

## Spiritual Gifts (2)

**Text:** Romans 12:6-8

### Introduction:

1. Review of previous lesson:
  - a. We are exhorted to sober Christian thinking concerning our place in the local church (Vs. 3)
  - b. To this end, we are to recognize the diversity of the body's members (Vs. 4-5). The body is a unified whole yet there is a diversity of members within that body, each with a unique and important function.
  - c. We are to seek to exercise our unique function (spiritual gift) as a member of the body (Vs. 6-8)
2. The blessing of knowing your spiritual gift:
  - a. It will help you to better serve the Lord. God has given us a gift to use so that we might be a blessing to the local church.
  - b. It will help you in your understanding and appreciation of other 'members' of the local church body.
  - c. It will help you in understanding your family members (e.g. spouse or siblings)
3. Remember not to confuse your personality with your spiritual gift. They do not always directly link together.
4. Remember that with God's help and enabling we are to learn to exercise each of these seven gifts in our lives. However, there is one gift in particular which God has given you which will be more natural for you to exercise than the others.
5. This lesson: Study of the 7 gifts with which God has endowed the local church. Imagine 7 members of our church. They are all a part of the one church body but each one of them has a different gift (one of the seven gifts described here). We could label each one of them as follows:

### I. **The Rebuker – “*whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith*” (Vs. 6)**

- A. Biblical Illustration of the gift of prophecy: Peter the Apostle
- B. Qualities: The prophet is not so much a gift of foretelling but forthtelling. Even in the O.T. context, much of the prophet's work was that of declaring the Revelation of God's Word to the people. The prophet is motivated in the following areas:
  1. The declaration of the truth in clear terms.
  2. The denouncing of sin and error. Peter's prophetic gift is highlighted in his preaching. He unmask the wickedness of the Jews in sharp, plain language. E.g. “*Him...ye have taken, and by **wicked hands** have crucified and slain*” (Acts 2:23) “*But ye denied the Holy One*”

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*and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And **killed the Prince of life...***” (Acts 3:14-15)

3. The discernment of sin, hypocrisy and error. Peter’s gift was exercised in his discernment of the hypocrisy of Ananias and Saphira – “...*why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost...*” (Acts 5:3)
  4. To be transparent and humble about faults. The prophet feels the need for a clear conscience before he rebukes others.
- C. Pitfalls: If not exercised with the Spirit’s control, and with the balance of other gifts, a prophet can be inclined to:
1. Be deficient in compassion.
  2. Be too hard on themselves. If prophets come across as hard on others, know that they are harder on themselves! Peter wept bitterly when he failed the Lord.
  3. Jump to conclusions too quickly and err in judgment. Peter was a somewhat impulsive “speak first, think later” type of person. Peter spoke first more than any other disciple in the Gospels.
  4. Be too hasty in their judgments of individuals. Prophets tend to have an immediate read out on people which is often accurate but sometimes it is incorrect.

## II. The Helper – “*Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering*” (Vs. 7)

- A. Qualities: The servant gift lies in the realm of practical helps. The servant is typically motivated in the following areas:
1. The practical needs of others. The servant has an eye to identify what needs to be done, even when it is often overlooked by others. They delight to free others up for more important things and are willing to neglect their own jobs list to help others.
  2. Servants are those who are the willing workers of the church. They are quick to put up their hand and volunteer for a task that needs doing.
- B. Pitfalls: If exercised in the flesh and not in the Spirit, an individual with the gift of helps can be prone to:
1. Driving themselves in the flesh rather than relying on God’s power.
  2. Failing to rest in the Lord with what does not get completed by the end of the day.
  3. Failing to wait on the Lord and trust Him for the timing in the completion of projects.
  4. Burn out due to overwork and inability to say no.
  5. Neglecting their devotional life due to being “too busy serving”
  6. Getting frustrated with others who appear indifferent to the needs

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- C. Biblical Illustration of a Servant: Martha (Luke 10:38-42). Martha's drive to serve was a good one but she allowed the tasks to become more important than the Lord Himself.

### III. The Teacher – *“he that teacheth, on teaching”*

- A. Qualities: Those with the gift of teaching are thorough and precise in their research and often gifted in their presentation and communication of things “hard to be understood” in the Word of God. They are sticklers for accurate doctrine, so much so that they sometimes are mistaken for prophets. The teacher will typically be motivated in the following areas:
1. To study God's Word diligently and thoroughly, paying attention to things like the meaning of words (e.g. Greek & Hebrew)
  2. To contend for accurate doctrine.
  3. To provide good teaching resources. Teachers often write books and study materials.
- B. Pitfalls: Teachers can be prone to the following mistakes:
1. Becoming puffed up in intellectual pride due to their accomplished research. E.g. Their resources are the best available on a particular subject!
  2. Arguing on minor points of detail that do not really fall into the category of “earnestly contending for the faith”
  3. Dismissing a whole sermon, lesson or resource due to a minor flaw (perceived or real).
  4. Impatient with those who will not accept their conclusions quickly. In effect the teacher's attitude can be, “Look, I've done all the research for you, these are the facts so just accept it.”
- C. Biblical Illustration of a Teacher: Luke, the physician and historian. Luke 1:4 *“That thou mayest know the **certainty** of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.”* Luke's attention to detail is breath taking (E.g. Acts 28:11)

### IV. The Encourager – *“Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation”* (Vs. 8)

- A. Qualities: This gift is the gift of encouragement. The word ‘exhortation’ comes from the Greek word meaning “to call alongside of”. It means to urge, to encourage, to beseech. It was a word used to describe the speeches of military leaders that would rouse fearful and hesitant soldiers to battle. Exhorters therefore tend to be motivated in the following areas:
1. To help others grow in their walk with the Lord in a practical way. They are the motivators of the church.
  2. To help others remove the obstacles that stand in the way of their spiritual progress. Exhorters are good at assessing someone's

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spiritual maturity and trouble shooting what might be holding them back from moving forward in their Christian life.

3. To personally involve themselves in the process of seeing others progress spiritually.

### B. Pitfalls

1. Overemphasis on the practical, leading to neglect of the doctrinal. Exhorters tend to gravitate to practical lessons as their motivation is to help people in their Christian experience. The risk is that they can become neglectful of the doctrinal basis for that experience.
2. Overusing illustrations. Exhorters tend to use lots of illustrations to help people to “visualize” the potential of practical Christian growth. While this can be helpful, they can be guilty of sharing private illustrations or simply using too many!

### C. Biblical Illustrations of the gift of Exhortation

1. Barnabas – he is called “the son of consolation” in Acts 4:36. ‘consolation’ comes from the same word as ‘exhortation’. Barnabas was an encourager as evidenced in his helping of Paul in Acts 9:27 *“But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.”*
2. Apostle Paul – Paul’s epistles are filled with practical exhortations. He ‘beseeches’ us in Vs. 1 to live a consecrated life. He urges and charges Timothy to go forwards in his Christian life, not allowing the obstacles to hold him back.

## V. The Giver – **“he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity”** (Vs. 8)

A. Qualities: The givers are those who have an eye to discern the material needs of God’s work and are prepared to sacrifice of their own capital to meet the needs. They tend to be marked by the following traits:

1. Sacrificial giving – their giving is usually generous.
2. Anonymous giving – their giving tends to be in the background and behind the scenes.
3. Quality giving – only the best will do for the work of the Lord.
4. Wise management of resources – they are often gifted in the management and maximization of their capital.

### B. Pitfalls

1. Lack of balance in the priorities of their giving. In their quest to be frugal in order to support God’s work, the giver can be neglectful of caring for the needs of those closest to them. In effect, they can be very generous to certain causes but at the same time very stingy to others (e.g. loves ones).

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2. Using their money to control people. While a Spirit filled giver will be careful to give to God's work in a humble fashion, a carnal giver may give in to the temptation to disclose their giving, thus giving them greater leverage over others. This is why the giver is exhorted to give "with simplicity"
- C. Biblical illustration of a giver: Matthew. Matthew records in greater detail than the other Gospel writers, the gifts given to the Lord. E.g. he describes Mary's ointment as "very precious" and Joseph's tomb used for the Lord as 'new'.

### VI. The Organizer – *"he that ruleth, with diligence"* (Vs. 8)

- A. Qualities: Rulers (organizers) are the gifted administrators in the church. Their gift tends to express itself in the following:
1. Organizers tend to be gifted delegators – they are good at allocating tasks to others and seem to have a knack for seeing where people will best fit in the team according to their gifts and abilities. Illustration: Pastor Ringwaldt's recent visit and comment to me when he saw me uploading a sermon in the sound room.
  2. Organizers are good at making jobs look easy. They have an ability to break down tasks into achievable goals.
  3. Organizers are good at managing the calendar. They are not only on top of their own schedule, but they are on top of yours as well! They will remember your anniversary and birthday even if you forget!
- B. Pitfalls
1. Delegating all the work to others while they sit back and relax! This is why they are exhorted to rule "with diligence".
  2. Being inflexible on the program. Organizers tend to want to stick to their idea of how things should be arranged and often are dismissive of others suggestions on the schedule.
  3. Failing to leave room for the leading of the Holy Spirit. If the organizer is not careful, the calendar and flow chart can take the place of the Spirit.
  4. Becoming busybodies in others business. Because organizers like to know what's happening, they can develop habits of quizzing others on the details of their lives to an excessive level. They can also be prone to taking over others schedule. This is partly because they can quickly see a flaw in your program!
- C. Biblical illustration of an Organizer: Nehemiah. To organize the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem within 52 days was an enormous feat! Yet Nehemiah was able to organize the team into an efficient work force to accomplish the task. He knew how to set people in their places (Neh. 13:11)

**VII. The Consoler – “*he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness*” (Vs. 8)**

- A. Biblical illustration of a mercy: The Apostle John, often know as “the Apostle of love”. He referred to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved”. He used the word ‘love’ more than any other disciple in his Gospel and Epistles.
- B. Qualities: The mercies are the burden bearers in the local church. They are keenly aware of others feelings and excel in loving the unlovable. Some of their strengths are as follows:
  - 1. Ability to empathize with those who are hurting. They feel the pain of others and are sensitive to people’s emotions. They have a desire to remove the source of the hurts in people’s lives (alleviate suffering). This quality means that they often attract people who are in distress. People with hurts and burdens will often offload onto a mercy very quickly, even if they are only newly acquainted to them.
  - 2. Deep loyalty to those close to them (e.g. family and friends). The Apostle John wanted to call fire down from heaven to consume the Samaritans for rejecting Christ (Luke 9:54)
- C. Pitfalls
  - 1. Accommodating sin and error in an individual’s life on the basis of their emotional attachment to them. Mercies tend to avoid disciplinary action, even when it is needed. Sometimes they can put their emotional attachment to an individual ahead of the commands of God’s Word (i.e. wrapping a love cloak around someone).
  - 2. Taking up other people’s offenses. In seeking to ‘restore’ others in the Gal. 6:1, the mercy needs to take heed to the admonition “considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Mercies are more prone than most to go down to bitterness over the mistreatment of others (real or perceived).
  - 3. Losing their joy due to being bogged down with the burdens of others and becoming dreary and depressive. This is why the mercies are exhorted to show mercy “with cheerfulness”.
  - 4. Going soft on the truth in the name of ‘love’. John the Apostle is a good example to us in this. He spoke much about love but at the same time made some of the strongest statements of truth in the Word of God. E.g. “*Love not the world...*” (1 John 2:15-16)

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### Conclusion/Summary:

1. Illustration: The hospital visit<sup>1</sup> - Imagine seven Christians representing each of the spiritual gifts visited a sick person in the hospital, here is what each one might say, based on the perspective of his/her gift:
  - **Servant:** “Here’s a little gift! Now, I brought your mail in, fed your dog, watered your plants, and washed your dishes.”
  - **Mercy:** “I can’t begin to tell you how I felt when I learned you were so sick. How do you feel now?”
  - **Organizer:** “Don’t worry about a thing. I’ve assigned your job to four others in the office.”
  - **Teacher:** “I did some research on your illness and I believe I can explain what’s happening.”
  - **Giver:** “Do you have insurance to cover this kind of illness?” “Are you covered by sick leave?”
  - **Exhorter:** “How can we use what you’re learning to help others in the future?”
  - **Prophet:** “What is God trying to say to you through this illness? Is there some sin you haven’t confessed yet?”
2. Illustration: The meal time accident<sup>2</sup> - If each of the seven motivational gifts were represented in a family and someone dropped the dessert on the floor, here is what each one might say and why they would say it.
  - **Mercy:** “Don’t feel badly. It could happen to anyone.” Motivation: To relieve embarrassment
  - **Organizer:** “Jim, would you get the mop. Sue, please help pick it up; and Mary, help me fix another dessert.” Motivation: To achieve the immediate goal of the group
  - **Giver:** “I’ll be happy to buy a new dessert.” Motivation: To give to a tangible need
  - **Exhorter:** “Next time, let’s serve the dessert with the meal.” Motivation: To correct the future.
  - **Teacher:** “The reason that it fell is that it was too heavy on one side.” Motivation: To discover why it happened
  - **Server:** “Oh, let me help you clean it up.” Motivation: To fulfill a need
  - **Prophet:** “That’s what happens when you’re not careful!” Motivation: To correct the problem
3. Challenge: Are we exercising the gift the Lord has given us in the local church body?

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<sup>1</sup> Institute in Basic Life Principles, Advanced Seminar Textbook, Pg. 82.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, Pg. 80.



## WHICH ONE OF THESE SEVEN PERSONS BEST DESCRIBES YOU?

### PERSON NUMBER 1

- You want to make sure that statements are true and accurate.
- You desire to gain as much knowledge as you can.
- You react to people who make unfounded statements.
- You check the credentials of one who wants to teach you.
- You use your mind to check out an argument.
- You enjoy spending hours doing research on a subject.
- You like to tell others as many facts as you can on a topic.
- You pay close attention to words and phrases.
- You tend to be silent on a matter until you check it out.
- You like to study material in a systematic sequence.



### PERSON NUMBER 2

- You can visualize the final result of a major undertaking.
- You enjoy coordinating the efforts of many to reach a common goal.
- You can break down a large task into achievable goals.
- You are able to delegate assignments to others.
- You see people as resources that can be used to get a job done.
- You are willing to endure reaction in order to accomplish a task.
- You require loyalty in those who are under your supervision.
- You remove yourself from petty details to focus on the final goal.
- You can encourage your workers and inspire them to action.
- You move on to a new challenge once a job is finished.



### PERSON NUMBER 3

- You see actions as either right or wrong.
- You react strongly to people who are not what they appear to be.
- You can usually detect when something is not what it appears to be.
- You can quickly discern a person's character.
- You feel a responsibility to correct those who do wrong.
- You separate yourself from those who refuse to repent of evil.
- You explain what is wrong with an item before you sell it.
- You let people know how you feel about important issues.
- You enjoy people who are completely honest with you.
- You are quick to judge yourself when you fail.
- You are willing to do right even if it means suffering alone for it.



### PERSON NUMBER 4

- You can sense when people have hurt feelings.
- You react to those who are insensitive to other's feelings.
- You are able to discern genuine love.
- You desire deep friendships in which there is mutual commitment.



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- You seem to attract people who tell you their problems.
- You find it difficult to be firm or decisive with people.
- You tend to take up offenses for those whom you love.
- You need quality time to explain how you feel.
- You want to remove those who cause hurts to others.
- You often wonder why God allows people to suffer.

### PERSON NUMBER 5

- You motivate people to become what you see they could be.
- You like to give counsel in logical steps of action.
- You can usually discern a person's level of spiritual maturity.
- You enjoy working out projects to help people grow spiritually.
- You sometimes raise expectations of results prematurely.
- You dislike teaching which does not give practical direction.
- You like to see the facial responses of those whom you counsel.
- You often take "family time" to counsel others.
- You enjoy giving examples from the lives of others.
- You soon give up on those who do not follow your counsel.
- You find it hard to follow through on the project you have started.
- You identify with people where they are in order to counsel them.



### PERSON NUMBER 6

- You notice the practical needs of others and enjoy meeting them.
- You enjoy serving to free others for more important things.
- You are willing to neglect your own work to help others.
- You sometimes go beyond your physical strength in serving others.
- You can remember the likes and dislikes of others.
- You can usually detect ways to serve before anyone else can.
- You will even use your own funds to get a job done quickly.
- You do not mind doing jobs by yourself.
- You do not want public praise, but you do need to feel appreciated.
- You find it difficult to say "no" to those who ask for help.
- You like to put "extra touches" on the jobs you do.



### PERSON NUMBER 7

- You are very frugal with money for yourself and your family.
- You enjoy investing money in the ministries of other people.
- You have an ability to make money by wise investments.
- You desire to keep your giving a secret.
- You react negatively to pressure appeals for money.
- You like to encourage others to give with your gifts.
- You want the ministries you support to be as effective as possible.
- You enjoy giving to needs which others tend to overlook.
- You sometimes fear that your gifts will corrupt those who get them.
- You desire to give gifts of high quality.
- You enjoy knowing that your gifts were specific answers to prayer.

**Which person did you check the most?**

1-Teacher; 2-Organizer; 3-Prophet; 4-Mercy; 5-Exhorter; 6-Server; 7-Giver.

