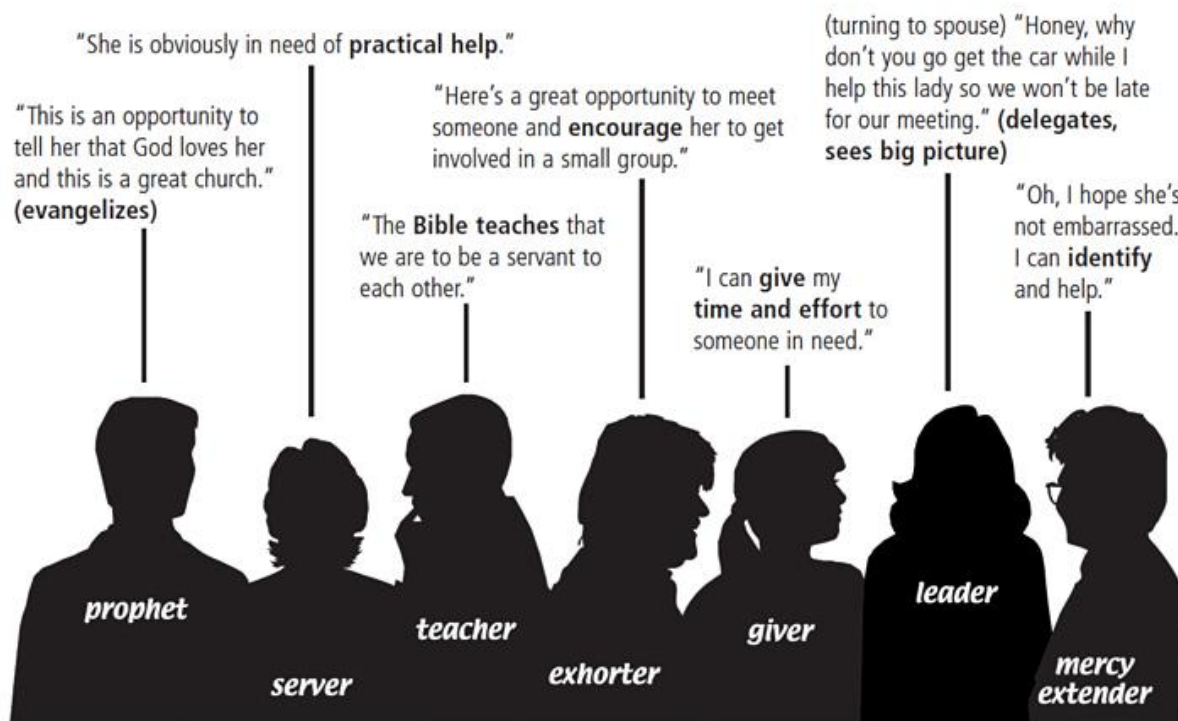


# ROMANS 12. IDENTIFYING YOUR GIFT(S)

A woman hurries across your church parking lot, her arms loaded with papers. She suddenly stumbles and the papers go flying. Anyone would rush over to help her, but the motivation behind why might be different for each of us.



Discovering gifts can be an exciting and valuable times in a Christian's life. It is our prayer that this study will guide you in the process. The first four sections are teaching we have put together from scripture. The last two sections are intended as general guides to potentially assist the reader in discovering their gift(s). The last two sections are based primarily on the following sources:

[Discover Your God Given Gifts by Katie Fortune](#)

[Discover Your Spiritual Gifts by Kia Hunt](#)

While these two sources are not word for word Bible scripture, the research that has gone into both as well as the longevity and peer reviews of the *Discover your God Given Gifts* training and seminars have shown these to be valuable assets. God bless your learning!

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## Gifts are from God for our benefit

We give gifts to others that we think they will like. The more we know about that person, the easier it is to give them a gift that will suit their needs, passions and interests. Nobody knows us better than God. He knows us better than we know ourselves. This is why the concept of God equipping each of us with gifts is so exciting. If God has shaped us with our own gifts, we can be assured that these gifts are exactly what we need.

[Mat 7:11 KJV] 11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

[Luk 11:13 KJV] 13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall [your] heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

As parents we have a heart to give good gifts to our children. God the perfect Father has that desire. Note in these two parallel scriptures how Matthew says he gives “good things” and Luke says he gives “the Holy Spirit”.

[Jas 1:17 KJV] 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

God loves us and conforms us into the image of his Son (Rom 8:29). We are reborn and regenerated — spiritually made alive. As new creatures God has given us passions and desires. Gifts not only allow us to carry out these new desires, but as we will see, also help shape them. Our gifts will help us achieve what our heart aches for. Gifts are not a burden, but will help us carry out the burdens of our hearts.

2Co 5:17 KJV - 17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

These gifts were not an afterthought. God had a plan for us from before we were born.

[Psa 139:13-17 KJV] 13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. 14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully [and] wonderfully made: marvellous [are] thy works; and [that] my soul knoweth right well. 15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, [and] curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all [my members] were written, [which] in continuance were fashioned, when [as yet there was] none of them. 17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!

*“Your gifts will help you achieve what your heart aches for. Gifts are not a burden, but will help you carry out the burden of your heart.”*

# Everyone has a gift

We know that 1) God loves us 2) God knows how to give good gifts of the Holy Spirit 3) God predestined us to be conformed to the image of Jesus. Anything good from God is a gift, yet scripture indicates God has given us specific gifts in order to do ministry.

Everyone has received a gift:

[1Pe 4:10 KJV] 10 As every man hath received the gift, [even so] minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

The Greek word for gift used in this verse is *charisma*. *Charis* means "grace". *Charisma* is described in Vine's Expository Dictionary as "'a gift of grace, a gift involving grace' (charis) on the part of God as the donor, is used." (1)

The next verse goes on to mention using the gift in 2 ways, speaking or serving:

[1Pe 4:11 KJV] 11 If any man speak, [let him speak] as the oracles of God; if any man minister, [let him do it] as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

This same word *charisma* is used to describe the gifts in Romans 12.

[Rom 12:6-8 KJV] 6 Having then gifts (charisma) differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether **prophecy**, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or **ministry**, [let us wait] on [our] ministering: or he that **teacheth**, on teaching; 8 Or he that **exhorteth**, on exhortation: he that **giveth**, [let him do it] with simplicity; he that **ruleth**, with diligence; he that **sheweth mercy**, with cheerfulness.

These are seven gifts we are to use. This study will show that these gifts actually shape our place in the body of Christ, which in turn shapes how we function and what motivates us. Because of this, the Romans 12 gifts are sometimes referred to as the motivational gifts, functional gifts, or ministry gifts.

In order to understand how these specific seven gifts are relevant to our lives, it is necessary to examine the other gifts in the Bible. Scripture appears to present the gifts in three categories.

*"This study will show that these gifts actually shape our place in the body of Christ, which in turn shapes how we function and what motivates us."*

# Three Categories of Gifts

## 1 Corinthians 12 gifts

These are sometimes referred to as the manifestation gifts. This is because they are described as “the manifestation of the Spirit”.

[1Co 12:7 KJV] But the **manifestation of the Spirit** is given to every man to profit withal.

Let's read the whole passage in context:

[1Co 12:1-11 KJV] 1 Now concerning spiritual [gifts], brethren, I would not have you ignorant. 2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. 3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and [that] no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. 4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another [divers] kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

The Greek word for gift is actually not even used in the first verse, which is why it's italicized or in brackets. Many translators inserted it because it seemed like the most appropriate word to present the correct thought of the author. It could also read as "spiritual abilities" "spiritual persons" or "things from the Spirit".

*[1Co 12:1 HCSB] 1 Now concerning what comes from the Spirit: brothers, I do not want you to be unaware.*

*[1Co 12:1 YLT] 1 And concerning the spiritual things, brethren, I do not wish you to be ignorant;*  
ESV Translators Notes: *Now concerning spiritual gifts\* footnote: or persons*

### **These gifts are distributed severally (individually) as the Spirit wills. - vs 11**

It is the Spirit who works all these supernatural manifestations. It is entirely up to the Spirit on who he chooses to work through for these gifts.

### **The manifestations of the Spirit are given for the profit of all. -vs 7**

These manifestations serve others. For instance, if someone is moving in the gifts of healing, it is the person being healed who is profiting.

These spiritual gifts are not skills or talents; they are spiritual powers of God that the Holy Spirit will manifest through a person as he (God) wills. Having said that, it is not always crystal clear how each of these manifestations should be defined down to the letter. But it's clear that these are all manifestations given and generated by the Holy Spirit's power.

*[Jhn 3:8 KJV] 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

**The word of wisdom** “Word” is important here. It means an utterance. This is an utterance of wisdom that can only come from God. If it were learned wisdom it would not be a gift. Some people shorten this to “gift of wisdom”, but that is inaccurate. Wisdom is promised and freely available for all children of God who ask (James 1:5). Again, each of these nine gifts are supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit. If God moves in the word of wisdom, that person will speak a word of divine direction from God - it could be something that gives direction in a future event or current circumstance. Possible examples: Paul foresees bad weather and poor fortune for the ship - Acts 27:10-11, Agabus foretells of a famine soon to come throughout all the world - Acts 11:28, the early apostles spoke the hidden wisdom of God in a mystery (1 Cor 2:7) and also explained such mysteries as the dead in Christ rising first at the last trumpet (15:51).

**The word of knowledge** This also is an utterance of knowledge that can only come from God. A word of knowledge is factual. It is telling of what is. This bit of knowledge is not something a person learned on their own, otherwise it wouldn't be a manifestation gift (this applies to all of the nine gifts so we won't mention it again). Again, the gift is *not* "the gift of knowledge", but the "*word (or utterance) of knowledge*". Possible examples: Jesus tells the woman the man she is with is not her husband (John 4), It is revealed to Peter that Ananias and Sapphira have held back a pledge to God (Acts 5).

**Faith** Every Christian has faith. If we look at all the other gifts in this list, they are gifts that demonstrate God's power. For the Spirit to manifest this gift is probably referring to a great faith that stirs someone up and causes them to believe for something that God wants to do which is seemingly impossible on the surface.

**Gifts of Healing** This is the only gift referred to in the plural. Given the context it's safe to assume this gift is talking about miraculous healing, not being skilled in medicine.

**Working of Miracles** Miracles happen. The phrase "*working of miracles*" implies that the Holy Spirit is *using a person* to do it. So instead of only believing God for something (gift of faith), God may physically use a person to be a conduit for the miracle, such as when Elijah took a physical object (his cloak), and struck the water so that it parted - 2 Kings 2:8

**Prophecy** This is the only gift that is also listed in Romans 12. We'll talk more about that later. Prophecy can be the speaking of an inspired word of God in order to edify, comfort or exhort (1 Cor 14:3). It can be foretelling or forth-telling. (It's important to remember that there is no further revelation in terms of adding to the Bible. The canon is closed.)

**Discerning of Spirits** The ability to discern a Godly spirit from a demonic spirit. This is another gift that should not be shortened down. The gift is "discerning of spirits", not "gift of discernment". All Christians can discern good from evil by growing in God and having their senses exercised (Hebrews 5:14). These are *gifts* (unearned, unlearned) and are done supernaturally by the Holy Spirit. If people seem naturally discerning in everything they do, they probably have the gift of prophecy listed in Romans 12, as we will see.

**Different (various) kinds of tongues** We as humans have the ability to study hard and learn other languages. The Holy Spirit can instantly empower us to speak other languages as he wills without us ever having learned them. If one speaks in a language they have not learned, this gift is being manifest.

**The interpretation of tongues** If God gives someone the ability to understand and/or speak/translate a language they have never learned, this gift is being manifest.

These are the nine manifestation gifts. When we look at the book of 1 Corinthians as a whole, we see that one of the reasons Paul was writing was because some of these gifts were not being used properly or there was confusion. Paul goes on to talk about love being greater than any gift.

This shows us that there were those moving in the gifts that were seemingly not all that spiritual. There is nothing wrong with coveting the best gifts (1 Cor 12:31), but we shouldn't feel we have to reach some grand state of spiritual maturity in order for God to use us in these supernatural manifestations. It seemed to occur regularly in the early church when there was a need, particularly to give weight to the power of the gospel message.

## **Ephesians 4 gifts**

After Jesus ascended he gave gifts of actual people that the Holy Spirit empowered to build up the church. Some people refer to these as the ascension gifts.

Eph 4:7-12 KJV - 7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Verse 8 says that when Jesus ascended he gave gifts to men. The word used for gifts here is not charisma, but *doma*, which also means gift but "lends greater stress to the concrete nature of the gift." (1) If we skip over the two sentences in parentheses (vs 9 & 10), it goes right into verse 11. So it would read, "And he gave gifts to men. And he himself gave some to be..." The New Testament church is built on Christ as the cornerstone, and also the apostles and prophets (Eph 2:20, Eph 3:5).

[Eph 2:20 KJV] 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner [stone];

A foundation is something that is laid once. The apostles and prophets received divine revelation from the Holy Spirit that now make up the Holy Scripture:

[Eph 3:5 KJV] 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

Then we have the gifts of the evangelist and the shepherd teacher. These gifts are for the equipping of the saint for ministry and for the edification of the body of Christ. Evangelists and shepherd teachers can move in the gifts just like anyone else. It's important to note that being gifted in these areas does not preclude the qualification of an overseer as those who shepherd the flock of God (1 Tim 3:1-7).

There is another list of gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:28-30, but these gifts are not new gifts, they appear to be a sampling of gifts from the three categories.

[1Co 12:28-30 KJV] 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 [Are] all apostles? [are] all prophets? [are] all teachers? [are] all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

The third category of gifts is the Romans 12 Gifts.



# The Romans 12 Gifts

Rom 12:4-8 KJV - 4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6 Having then gifts (charisma) differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Again, everyone has received a gift:

[1Pe 4:10 KJV] 10 As every man hath received the gift (charisma), [even so] minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

These are seven gifts we are to use. We are instructed specifically on how to use them based on what they are (with cheerfulness, with simplicity, etc.). Note the difference between the manifestation gifts and these ones. The gifts in Romans could be mistaken for skills or talents, while the supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12 most certainly could not. Make no mistake though; the seven items listed in Romans are most certainly gifts from God. In verse 6 we are described as "having" these gifts. These are gifts God has given us to use in the body of Christ. Additionally, because these gifts are always in us, it makes sense that they would naturally influence all areas of our lives.

Verses 4 and 5 would seem to indicate that these gifts make up our office (meaning function) within one body. These gifts are our "functions". Because these gifts are our functions, we will gravitate towards operating in them without even realizing it. A hand will naturally be a hand and an eye will naturally be an eye. We will be most effective when using our function within the body that God has fit together. The more effective we are, the more joy and encouragement we will get from serving in God's church. Consistently operating outside of our gifts can lead to frustration.

**"Because these gifts are our functions, we will gravitate towards operating in them without even realizing it.**

Identifying these gifts within the church is a valuable exercise for many reasons.

- 1. Operating in our function is beneficial to our joy and fruitfulness. Knowing our gifts makes us aware of what we naturally do best.**

These gifts are our actual function. Would God give you a function and expect you not to use it? They are a part of who we are, our design. They motivate us and equip us to carry out the God-placed desires of our heart.

- 2. We view ministry through the lens of our gift. Knowing this helps us understand others and ourselves.**

If someone has the gift of leading/administration, they may come across as controlling or demanding while making sure everything is coordinated for a project. The person who shows mercy may be turned off by the tendency for those with the gift of prophecy to come across as blunt or appear judgmental. The

server may become frustrated because the exhorter is taking time out to encourage someone instead of pitching in and helping. Each gifted person will see the world through their own lens and have a tendency to ask, "Why don't others see things the same way I do?"

We can't help but see things through our own lens. Our motivation gifts shape our personalities. If we understand them in ourselves *and in others*, we can understand the strengths and weaknesses within the body and adjust accordingly.

Here is a quote from the book *Discover Your God Given Gifts*.

"God has purposely limited and focused our giftedness so that we must work together and remain dependent on each other in order to grasp the whole truth. Remember the six blind men who went to "see" an elephant? One felt the side and said an elephant is like a wall. The next felt the tusk and claimed an elephant is like a spear. The third felt the trunk and likened it to a snake. The fourth felt a leg and said an elephant is like a tree. The fifth, touching an ear, declared an elephant is like a fan. The sixth felt the tail and insisted an elephant is like a rope. No one was altogether right, yet neither was he entirely wrong. It was only when they got all their observations together that they "saw" the whole elephant. Thus it is with our motivational gifts. Each of us is somewhat blind to the other perspectives. We are wrong to say our way of seeing is the only true one. We are each partly right. But we are not totally right all by ourselves. We need each other's viewpoints in order to see the complete picture." (2)

### **3. It gives us permission to not excel at everything**

When we realize that we primarily excel in one or two of the seven gifts, we can evaluate *how* we serve in the body of Christ and tailor that to our gifts. It will give us permission to say "no" to certain areas of ministry because there is someone more equipped wanting to say "yes". We will also understand why certain things may come easier for us and certain things may frustrate us.

For example, let's say it is a practice of a church to immediately gather in the fellowship hall after service to discuss the message. People are encouraged to go from person to person to share what they received from the message and spend no longer than 5 minutes with each person. This is a good exercise in general. Some people may do well with this while others may not. One with the gift of exhortation may thrive on this. They are eager to encourage and apply some basic message points in practical terms to stir others up to action. The person with the gift of teaching on the other hand may have a harder time. They will need more time to digest the message and research the truth behind it. Since truth and accurate doctrine are so important to them, this exercise may seem shallow and of little long term value. Those with the gift of serving may be distracted because they keep noticing practical needs that need to be met. Those with the gift of mercy/compassion may want to spend longer than 5 minutes with someone because more time is needed to sympathize with and restore that person.

In this example, people who do not understand their gifts may think that these feelings they have are something wrong. But when they understand their functional gifts, it gives them permission use these natural tendencies for ministry. When a church understands this, it can tailor the administration of ministry to better utilize all seven of the gifts.

## Taking the Test

The best way to discover your Romans 12 gift is to pray about it. Understand that you already have at least one of these gifts. Another great way is to ask others how they perceive you.

This test can be very beneficial not only in finding your gift(s), but in understanding others. Since these gifts are part of who we are and determine our place in the body, it would be natural for them to affect are personalities.

Spend some time (it can take around 20-40 minutes) filling out the following test. As you do, here are some things to remember:

- Don't try to get a certain gift based on your position in ministry or your pride. Having the gift of leading or teaching does not necessarily equate to being called or qualified to shepherd God's flock. If God gave you a gift, you will never feel more fulfilled than when using that gift, so it's worth it to you and to others to take the test honestly.
- High and low numbers do not indicate spiritual maturity. Some people's highest scores may be up in the 80's, while others may be in the 60's. Everyone grades themselves differently, some harder, some more liberal. The main thing you are looking for is the gift that clearly stands out from the rest and that you identify with. Knowing your second, third, fourth, etc. score will also be beneficial. Often the second strongest gift will serve as a modifier to the first. Also, don't feel bad about what you score low in. This does not mean you need to improve in this area, it means you are probably not as naturally gifted in that area.
- Score your natural (typically your first) reaction to the statement, not your learned behavior modifier. For example, if the statement is, "I am receptive when others point out my blind spots", score yourself on how you naturally feel when this happens. If it really irritates you, score a low number. Even if you've learned to react peacefully when someone points out your blind spots because you know there is value in it, score how you truly feel.
- Your score for each gift consists of the numerical sum of the first 20 question, so the highest score possible is 100. The 5 separate statements at the bottom of each page are separate from that number. These bottom 5 are for identifying potential weaknesses based on your gift.

Test is a separate document provided by the administrator of this study. Please begin.

## **After the Test. Evaluating your Gifts.**

The next section is a general guide that lists common definitions for each gift and common personality traits identified with each gift. It also lists some possible scripture examples. It is here to serve as a guide and should be used with wisdom. We did not write it, the author and full resources can be found here:

<http://www.spiritualgiftsworkbook.com/>

## Prophecy–Declaration of Truth

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them . . .” Rom. 12:6

**Greek word study:** “propheteia” implies a foreteller, an inspired speaker, a poet

### Study Challenge

We begin this chapter with a pop quiz. Write down everything you can remember about the personality of Peter, Jesus’s disciple, and/or John the Baptist. Relax, this is an open book quiz. Look up these scriptures and note how they offer insight into what type of person this was. If you’re in a group divide the work and discuss the answers or write them on a board so everyone can see.

#### Characteristics of Peter

Matt. 14:28  
Matt. 18:21  
Mark 8:29  
Mark 8:31-33  
Luke 5:8  
Luke 22:33  
John 13:9  
John 18:10  
Acts 2:14-40 bold,  
Acts 5:1-11  
Acts 5:29-42  
II Peter 2:1-3  
Others:

#### Characteristics of John the Baptist

Luke 3:3 ministry of repentance from sin  
Luke 3:4-6 fulfilled prophecy, prepares the way for Christ  
Luke 3:7 & 9 bold, criticized sinful people  
Luke 3:8 preaches redemption when repentant  
Luke 3:10-14 do what is right and honest  
Luke 3:19-20 rebuked authority, bold, suffered for right  
Others:  
–father was a priest<sup>3</sup>  
–ate and dressed strangely, didn’t care about opinions  
–fasted often  
–lived simply, humbly

#### Other possible prophets:

Jonah–Jonah 1-4  
Mary, the mother of Jesus–Matt. 1:18-19, Luke 1:26-56, 2:15-20, 2:33-35, 2:51, John 2:1-10, Acts 1:14  
Anna–Luke 2:36-38

**Definition:** One who is motivated to see the truth of God’s will revealed to all people.

**Key Words:** truth, accountability, conviction, repentance, perceptive, discerning, bold

#### Characteristics:

1. hates evil, wants to see justice done, works to warn others about evil, fair
2. call for repentance from others as well as self, open to constructive criticism, desire to see growth
3. open about beliefs, wants others to know God is the Lord of their life
4. it’s either good or evil, right or wrong, uses the Bible as the standard for judgement
5. ability to discern motives, sensitive to dishonesty, hates deception or phoniness
6. can be very verbal, dramatic, could have a talent for proclaiming God’s word through song or poetry
7. impulsive, opinionated, direct, honest, deep thinker
8. persuasive, convincing with God’s message
9. great respect for God, is pained to hear God misrepresented
10. strength of character, steadfast in beliefs, willing to suffer for what is right, obedient to God’s instructions

11. very high standards for self and others, will distance themselves from those with differing beliefs
12. great love for the Bible, often memorizes scripture easily, feels knowing the Bible brings them closer to God
13. perceptive, forward thinking, has innovative ideas, long range goals, drawn to things that shed light on future events
14. may prefer groups to individuals, has a message of repentance for as many people as possible
15. world view, interest in what's happening globally and what it means scripturally, politically, socially, historically

### Possible Pitfalls

1. harsh, tactless, can be too opinionated, impulsive or outspoken
2. loner, difficult to get close to, rejects those that don't live up to their standards
3. low self-esteem, can be very hard on themselves for not meeting their own high standards
4. pessimistic, realistic view of human nature and focus on the need for repentance can bring on a negative outlook
5. intolerant, judgmental, unforgiving, tendency to see everything black and white leaves no room for gray

A note on pitfalls: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." John 10:10. These words of Jesus remind us that there is a force working to twist everything that God has made good. If the purpose of these gifts is to glorify God and benefit the church where do you think the enemy will attack? Anywhere that would keep you from being effective. The pitfalls mentioned in this study do not mean that everyone with that gift will have these faults. Rather, these are areas to be on your guard. Do not allow anything to stand in the way of using your gift to the fullest.

What an incredible gift to be a prophet. What a responsibility. All the gifts are equally important, but this one has the motivating force to bring the unsaved to God. Without this, the church could not grow and the body would not be able to function. If you have this gift be encouraged. You are foundational to God's plan for the church. He has given you a powerful gift and has great plans for you. Do not be overwhelmed but overjoyed knowing that you will only be called to serve in ways that fulfill your dreams, use your abilities and suit your personality. Pray that God will provide those opportunities and be open to using your gift. That's why God gave it to you.

If you know someone who is a prophet, you have found a treasure. With honesty and perception they will hold you accountable. They can provide great insight and wisdom when you need it. Understand that your friend's character is a gift from God enabling him or her to accomplish His will. Allow them to use their gift to serve you. And remember, we are all called to testify that Jesus is Lord. Follow the example of the prophet.

Can you identify with any of the characteristics or pitfalls of the Motivational Gift of prophecy?

Think of specific ways that might be good for a prophet to serve the church?

**Greek word study:** “diakonia” implies attendant, offering aid, relief or service, minister

Study Challenge

Pop quiz again. List all the characteristics you can think of (or look up) for Martha and Timothy. Luke and John offer great insight into the character of Martha, the sister of Mary and Lazarus. Timothy was Paul’s trusted assistant. He continued Paul’s work and attended him when he was sick or imprisoned. Paul’s letters to Timothy are full of praise for his tireless service and encouragement for his ministry.

Characteristics of Martha

- Luke 10:38
- Luke 10:40
- Luke 10:41
- John 11:5
- John 11:20
- John 11:21-22
- John 11:27
- John 11:39
- John 12:2
- Others:

Characteristics of Timothy

- Acts 16:1-2
- Acts 17:14
- Acts 19:22
- Rom. 16:21
- I Cor. 4:16-17
- Phil. 2:19
- encouragement from Paul:
- I Tim.
- I Tim. 4:14-15
- I Tim. 5:23
- II Tim. 1:5
- II Tim. 1:6
- II Tim. 2:3
- II Tim. 4:9
- II Tim. 4:13
- II Tim. 4:21
- Others:

Other possible servers:

- Jacob—Genesis 25:21-33:20
- Peter’s Mother-in-law—Matthew 8:14-15
- Philip—John 1:43-46, 6:5-7, 14:8-10, Acts 6:2-5, 8:5-40, 21:8
- Stephen—Acts 6:2-15, 7:54-60
- Phoebe—Romans 16:1-2

**Definition:** One who is motivated to identify practical needs and fill them.

**Key Words:** practical, worker, helpful, hospitable, tireless

**Characteristics:**

1. organized, remembers or keeps track of people’s preferences and important dates
2. reliable, self motivated, hard working, does not typically procrastinate
3. thoughtful, notices practical needs
4. good with their hands, often manifests in craftsmanship or creativity, good at fixing things
5. hospitable, friendly, welcoming
6. feels inadequate as a spiritual leader, may need much encouragement if called to a position of authority
7. enjoys working with and for others, people oriented, team player
8. appreciates leadership, likes organized projects and clear instructions, obedient to God

9. volunteers, willing to help, enjoys being busy, always has several projects or commitments
10. short-term goals, likes to see a project completed
11. needs to feel useful, likes sincere appreciation for their work
12. feels their effort allows others to focus on their work for God
13. focus on the physical, drawn to care for the sick and suffering
14. generous, uses own resources to get a job done, self sacrifice
15. works out of a love for others and for the Lord

### Possible Pitfalls

1. pushy, bossy, excludes others, insensitive when focused on taking care of a project
2. can't say "no", too many projects, burnout from serving in ways they don't enjoy or are not equipped to handle
3. neglecting family in favor of commitments, self sacrifice extends to family
4. physically exhausted or sick from working too hard, resists being served by others
5. oversensitive if their work goes unappreciated (Do all things for the glory of God.)

Martha is a wonderful character to study. The story in Luke 10 almost makes her the bad guy unless you read the rest of what the Bible has to say about her. When Jesus lovingly reminds her of the importance of keeping her eyes on what is eternal he is not downplaying her gift of serving. There will always be physical and practical needs in the world. While the server is specifically gifted to meet those needs, too much focus on tasks can be a stumbling block. An occasional, gentle reminder of the big picture might be just what the server needs. John 11:5 tells us how much Jesus loved Martha and as you read further Martha becomes a central character in the story of Lazarus' resurrection. She is highlighted as a woman of exceptional faith. In verse 2 she recognizes Jesus's power to raise her brother and in verse 27 confesses Jesus as the Messiah. In John 12:2 we see that her gift of service is not only needed but welcomed by Jesus as she serves him again.

If you know someone that has this gift, there is one great gift that you can give to them. Thank them for their efforts, especially if the server is someone in your family. A server can be drawn to use their gift outside of the home because they don't feel appreciated by their family. Love them for the abilities with which God has equipped them. Without the hard work of the servers the body of Christ could not function. Follow their example of being thoughtful, useful and hospitable.

## Study Challenge

Can you identify with any of the characteristics or pitfalls of the Motivational Gift of serving?

Can you think of ways to honor the servers in your church or your life? Will you make a commitment to implement some of these ideas?





**Greek word study:** “didaskalia” implies to teach, to learn, instruction, doctrine

Study Challenge

This is one of those words where our contemporary understanding doesn't portray it's original intent. If I were to try to capture the essence of this gift in one word it would be researcher. In Bible times scribes were gifted writers trained to copy scriptures and record events. They became widely respected as authorities on the word of God, and because of their education and expertise these were the teachers of the day.<sup>3</sup> When Paul used the word “teacher” to define this gift this is the image he would have had. Later in this book you will see that there is also a Ministry Gift of teaching. Many people with the Motivational Gift of teaching may never feel called to “teach” in the way we think of it. Most people with this gift, however, are very interested in knowledge both for themselves and those around them. There are more ways to teach than just standing in front of a classroom.

The Bible offers Luke, author of Luke and Acts, as an excellent example of a teacher. And, though we don't have nearly as much information on Priscilla and Aquilla, the evidence is strong that one or both of these students of Paul had the Motivational Gift of teaching. There are some Bible scholars that credit Priscilla with the authorship of the book of Hebrews.<sup>4</sup> No one really knows who wrote Hebrews, but if Paul was her mentor and guide while writing this epistle it could explain why he often mentioned her name first in his greetings to Priscilla and Aquilla. It is quite unusual to mention the wife before the husband in that day and culture. He obviously held her in very high esteem.

Characteristics of Luke

Luke 1:1

Luke 1:2

Luke 1:3

Luke 1:4

Col 4:14

II Tim. 4:11

Others:

Most Bibles will give an introduction to the book of Luke. Reading this will offer insight into who Luke was, his writing style and audience. What traits are implied by his form of communication?

Characteristics of Priscilla and Aquilla

Acts 18:1-3

Acts 18:18

Acts 18:24-26

Rom. 16:3-4

I Cor. 16:19

II Tim. 4:19

Others:

Other possible teachers: Thomas–

John 20:24-28

Apollos–Acts 18:24-28

**Definition:** One who is motivated to research, understand and impart knowledge of the truth of God's word.

**Key Words:** truth, research, intelligence, facts, education

## Characteristics:

1. accurate, honest
2. detail oriented, sensitive to the context of information, notices discrepancies
3. ponders information, thinks through all the facts before giving an opinion
4. educated, appreciation for higher levels of learning, gives and expects other's credentials, continues to learn
5. factual, avoids anecdotes when facts are sufficient to make a point
6. validates sources, investigates information, uses tested and accepted standards
7. it's either good or evil, right or wrong, uses the Bible as the standard for judgement, logical, objective
8. researcher, thorough, reports facts in a systematic way
9. steadfast in beliefs because they are carefully thought out and researched, strong ethics, follows rules and laws
10. disciplined, controlled, patient, determined, sets high standards for self and others
11. believes the truth is sufficient to change people
12. interested in etymology, wants the origins and meanings of facts, words and traditions, uses a large vocabulary
13. not typically drawn to evangelism, likes to see believers grow in their knowledge of the Bible
14. not always comfortable with people, may prefer the preparation to the presentation
15. select circle of friends

## Possible Pitfalls

1. loner, prefers books to people, could neglect family and friends because of time-consuming research/study
2. exclusive, proud of educational achievements, disregard for others with less knowledge
3. rejecting the entire message if one aspect is not accurate
4. fact-focused, could bore people with facts, lack of practical application accompanying their teaching, unemotional
5. intolerant, stubborn, suspicious, unforgiving, missing the spirit of the law in favor of the letter

Many people will tell you that Luke is their favorite book in the New Testament. That is because he is the most universal. His attention to detail and excellent writing skill makes it interesting to read. He reports the facts systematically, and accurately having investigated, interviewed and identified his audience. He was a physician and gave special attention to births, healings, deaths and persecution. His gospel stands out as the one with a message for women and non Jews underlining the point that Jesus Christ came to save everyone.

It is often this Motivational Gift that provides the patience to create curriculum, dictionaries and resource libraries. Their exhaustive research can expose injustice and discover cures. Rejoice that God has equipped some people to serve the body in this way. If you know someone with this gift embrace their love of knowledge. Use them as a resource to test your information knowing they will be truthful and thorough.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that people with this gift are always dull or anti-social. They can be creative and fun, always coming up with innovative ways to help others learn. You see, a teacher knows what it takes to get the information sink in for his or her particular audience. To a teacher the search for truth is the adventure. From that perspective what motivates them is the excitement of the quest.

## Challenge

Can you identify with any of the characteristics or pitfalls of the Motivational Gift of teaching?

In what ways (other than having a group of students) can teachers get across a message or help others grow in knowledge?

**Greek word study:** “parakaleo” implies to call near, intreat, implore, encourage, comfort

Study Challenge

Paul was gifted in many ways and accomplished so much for the early church that it’s hard to pick just one Motivational Gift for him. While we may not know for sure until we can ask him in heaven he writes “I exhort you . . .” often enough to use him as an example of this gift. Likewise examine Titus, who often worked with Paul. In his letters Paul speaks very highly of Titus indicating that they are of like mind and spirit. List the characteristics of Paul and Titus below.

Characteristics of Paul

- Acts 18:4
- Rom. 1:11-12
- I Cor. 3:1-3
- I Cor. 9:19, 24
- I Cor. 12:12-27
- II Cor. 1:3-7
- II Cor. 4:17
- II Cor. 8:10-11
- II Cor. 9:5
- Phil. 3:4-9
- Col. 1:28-29
- I Thes. 5:14
- I Tim. 2:1
- Titus 1:9
- Titus 2:6
- Others:

Characteristics of Titus

- II Cor. 2:13
- II Cor. 7:6-7
- II Cor. 7:13
- II Cor. 7:14
- II Cor. 7:15
- II Cor. 8:6
- II Cor. 8:16-24
- II Cor. 12:18
- Others:

Other possible exhorters:

- Silas—Acts 15:22-41, 16:25, 17:10-15
- Barnabus—Acts 4:36, Acts 9:26-27, Acts 14:20-22, Acts 15:37-39
- Aaron—Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers

**Definition:** One who is motivated to participate in the process of self and others growing closer to God.

**Key Words:** growth, encourage, people, practical, positive, communication

**Characteristics:**

1. people oriented, likes discussions and brainstorming sessions, needs feedback, enjoys groups as well as one-on-one
2. forward thinking, can picture where God wants us to be and all the steps it takes to get there, action oriented
3. likes practical application, wants examples of how an idea will effect their life and steps to follow
4. enjoys hearing other’s experiences, uses anecdotes to illustrate points
5. recognizes when hardships will bring spiritual growth, welcomes experiences and uses them to help others grow
6. loves to see growth, excited about reaching the next level, drawn to others that sincerely want to grow
7. likes unity, wants to bring people together, confronts problems, decisive
8. positive outlook, can see people through God’s eyes, as he wants them to be, wants to help people be their best

9. universal approach to people, non judgmental, comfortable with others from all walks of life
10. the ability to meet people where they are, finds common ground with young and mature christians
11. reads the Bible with a practical approach, wants to make it useful for every aspect of life
12. explains the Bible so others can understand and apply it to their life
13. sets achievable standards for self and others, raises the bar when goal is reached
14. prefers to evangelize by living a Christ-like life, living witness
15. excellent communications skills, listens well, shares openly, offers good advice

### Possible Pitfalls

1. sets goals that others aren't prepared to reach, expects too much too soon, people can become projects
2. opinionated, outspoken, interrupting others with own ideas, overconfidence in their own counsel or advice
3. may be easily swayed by other's advice or pressure
4. others can become too dependent on them, interfering with God's plans
5. using human experience over the Bible or facts, taking things out of context to try to make them applicable.

In Revelation 2:4 John writes, "I have this against you, that you have left your first love." Most of us are guilty of taking God for granted. We've been through the dry spells where we don't feel like putting in the effort to know or praise the Lord. We become complacent. This is why God equipped the exhorters with energy to drive themselves, and the desire to encourage those around them to action. But remember, exhorters benefit from encouragement too. Perhaps this is why Paul needed friends like Titus, Silas and Barnabus at times in his life.

Of the 7 Motivational Gifts Paul is usually suspected to be a prophet, teacher or exhorter. And there is certainly evidence for any of them. Explaining the reasons why I lean toward exhortation will explain a few things about all three of those Gifts. To begin with, he is flexible with people, saying, "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." I Cor. 9:22 The prophet believes that being yourself while pointing others to God is sufficient. He will rarely change for anyone but God. In addition, Paul talks about how eating meat sacrificed to idols is wrong for some, but not others. The teacher and the prophet tend to be more black and white. If it is a rule it should be followed regardless of who you are. It's not fair to make exceptions for some people. Paul also makes the scripture accessible to everyone recognizing the difference between the baby christian needing the milk of the word and the mature christian ready for meat.

Another point is Paul's emotion. Teachers love very deeply, but are not usually gushy about it. In II Cor. 2:4 Paul says, "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you." Then, we see Paul's dependency on fellowship. Prophets certainly benefit from fellowship with other christians, but it's not an overwhelming need for them. Paul expresses gratitude for friends and how they refresh his spirit in I Cor. 16. In Rom. 1:12 Paul says, "...I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me." In almost every letter he writes about his longing to be there in person with that church or plans to visit soon. In exhaustive lists he greets dear friends with words of encouragement and praise.

If you are an exhorter continue to build relationships, asking God to use you as you interact with each person. Offer advice that is Godly and scripture based. Hold yourself accountable to listen to the Holy Spirit to know when to step back and let them learn how to rely on God.

## Challenge

Can you identify with any of the characteristics or pitfalls of the Motivational Gift of exhortation?

In what types of service or activities might an exhorter be most beneficial?

**Greek word study:** “metadidomi” implies to give over, share, impart, bestow, commit

Study Challenge

An amazing example of a giver is Abraham, the father of the nation of Israel. Perhaps you’ve never thought of Abraham in this light before, but when you start reading the scriptures about the way he gives it offers a fascinating perspective of this monumental character in the Bible. Going to the New Testament we find Matthew, author and disciple, as most likely possessing this gift.

Characteristics of Abraham

- Gen. 12:10
- Gen. 13:2
- Gen. 13:8-11
- Gen. 13:17
- Gen. 14:18-20
- Gen. 14:23
- Gen. 18:2-8
- Gen. 18:23-32
- Gen. 21:27-31
- Gen. 22:9-18
- Gen. 23:13-16
- Gen. 25:5-6
- Heb. 11:8-19
- others:

Characteristics of Matthew

- Matt. 2:11
- Matt. 6:1-4
- Matt. 6:19-21
- Matt. 6:25-34
- Matt. 7:6-8
- Matt. 13:44
- Matt. 13:45
- Matt. 17:24-27
- Matt. 18:4
- Matt. 18:21-35
- Matt. 19:27-30
- Matt. 20:1-16
- Matt. 25:14-30
- Matt. 25:35-40
- Matt. 26:7-13
- Matt. 26:15
- Matt. 27:9
- Matt. 28:11-15
- Luke 5:27
- others:

Other possible givers:

- Zacchaeus—Luke 19:1-10
- Tabitha—Acts 9:36-42
- Cornelius—Acts 10
- Lydia—Acts 16:14-15 & 16:40

**Definition:** One who is motivated to give from all their resources to further the work of God.

**Key Words:** faith, wisdom, generous, resources, sacrifice, steward

**Characteristics:**

1. great joy in giving and in seeing others receive
2. considers time, talents, knowledge, skills, affection in addition to money as resources from which to give
3. feels compelled to give tithes and offerings

4. gives humbly, does not need recognition
5. gives out of genuine joy, not vain about gifts whether it is their talents, skills or money
6. sensitive to genuine needs, looks for those who can't help themselves
7. prefers to seek Holy Spirit for an amount to give, rejects suggested donation amounts
8. gives gifts of high quality and craftsmanship
9. gives thoughtfully, wants to know the person receiving the gift will get joy from it
10. good at investing, saving and handling money, makes informed and wise purchases, alert to financial situations
11. ability to be frugal, sacrifice comforts to have more to give, simple needs and lifestyle
12. wants to see others give, sets an example of a cheerful giver
13. giving makes them part of a ministry, sees how their contributions benefit the whole body
14. prays about what and where to give, likes to get confirmation, wants their gifts to be an answer to prayer
15. knowledge that God has given them all they have, faith that God will provide, good steward of God's gifts

### **Possible Pitfalls**

1. controlling people with their gifts, allowing people to rely on them instead of God, spoiling children
2. being too stingy with family, being miserly, not looking for opportunities to give
3. being judgmental about who deserves to receive their gifts
4. focus on earthly treasures, putting financial advice before God's, greed, corruption
5. pressuring others to give, judging how others use their money

This can be one of the most difficult gifts to recognize. In a study of what this gift is like in children the Fortune's book<sup>2</sup> indicates that some are outgoing and some are shy. Some are talkative, some are not. Some are realistic while others are idealistic. You get the idea. Where most of the gifts have very clear characteristics, not only is this one hard to define through traits, but unless a person is operating in this gift the way God intended actions can look the opposite of what you'd think.

As an adult this gift often revolves around money, but not always. I know people with this gift that have little financial resources from which to give. This motivation becomes evident when you look beyond that and realize that resources include time, talent or love. If not money, they give what they have with great joy and humility. Most often they give when they feel it is sincerely needed or required by God. A mature Christian with this Gift is drawn to give generously to further God's work. They understand the concept that as they give God will give back to them abundantly. (Luke 6:38)

The giver often finds themselves with plenty to give because they are equipped to be wise with money. It is through this that the enemy finds opportunities to destroy what God has planned. Matthew talks about money more than any other gospel and the majority of it is warnings. Whether the tendency is hoarding or pursuit of fortune the giver, or those around them, may not recognize this gift because they have not yet discovered what God would have them do with their money. They just have the motivation to collect it. It takes responsibility to pray and listen to the Holy Spirit to know when and where to give it back. Fulfilling this purpose is true joy for the giver.

## **Challenge**

Can you identify with any of the characteristics or pitfalls of the Motivational Gift of giving?

If a giver is accustomed to only giving money from what other resources could they be challenged to give? Why is it important to give in many ways?

**Greek word study:** “proistemi” implies to stand before, preside, be over, rule, establish, appoint

Study Challenge

The fact that the Motivational Gifts can be seen clearly in Old Testament characters is evidence that these gifts have always been a part of how God creates people. To learn about the Gift of leadership recount Joseph’s journey from a younger brother to a ruler in Egypt and note the characteristics of leadership that got him there. Read also about Nehemiah, a man with the very specific task to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. List the skills that were essential to accomplish the job.

Characteristics of Joseph

- Gen. 37:2
- Gen. 37:5-11
- Gen. 37:13
- Gen. 39:2-3
- Gen. 39:4-5
- Gen. 39:7-9
- Gen. 39:21-22
- Gen.39:23
- Gen. 40:4
- Gen. 40:6-7
- Gen. 40:12
- Gen. 40:14-15
- Gen. 41:33-36
- Gen. 41:37-44
- Gen. 41:48-49
- Gen. 41:55-57
- Gen. 42:6
- Gen. 45:5-8
- Gen. 4:11
- Gen. 47:12
- Gen. 47:15-25
- Gen. 48:13-19
- Gen. 49:26
- others:

Characteristics of Nehemiah

- Neh. 2:1-8
- Neh. 2:12
- Neh. 2:17-18
- Neh. 2:19-20
- Neh. 3
- Neh. 4:1-6
- Neh. 4:7-9
- Neh. 4:10-15
- Neh. 4:19-21
- Neh. 5:6-13
- Neh. 5:14-19
- Neh. 6:1-4
- Neh. 6:5-9
- Neh. 6:10-14
- Neh. 6:15-16
- Neh. 7:1-2
- Neh. 7:5
- Neh. 13:10-13
- others:

Other possible leaders:

- Deborah—Judges 4-5
- David—I Samuel 16-31, II Samuel, I Kings 1-2, I Chronicles 10-29
- Jairus—Mark 5:22-43, Luke 41-56
- James—Matthew 13:55, Mark 6:3, Acts 15:13-21, Gal. 1:19, 2:9-10

**Definition:** One who is motivated by envisioning the will of God and working with people and resources to achieve it.

**Key Words:** administration, goals, responsibility, diligence, visionary, organization



### Characteristics:

1. great respect for authority and established systems of hierarchy
2. does not take charge unless asked or if there is no leadership in place
3. sees the big picture, sets long range goals, not distracted by details, focused, planner
4. problem solver, visionary, able to come up with innovative and creative ideas, adventurous
5. diligent, wants to see a project completed in a timely manner
6. intelligent, able to mentally organize complicated scenarios
7. practical, organized, efficient, can picture all the steps, resources and people needed for a project, administrator
8. delegates well, knows who would be best for which job
9. motivational, able to encourage others to get a job done, praises hard work
10. hates boredom, busy-work and routine chores, needs to be challenged and working toward a worthwhile goal
11. project oriented, finishes one task and moves on to the next
12. strong sense of responsibility, cares for those that need it, provider, role model
13. able to endure complaints, criticism and roadblocks in order to accomplish the goal
14. appreciates loyalty, hard work and cooperation
15. good communication skills, team leader, good with people

### Possible Pitfalls

1. using people, appearance of laziness because everything is delegated
2. too ambitious, work-a-holic, pushy, insensitive to others need to take a break
3. playing favorites to those that work harder or appear more loyal
4. taking charge where not called, bossy, not listening to other's ideas
5. neglecting family and responsibilities in favor of more exciting projects

A leader is not necessarily the first person to raise their hand when leadership is needed. They have such respect for authority that they feel it is necessary to be qualified for the job. A leader must set an example and take that responsibility seriously. It may take encouragement or appointment before they will assume a leadership role. However, they will usually feel confidence and joy once they take on the challenge.

Leaders have very thick skin when it comes to challenges and criticisms while working toward a goal. Do not, however, mistake this for insensitivity. When it is needed a leader will have an extremely tender heart. They feel a strong sense of responsibility for those that are on their team or under their care and can be very protective and loving.

The most noteworthy thing for a leader to remember is that truly great spiritual leaders take their leading from the Holy Spirit. Pray that God will keep you focused on His will, not yours and give you confidence, wisdom and humility. John 13:4-16 shows how Jesus was the greatest example of a servant leader as he washed his disciples feet. "If I then, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."

## Study Challenge

Can you identify with any of the characteristics or pitfalls of the Motivational Gift of leading?

What purpose does a leader serve in the body? Think of some practical ideas for getting more leaders to use their gift in your church.

**Greek word study:** “eleos” implies human or divine compassion, tender mercy, pity, compassionate word or deed

Study Challenge

John is referred to as the disciple whom Jesus loved. Look through his gospel to see the compassionate perspective from which he writes his message. For another example of a truly faithful and loving friend, note the qualities of Ruth.

Characteristics of John

- John 3:16
- John 4:1-27
- John 6:60-66
- John 8:3-11
- John 11:3
- John 11:35-38
- John 13:1
- John 13:23
- John 13:24-25
- John 14:1-4
- John 14:12-17
- John 19:26-27
- John 14:15-17
- Luke 9:49
- Luke 9:53-56
- others:

Most Bibles will give an introduction to the books of John and 1st, 2nd and 3rd John. Read these for additional insight to the character of the author.

Characteristics of Ruth

- Ruth 1:8-14
- Ruth 1:15-18
- Ruth 2:2
- Ruth 2:11
- Ruth 2:13
- Ruth 2:14 & 18
- Ruth 3:8-9
- Ruth 3:10
- Ruth 4:15
- others:

Other possible mercy extenders:

- Rebekkah—Genesis 24, 25:21-28, 27
- Jeremiah, the weeping prophet—Jeremiah
- Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus—Matthew 1:16-25, 2:13-14, Luke 2:4-7
- The Good Samaritan (fictitious character but a good example)—Luke 10:30-37

**Definition:** One who is motivated to identify with the emotions of others and show God’s love.

**Key Words:** empathy, aid, love, compassion, sensitivity, cheer

**Characteristics:**

1. optimistic, looks for the good in people
2. intuitive, can sense the mood of a situation as well as individuals
3. sensitive, understanding, drawn to those that are hurting
4. uncomfortable with pain, wants to relieve discomfort, looks to bring healing
5. often more at ease with mental and emotional issues than physical

6. gentle, uses firmness only when necessary
7. kind, avoids words and actions that would hurt others, thoughtful, trustworthy
8. discerning, knows when people are insincere and reacts strongly to it
9. appreciates genuine love, need for deep mutual friendships, enjoys quality time and a caring touch
10. needs to be needed, feels used by God when they share someone's joy or sorrow
11. forgiving but not foolish, looks for sincere repentance, will not give up when they feel their support can help
12. offended when loved ones are hurt, helps carry burdens, faithful
13. often drawn to Prophecy Motivation—possibly because they compliment each others strengths and weaknesses
14. non-judgmental, attracts people from all races, backgrounds, status, ages, open to anyone that is hurting
15. champions causes, cares for helpless, ie. elderly, children or animals, enjoys being with other compassionate people

### Possible Pitfalls

1. intuitive decisions can appear emotional or weak, lack of conviction—taking a stand might alienate someone
2. misinterpretation or misuse of affectionate nature, closely monitor counseling and relationships with the opposite sex
3. takes up other's offense, unforgiving to those who cause pain, possessive relationships, easily hurt by lack of love
4. interfering with God's plan by not allowing others to learn from the trials in their life
5. empathy overload, not releasing burdens to God, developing literal sympathy pains

Romans 12:8 says “. . . he who shows mercy (do it) with cheerfulness.” This optimism is essential in the body of Christ. While it often comes naturally to those with this gift the verse above is actually a command. Find the joy of the Lord by seeking opportunities to give compassion. As the mercy extender takes on the weight of other's problems it is necessary to give those burdens to the Lord and retain the cheerfulness to keep serving.

The mercy extender thrives on being needed by others. What some might consider abuse, they embrace as their opportunity to serve God. There is energy for the phone call at three A.M. from someone who is hurting. There is patience for the person who has failed, but wants to try again. There is forgiveness for those that ask for it. This gift in its fullest use comes with the ability to see others through Jesus' eyes and love them with God's love. This does not make them pushovers, though. If you hurt a mercy extender or, even worse, someone they care about look out! They won't give up a grudge without a lot of convincing. God protects the mercy extender by giving them sensitivity to insincerity.

## Study Challenge

Can you identify with any of the characteristics or pitfalls of the Motivational Gift of mercy?

What are some good ways for a mercy extender to serve? In what ways should they exercise caution and accountability in serving?

## Some additional reading for after the test

“Suppose that you have seven people over for dinner and each just happens to have a different motivational gift. You are bringing three salad plates to the table when one slips from your grip and crashes to the floor, scattering bits of glass and salad in one big mess. How will each person react?

Perceiver: “That’s what happens when you try to carry too many plates.”

Server: “I’ll clean it up.” Teacher: “The reason you dropped that plate was

that it was not balanced properly.” Exhorter: “Next time, let someone help you carry the plates.” Giver: “I’ll be glad to help you make another salad.”

Compassion person: “Don’t feel embarrassed, it could have happened to

anyone.” Administrator: “John, get the broom and dustpan. Sally, bring the mop. “ Marie, help me fix another salad.” (2)

“We have found that opposites usually attract in marriage. Usually one will have a speaking-type gift and the other will have a serving type gift. A perceiver [prophecy] may be attracted to a compassion person, or a teacher to an exhorter, or a server to an administrator—seemingly contrary gifts. We could write a whole book on this subject (and we may!) but we’d like to say here that many marriage conflicts and stresses can be eliminated simply by coming to know and accept the motivational gifts of the mate. Take Tim and Darlene, for instance. Tim is the quiet type who likes to work with his hands, a boat builder by trade. He is easily moved to tears, easily swayed in the stands he takes. Darlene is more outgoing, highly opinionated, unmovable in her standards, and drawn to a ministry of prayer. There were many conflicts at first for them. Darlene would get irritated at Tim’s “wishy-washiness” and changeability. He was upset with her dogmatic and unbending ways and easily hurt by her outspokenness. Then the motivational gift test revealed that she was a perceiver [prophecy] and he was a compassion person. Almost immediately their relationship improved. Darlene realized that she needed to pray more and comment less. She began to appreciate her husband’s sensitivity and gentleness as a beautiful gift from the Lord, and understood that he could hear from God, too. Tim realized that Darlene’s giftedness was from the Lord and that he could value, rather than be threatened by, her strong standards. He saw that it was okay for her to be the more verbal of the two. They began to encourage each other’s giftedness instead of resisting it. Differences were seen as an asset, and they have since become one of the most loving and spiritually mature couples we know. Darlene said, “I realized if both of us were just alike, one of us wouldn’t be needed.” Then there’s Gill and Gloria. He’s a dynamic speaker type who for years tried to push his quiet, reserved wife into public ministry with him, accusing her of stubbornness and rebellion for not complying. Her attempts to talk in front of groups left her drained, embarrassed, and devastated. She, on the other hand, accused Gill of being dominating, controlling, and prideful for wanting such a visible public ministry. After taking the motivational gift

test they both repented for their judgments of each other. They discovered he was an administrator/perceiver combination and she was a server with a secondary gift of compassion. Gill released Gloria to be a behind-the-scenes support person and she accepted the fact that Gill's giftedness, not pride, was the reason he enjoyed a high-profile ministry. They are getting along just fine now. We recommend that every married couple, and every couple considering marriage, get to know their motivational gifts. " (2)

We hope you've found this study and exercise to be beneficial. Again, the last two sections consisting of the test and gift definitions are intended to serve as Biblically based guides, not the words of God set in stone. In addition to your test results, please continue in prayer and Godly fellowship as you stir up your God-given gifts.

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1. Vine, W. (24 Jun, 1996). Dictionaries :: Gift, Giving. Retrieved from <http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/Dictionary/viewTopic.cfm>

2. Fortune, Katie (1987-10-01). Discover Your God Given Gifts (Kindle Locations 3933-3941). Chosen. Kindle Edition.