This imbalance causes the server's authority to become frustrated because tasks assigned to the server are not completed on schedule.

### • REACTING TO OVERLOOKED NEEDS

A server may react to people around him who, in his judgment, walk right past obvious needs. He assumes that others see what he sees. If he tells someone about a need and that person does not follow through on his suggestion to meet that need, the server may become resentful.

### • RESENTING LACK OF APPRECIATION

If a server is given a physical job simply because he is a server and is expected to get his joy from doing it, he may feel misused and react in anger. He will then fail to remember that he is working for the Lord. A server's perspective may also be lost if the one whom he is serving is not making wise use of his time.

### • WORKING PEOPLE AROUND HIS SCHEDULE

Because of the server's lack of desire or ability to properly delegate tasks, he will often develop his own time schedule and force others to adapt to it. Lack of delegation may also hinder the family from feeling involved in his serving and cause them instead to feel that they are taken for granted.

### • BEING FRUSTRATED WITH TIME LIMITS

A server may react to a rigid schedule, not realizing that it is for his own protection. He may feel that it hinders him from the joy of additional serving. Twice, Timothy was told by Paul not to get sidetracked. "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me. . . . Do thy diligence to come before winter . . ." (II Timothy 4:9, 21).

### • INTERFERING WITH GOD'S DISCIPLINE

The purposes of God may be frustrated when a server meets a need that God allowed in a person's life to bring about repentance. If a server could have met the physical needs of the prodigal son while he was in the pig sty, it could have hindered his return. (See Luke 15:11-31.)



# What are the characteristics of the gift of teaching?

## Gift

## Characteristics

## Misuses

### Teaching



Who in Scripture best illustrates the motivational gift of teaching?

#### LUKE

What guidelines are given for the gift of teaching in Romans 12:11?

- DILIGENT RESEARCH
- FERVENT IN SPIRIT
- SERVING GOD

What basic principle does the teacher most need to exercise?

#### MEDITATION

Meditation allows the teacher to become mighty in Spirit.

#### • NEEDS TO VALIDATE INFORMATION

When a teacher hears important statements, whether given privately or publicly, he will desire to verify them. His motivation is to confirm that the statements are true and have the authority to bring spiritual freedom. Luke wrote his Gospel to "Theophilus that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed" (Luke 1:4).

#### • CHECKS OUT TEACHERS

A person with the gift of teaching will be especially alert to false teachers. He will want to investigate their backgrounds before listening to them. He will also assume that others want to know the teacher's qualifications; thus, he will tend to relate these before he speaks. Luke began his Gospel by affirming that he was an eyewitness and that he "... had perfect understanding of all things from the very first ..." (Luke 1:3).

#### • RELIES ON ESTABLISHED RESOURCES

A teacher has a need to go to reliable sources to validate truth. He will also use accepted works of recognized authorities to further confirm statements that others make. Luke praised the Bereans for daily confirming Paul's statements with the Old Testament Scriptures. (See Acts 17:11.) Luke also related his writings to the other Gospel accounts and to the Old Testament.

#### • PRESENTS TRUTH SYSTEMATICALLY

Teachers tend to feel more comfortable when material is laid out in an orderly sequence.

#### • BECOMING PROUD OF KNOWLEDGE

With the teacher's thoroughness in checking out facts, he will acquire much knowledge. Since "... knowledge puffeth up ..." (1 Corinthians 8:1), it is very easy for him to become proud. He may also appear prideful by giving far more information than is needed to prove a point. Furthermore, pride can be communicated by the attitude, "It isn't right until I check it out and say that it is right."

#### • DESPISING LACK OF CREDENTIALS

Many teachers attempt to control misinformation by requiring approved courses of instruction. By depending only on these courses, credentials can be overemphasized, and the practical wisdom of those whom teachers consider uneducated can be despised or minimized. In such cases, teachers make the mistake of concentrating on intellectual knowledge rather than spiritual perception.

#### • DEPENDING ON HUMAN REASONING

Since he is able to use scholarly resources, a teacher can easily give the impression that he is the only source of truth and that his gift is more important than the other gifts. The teacher may also react to, or fail to see, the need to bring his intellect under the control of the Holy Spirit, thus putting his scholarship ahead of the spiritual insight that comes through meditating on Scripture.

#### • CRITICIZING PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

A teacher's motivation to verify all statements by the authority of Scripture may hinder him in making



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The teacher wants to know the events in the order in which they occurred. Luke emphasized the chronological structure of his Gospel when he explained that his approach was “. . . to write unto thee in order . . .” (Luke 1:3).

### • GATHERS MANY FACTS

Those with the gift of teaching often have a greater delight in researching facts than they do in teaching them. When they do speak or write, they feel constrained to give as many facts as possible. Luke’s Gospel is the longest of the four; he includes information left out by other writers, and he emphasizes the completeness of his account. (See Acts 1:1.)

### • REQUIRES THOROUGHNESS

A teacher enjoys giving details that are not noticed or mentioned by others. Luke gives precise descriptions of events, conversations, circumstances, and physical conditions. He detailed more names, titles, cities, dates, and events than any other Gospel writer.

### • UNEASY WITH SUBJECTIVE TRUTH

A teacher is concerned that truth be presented in balance. He recognizes the danger of using personal experience as a foundation for truth. He wants to go from Scripture to experience, rather than from experience to a proof text in Scripture. A teacher tends to remain silent until information has been heard, observed, and verified. Luke’s silence is conspicuous in the New Testament; none of his own statements are recorded.

### • PERSEVERES WITH ACCEPTED TEACHERS

A teacher tends to remain loyal to a mentor or a school as long as any truth remains; he does what he can to promote truth. Luke demonstrated amazing loyalty to Paul and his message when Paul was in prison, even after others left him. “Only Luke is with me” (II Timothy 4:11).

### • CLARIFIES MISUNDERSTANDINGS

If a teacher learns that his facts are wrong, he will not simply accept the conclusion but will want to retrace his own investigation to determine at what point he got off the right track. He will want to use the same procedure in helping others who have strayed from the truth.

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wider Scriptural application. As he focuses on textual studies, he may miss the underlying principles that tie all Scripture together “. . . for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (II Timothy 3:16).

### • SHOWING OFF RESEARCH SKILLS

When a Christian with the gift of teaching shares a conclusion, he feels obligated to explain how he arrived at it. He often assumes, wrongly, that because he enjoyed the research so much, others will enjoy it too. Concentration on research may also cause a teacher to live in an unreal world that he has created by his exclusion of other people.

### • REJECTING SCRIPTURAL PRESUPPOSITIONS

If a teacher fails to subject his intellect to the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, he will need to reexamine the “foundational truths of Scripture,” which are to be understood by faith. His theology will become the reorganization of Scripture around a philosophical base.

### • PUTTING MIND ABOVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

The most effective way for anyone to keep his intellect under the control of the Holy Spirit is to meditate upon God’s Word day and night. Neither the inspiration of Scripture nor the true meaning of Scripture can be understood intellectually; they must be discerned spiritually. If a teacher fails to become mighty in Spirit, he will tend to trust his own intellect.

### • TAKING TEACHINGS TO EXTREMES

Truth out of balance leads to heresy. Imbalance begins by studying a doctrine apart from its moral settings (e.g., the Second Coming without its purifying hope, communion without self-examination). Argumentation and division result. Imbalance also occurs when related truths are separated (e.g., mercy without justice, grace without law).

### • ARGUING OVER MINOR POINTS

If a teacher leans on his own understanding, it is easy for him to reject an important spiritual truth because he detects a minor flaw in the presentation of it. He may further reject this truth because he is being asked to intellectually accept a conclusion without knowing how the other person arrived at it.



# What are the characteristics of the gift of exhorting?

## Gift

## Characteristics

## Misuses

### Exhorting



Who in Scripture best illustrates the motivational gift of exhorting?

#### PAUL

What guidelines are given for the gift of exhorting in Romans 12:12?

- **REJOICING IN HOPE**
- **PATIENT IN TRIBULATION**
- **CONSTANT READINESS FOR PRAYER**

What basic principle does the exhorter most need to exercise?

#### GOD'S DESIGN

Understanding God's design allows the exhorter to understand and be able to explain God's sovereignty.

#### • COMMITTED TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The motivation of an exhorter is to see spiritual growth take place in practical living, and he is willing to become personally involved to see it achieved. Paul said, "... I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (Galatians 4:19). Paul further declared that he worked night and day to "... present every man perfect [mature] in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28).

#### • SEES ROOT PROBLEMS

An exhorter can often discern the spiritual maturity of another person. Based on this, the exhorter is motivated to search out hindrances in the lives of those who are not growing spiritually and to give further encouragement to those who are. Paul saw the Corinthians as spiritual infants and therefore could not speak to them "... as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal ..." (I Corinthians 3:1).

#### • SEES STEPS OF ACTION

An exhorter has the ability to visualize spiritual achievement for another Christian and then help him work out practical steps of action to achieve it. These steps are designed to remove hindrances and develop personal disciplines through which the Holy Spirit can work. Paul told Timothy to flee youthful lusts, to avoid foolish questions, and to follow righteousness with a pure heart. (See II Timothy 2:22-23.)

#### • RAISES HOPE FOR SOLUTIONS

An exhorter tends to use examples from the lives of others to help Christians see the potential of daily

#### • KEEPING OTHERS WAITING FOR HIM

An exhorter's willingness to give people whatever time is necessary to help them grow spiritually often cuts into family time and personal responsibilities. He often assumes that his family will understand—until major resentments surface. Paul understood the sacrifices that he was making in his ministry. If an exhorter is married, his priority must be his marriage. (See I Corinthians 7:32-34.)

#### • LOOKING TO HIMSELF FOR SOLUTIONS

As an exhorter gains experience and success in counseling, he tends to categorize problems as he hears them and arrive at conclusions before getting all the facts. By failing to listen completely and sense direction from the Holy Spirit, an exhorter can be guilty of the folly of giving wrong direction. (See Proverbs 18:13.)

#### • BEING PROUD OF VISIBLE RESULTS

When an exhorter gives steps of action, he assumes that they will be carried out. He bases this expectation on the fact that he has "come alongside" and is working with the person to achieve agreed-upon goals. As spiritual growth becomes visible, it is easy for an exhorter to take personal credit for it. He may also be tempted to settle for outward conformity rather than true inward change.

#### • STARTING PROJECTS PREMATURELY

Exhorters tend to jump into new projects without finishing existing ones. They use projects to motivate



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victory. Paul used the testimony of one church to motivate another church. (See II Corinthians 9:2.) He used his own life to illustrate God's grace, since he was the chief of all sinners. (See I Timothy 1:15.)

### • TURNS PROBLEMS INTO BENEFITS

Mature exhorters have learned by experience that God gives special grace during trials. Based on this, Paul gloried in tribulation. His credentials were the persecutions that he experienced and the counseling God gave him during his afflictions. (See II Corinthians 1:1-7.)

### • DESIRES TO BE "TRANSPARENT"

An exhorter knows that true growth will not take place where there is guilt. Paul told Timothy to maintain a "good conscience." (See I Timothy 1:19.) An exhorter desires an open life in order to gain a wider hearing for the Gospel. Paul explained, "... I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (I Corinthians 9:22).

### • GAINS INSIGHT THROUGH EXPERIENCE

The exhorter is motivated to learn cause-and-effect sequences and through them to discover underlying principles of life. He studies both Scripture and experience to find these. His motivation is to promote spiritual growth and to bring diverse groups of Christians together.

### • URGENCY TO ACT ON CLEAR STEPS

An exhorter tends to explain truth using logical reasoning in order to motivate people to act upon it. Because of their logic, Paul's writings in I Corinthians 15 have been studied in law schools. He reasoned with the Jews, the Greeks, King Agrippa, and others. (See Acts 18:4, 26:28.)

### • DESIRES TO SHARE FACE TO FACE

An exhorter needs to see the facial expressions of his listeners in order to determine their responses and to confirm positive results. Paul's longing to see his fellow believers was constantly reaffirmed. (See I Thessalonians 2:17, 3:10; II Timothy 1:4.) He used personal conferences extensively. (See I Thessalonians 2:11-12.)

## Misuses

others, and then when others are involved, the exhorter finds a better project. After being assigned several projects, those who are working on them may become frustrated. The exhorter, however, sees the projects as simply a means to accomplish a bigger goal.

### • TREATING PEOPLE AS PROJECTS

The exhorter is constantly on the lookout for steps of action that will bring lasting results. As he works with his family or friends, they may get the impression that they are simply another counseling project rather than real people who need personal attention.

### • SHARING PRIVATE ILLUSTRATIONS

The problem with treating family and friends as "projects" rather than people is made even worse as the exhorter shares private illustrations that come out of his counseling experiences. Exhorters depend heavily on illustrations to communicate their messages. However, when these illustrations are shared without permission, listeners become uneasy and those who were counseled become resentful.

### • PRESENTING TRUTH OUT OF BALANCE

Exhorters tend to avoid heavy doctrinal teaching that does not have immediate practical application. The result of this emphasis can be an imbalance of teaching, which will eventually show up as doctrinal error. Thus, the exhorter needs the balancing ministry of the teacher.

### • SETTING UNREALISTIC GOALS

Exhorters often visualize long-range projects and goals for people. These are usually presented without reference to the amount of time that will be required to achieve them. Those whom the exhorter motivates assume that the projects and goals will be achieved much sooner than they can actually be achieved. This situation raises expectations and breeds disillusionment.

### • GIVING UP ON UNCOOPERATIVE PEOPLE

Exhorters tend to lose hope for people who do not quickly and consistently respond to the steps of action that are given for spiritual growth. By surrounding themselves only with those who do respond quickly, they forfeit valuable personal character training and insights that God must then teach in other ways.



# What are the characteristics of the gift of giving?

## Gift

## Characteristics

## Misuses

### Giving



Who in Scripture best illustrates the motivational gift of giving?

#### MATTHEW

What guidelines are given for the gift of giving in Romans 12:13?

- **GIVING TO NEEDS OF CHRISTIANS**
- **HOSPITALITY**

What basic principle does the giver most need to exercise?

#### OWNERSHIP

Understanding the principle of ownership allows the giver the freedom to respond to God's direction.

#### • ABLE TO SEE RESOURCES

A giver has the ability to discern wise investments. His motivation is to use assets of time, money, and possessions to advance the work of the Lord. If a person with the gift of giving has limited funds, he is still able to use his ability to recognize available resources and draw upon them when needed.

#### • INVESTS SELF, THEN GIFT

A giver needs continuous reassurance that his decisions are in God's will, whether he has little or much to give. To achieve this, he will first give himself and then his gift to the Lord. Since all believers must practice giving, Paul explained how the Macedonians "... first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God" (II Corinthians 8:5).

#### • DESIRES TO GIVE HIGH-QUALITY GIFTS

The giver's ability to discern value motivates him to provide quality gifts. He wants them to last. Matthew recorded in greater detail than any other Gospel writer the gifts given to Christ. He is the only writer who mentioned "the treasures" brought by the Magi; he described Mary's ointment as "very precious" and described Joseph's tomb as "new." (See Matthew 2:11, 26:6-11, and 27:57-60).

#### • HOPES GIFT ANSWERS PRAYER

A giver who is in fellowship with the Lord will be prompted to give even when a need is not obvious. The ultimate confirmation that his gift was according to God's will comes when he learns that it fulfilled an unknown need or answered a special prayer.

#### • HOARDING RESOURCES FOR SELF

The fear of the Lord is the key to effective use of the gift. One way we learn the fear of the Lord is by regular giving. It was for this purpose that the tithe was established. (See Deuteronomy 14:22-23.) If a giver stops exercising his gift, not only will he begin to lose the fear of the Lord, but his practice of storing up will cause him to become stagnant.

#### • USING GIFT TO CONTROL PEOPLE

A giver has a desire to make sure that his gifts are wisely invested and used. Thus, he will often buy a quality item to donate rather than give the money for it. However, if items are purchased or projects are sponsored by a giver, he may be viewed as using his gifts to control lives and ministries.

#### • FORCING HIGHER LIVING STANDARDS

If a giver's focus is more on the quality of the gift than the need that it is meeting, he can cause the receiver to be dissatisfied with the quality of other things that he owns. A giver could also excuse personal luxuries on the basis that he is generous with his money. However, when he is not faithful in little, God will not trust him with much.

#### • FEELING GUILTY ABOUT PERSONAL ASSETS

A giver who is not in fellowship with the Lord will begin to feel guilt as he stores up funds. Even if he is preparing for a special need, he must have the reassurance from the Lord that his plans are according to God's will.



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### • DESIRES TO GIVE SECRETLY

Just as the giver looks to the Lord for direction, so he wants recipients to look to the Lord for provision. The giver knows that future reward is more valuable than present praise; thus, he will give quietly and often give anonymously. Matthew is the only Gospel writer who emphasized secret giving. (See Matthew 6:1–4.)

### • CONCERNED THAT GIVING WILL CORRUPT

A mature giver understands the destructiveness of the love of money. He is very aware that the disciplines that God taught him in acquiring assets may not have been learned by those who need his assistance. Therefore, he looks for ways of giving that avoid dependency, slothfulness, or extravagance.

### • EXERCISES PERSONAL THRIFTINESS

The personal assets that the giver has are often the result of consistent personal frugality while being content with the basics. A giver will always be concerned about getting the best buy, not with how much he has left. He will spend extra effort in saving money and being resourceful with what he has.

### • USES GIFTS TO MULTIPLY GIVING

The motivation of a giver is to encourage others to give. He wants them to experience the joy and spiritual growth that come by sacrificial giving. Thus, the giver may provide matching funds or the last payment in order to encourage others to give.

### • CONFIRMS AMOUNT WITH COUNSEL

A giver reacts to pressure appeals. He looks instead for financial needs that others tend to overlook. A husband who has the gift of giving will often confirm the amount that he should give by seeing if his wife has the same amount in mind.

## Misuses

### • REJECTING PRESSURE APPEALS

If a giver reacts to all appeals for funds and looks only for the hidden and unannounced needs, he may fail to recognize the Lord's direction. He may also miss an important opportunity to give wise counsel or needed funds to a worthy ministry.

### • GIVING TOO SPARINGLY TO FAMILY

The frugality of a giver is often extended to his own wife and children. However, if he does not show the same concern, care, and delight in meeting their needs as he does in meeting others' needs, they will react to his generosity. By listening to the Lord and the counsel of his wife, he will avoid the damaging consequences of unwise gifts or investments.

### • GIVING TO PROJECTS VS. PEOPLE

If a giver loses his focus of meeting the needs of people, he may be unduly attracted to projects. His desire for measuring value may prompt him to build a "memorial to his generosity." The emphasis of Scriptural giving is distributing to the necessity of the saints. Paul's collection was for the needy Christians.

### • CAUSING PEOPLE TO LOOK TO HIM VS. GOD

When a giver lets others know what he is giving, he will cause many to turn their attention from the Lord to him. He also risks the danger of attracting people with wrong motives. These people are trained to appeal to his human inclinations and extract funds that were not directed by the Lord.

### • WAITING TOO LONG TO GIVE

If a giver is not instantly obedient to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, he may lose the joy of seeing God accomplish a miraculous provision through him. The one who was to receive the gift will also be denied the opportunity of seeing God provide funds precisely when needed.



# What are the characteristics of the gift of organizing?

## Gift

## Characteristics

## Misuses

### Organizing



Who in Scripture best illustrates the motivational gift of organizing?

#### NEHEMIAH

What guidelines are given for the gift of organizing in Romans 12:14?

- BLESS PERSECUTORS
- BLESS, AND DO NOT CURSE

What basic principle does the organizer most need to exercise?

#### SUFFERING

Suffering causes the organizer to be sensitive to the needs of others.

#### • ABLE TO VISUALIZE FINAL RESULTS

When a major project is given to an organizer, he is able to picture the completed task and what it will take to accomplish it. When Nehemiah was given the task of removing the "great affliction and reproach" of God's people in Jerusalem, he immediately visualized the need to rebuild the walls. (See Nehemiah 1:2-3.)

#### • NEEDS LOYALTY IN ASSOCIATES

In order for an organizer to visualize the completion of a task, he needs to know who and what his resources are. Since the efficiency of his entire operation depends upon the faithfulness of the workers, he would rather have a few reliable workers than several that he cannot count on. Nehemiah required an oath of cooperation from the rulers, nobles, and people. (See Nehemiah 5:1-13.)

#### • ABLE TO DELEGATE

An organizer knows which tasks to delegate and which he must do himself. He also is able to sense which workers will need more assistance than others. Organizers are able to naturally maintain a continued accountability with their workers. Nehemiah delegated the building of the walls, but he retained responsibility for dealing with the enemies. (See Nehemiah 4:13.)

#### • WITHSTANDS REACTION TO TASKS

Once an organizer commits himself to a task, he is willing to endure much opposition, which may come from insiders or outsiders. However, he knows that without

#### • VIEWING PEOPLE AS MERE RESOURCES

If an organizer is in the position of authority, he can simply direct people based upon his gift of seeing the bigger picture. However, if he is not in this position, he must earn the right to be heard. Then he must patiently explain that all the steps that he sees are required to reach the goal. An organizer will tend to make suggestions and then react or become discouraged when these steps are not implemented.

#### • BUILDING LOYALTY WITH FAVORITISM

An organizer is very sensitive to loyalty. He depends on it to accomplish his goals or the goals others have for him. An organizer in charge of a work may single out individuals who he thinks are especially important to his goals and show them favoritism or partiality. If he is not in charge, he may cause disharmony by openly expressing frustration.

#### • USING DELEGATION TO AVOID WORK

When a person with the gift of organization is not in charge, it is easy for him to delegate his responsibilities to others. His work may be completed; however, he will forfeit the character training and other objectives envisioned by the one who assigned him the task. His authority and others may then react to him and accuse him of laziness and irresponsibility.

#### • BEING UNRESPONSIVE TO APPEALS

When an organizer who is in charge of a project rejects valid suggestions



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the continuous pressures he must exert, the final goal will not be achieved. Nehemiah responded to persistent opposition from outside enemies and fellow workers.

(See Nehemiah 4:8–18.)

### • MAKES JOBS LOOK EASY

An organizer has the ability to take seemingly impossible tasks and break them down into achievable goals. Nehemiah took the huge task of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and broke it down into smaller sections that each family or group was able to complete. (See Nehemiah 3:1–32.)

### • VERY ALERT TO DETAILS

An organizer notices what others might consider insignificant factors; he knows these are essential components of the successful completion of the project. He also tends to remove himself from distracting details in order to focus on the ultimate goal. Nehemiah did not get involved in actual building; however, he removed obstacles, such as financial pressures, which would have hindered the workers. (See Nehemiah 5:1–13.)

### • COMPLETES TASKS QUICKLY

The efficiency of organizers begins before they even start a project as they check out and secure needed resources. Before the rebuilding began, Nehemiah secured timber from the king's forest. Organizers also place workers according to their strengths and weaknesses so that maximum productivity can be achieved.

### • ABLE TO BE DECISIVE

Because the organizer clearly visualizes the final goal, he is able to quickly evaluate requests and situations and make firm decisions. Nehemiah was often urged by his enemies to have a conference with them. His refusal was firm.

### • INVOLVES OTHERS IN CLEANUP

In an organizer's mind, the job is not finished until everything is back in its place. He will inspire and encourage workers to complete a job by approval, praise, reproof, and challenge. The organizer's final joy comes when he sees all the parts come together. It does not matter to him if others appreciate the job as long as he knows it was accomplished according to the plans laid out.

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or refuses to listen to grievances, pressures result. These cause him to become harsh or even to resign. When an organizer is not responsive to directions from his authorities, he must be disciplined. If he reacts, he will build patterns of resentment and pride.

### • PUTTING PROJECTS AHEAD OF PEOPLE

When an organizer reacts to people who do not have his spiritual gift, he is usually focusing on their inefficiency and disorganization. By reacting, he overlooks their real needs and potential and damages important relationships and the potential ministry that God intended for him.

### • OVERLOOKING WORKERS' SERIOUS FAULTS

If an organizer is given a position of authority in the local church, he will appoint workers on the basis of their ability to get the job done. If serious character flaws are discovered in a valuable worker, the organizer will be reluctant to dismiss him. Failure to do so, however, will communicate approval and acceptance of the behavior and will cause reaction or imitation by others.

### • FAILING TO EXPLAIN OR PRAISE

When an organizer is put in charge of several people to accomplish a job, he may give instructions without explanation. This neglect causes fellow workers to feel like pawns in a chess game. Their feelings of being used are intensified if they are not given proper praise or appreciation when the work is done.

### • FORCING DECISIONS ON OTHERS

An organizer can misuse his special abilities of persuasion and decisiveness by coercing others to help him achieve personal ambitions. They can also be misused on legitimate jobs through insensitivity to the schedules, weariness, or personal priorities of the workers.

### • LOSING INTEREST IN FINISHED JOB

An organizer is fulfilled when he sees a job completed. However, before moving on to a new job, he must make proper provision for maintenance of the completed job. When this trait is carried over into the personal life of an organizer, he is seldom content with the things that he has or that he has done.



# What are the characteristics of the gift of mercy?

## Gift

## Characteristics

## Misuses

### Mercy



Who in Scripture best illustrates the motivational gift of mercy?

#### JOHN

What guidelines are given for the gift of mercy in Romans 12:15?

- REJOICE WITH THOSE WHO REJOICE
- WEeping WITH THOSE WHO WEEP

What basic principle does the one with the gift of mercy most need to exercise?

#### MORAL FREEDOM

Moral freedom protects the one with the gift of mercy from improper relationships.

#### • IS DEEPLY LOYAL TO FRIENDS

A person with the gift of mercy will demonstrate loyalty to a friend even by reacting harshly toward those who attack the friend. When the Apostle John watched the Samaritans reject Jesus, Whom he loved, John wanted to call down fire from heaven to consume them. (See Luke 9:54.)

#### • NEEDS DEEP FRIENDSHIPS

The very nature of a person with the gift of mercy usually requires close friendships. These friendships, however, must have mutual commitment, which is often reaffirmed. John enjoyed such a friendship with Christ. He was not only closer to Christ than most of the other disciples, but he referred to himself as the "disciple whom Jesus loved." (See John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20.)

#### • EMPATHIZES WITH HURTING PEOPLE

The person with the gift of mercy is able to sense which individuals are hurting and to share the pain with them. Along with the pain, a mercy senses the full scope of emotions. John wrote his first epistle to give joy, fellowship, hope, and confidence and to cast out fear and torment. (See 1 John 1:3-4, 3:2-3, 4:18, 5:13-14.)

#### • MAKES DECISIONS BASED ON BENEFITS

Those with the gift of mercy find it hard to be firm because they do not want to offend other people.

#### • TAKING UP OFFENSES

The tendency of one with the gift of mercy is to take up an offense for someone who is being hurt by another person, especially if the one being hurt is a friend. Before comfort is given, a prophet should find out what caused the hurt, and an exhorter should give steps for properly responding to it.

#### • BECOMING POSSESSIVE

The deep need for commitment in a close friendship can cause one with the gift of mercy to monopolize the time and attention of others. As he experiences disappointments in one friendship, the mercy tends to place greater demands on a new friendship.

#### • TOLERATING EVIL

If those with the gift of mercy do not have spiritual discernment as to why people suffer, they may give sympathy and encouragement to those who are suffering as a direct result of violating God's moral laws. The one with the gift of mercy can learn discernment by seeing people through the eyes of the other spiritual gifts.

#### • FAILING TO BE FIRM

When a person with the gift of mercy is given a position of leadership, he will tend to avoid disciplinary action that is needed. As a result, the person who should have been disciplined is not brought to repentance, prophets react to his leadership, and other mercies react to the prophets.



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Therefore, the mercy must see that greater hurt and offenses will occur if he fails to be decisive. When John was faced with denying Jesus, he demonstrated boldness and decisiveness, which caused the Sadducees to marvel. (See Acts 4:13.)

### • DEEPLY SENSITIVE TO LOVED ONES

The gift of mercy carries with it the ability to sense genuine love. Therefore, it carries a greater vulnerability to deeper and more frequent hurts from those who fail to demonstrate sincere love. In his writings, John used the word *love* more frequently than any other writer of the New Testament books.

### • ATTRACTS PEOPLE IN DISTRESS

One with the gift of mercy has a deep understanding of people who are going through mental or emotional distress. This sensitivity causes those with hurts to be drawn to him and to confide in him. As Christ was dying, He transferred responsibility for His grieving mother to John.

### • DESIRES TO REMOVE HURTS

Whereas an exhorter will try to help a person find benefit from his hurts, the one with the gift of mercy will try to remove the source of the hurts. The message of John's first epistle was for Christians to stop hurting and hating each other. (See I John 3:11, 15.)

### • MEASURES ACCEPTANCE BY CLOSENESS

A person with the gift of mercy tends to need physical closeness in order to be reassured of acceptance. The closeness includes times of rich fellowship. John sought out the closest place to Christ at the Last Supper and leaned upon the Lord. His need for physical closeness may also have prompted his request to sit next to Christ in glory. (See Mark 10:35–37.)

### • ATTRACTED TO PROPHETS

The statement that "opposites attract" is certainly true with the motivational gifts. Those with the gift of mercy are often attracted to those with the gift of prophecy. The firm truth of the prophet is thus balanced with the gentle love of the mercy. John spent more time with Peter than with any other disciple. (See Luke 22:8, Acts 3:1–11, 4:13–19, 8:14.)

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### • LEANING ON EMOTIONS VS. REASON

Because those with the gift of mercy have such sensitive feelings, they tend to base their decisions on emotions rather than on principles. Their subjective reasoning can easily cause them to reject Biblical doctrines that seem harsh to them.

### • DEFRAUDING THE OPPOSITE SEX

A person of the opposite sex tends to be drawn to one who has the gift of mercy. This attraction comes about because of the ability of the mercy to be a sensitive, understanding, and responsive listener. The possibility of defrauding others must be considered in any relationship that a mercy has with a person of the opposite sex.

### • REACTING TO GOD'S PURPOSES

Unlike exhorters, who look at suffering as a means of receiving more grace and growing spiritually, those with the gift of mercy tend to react to the idea that God would allow a good person to suffer. Unless the person with the gift of mercy maintains a proper perspective, he can easily become bitter toward God.

### • FAILING TO SHOW DEFERENCE

When a person with the gift of mercy demands physical closeness in a friendship, he may fail to consider the desires of other individuals who need that person's time and attention. John was gently reproved for his request to be next to Jesus in His kingdom.

### • CUTTING OFF INSENSITIVE PEOPLE

A person whose words and actions reflect insensitivity to the feelings of other people will be quickly recognized and reacted to by one with the gift of mercy. Rather than trying to help this insensitive person, the mercy will tend to close his spirit and cut off fellowship with him.