

HOW TO IDENTIFY SPIRITUAL GIFTS



Albany Rescue Mission, Inc.
604 North Monroe Street Albany, Georgia 31701
albanyrescuemission.org

1. WHAT ARE THE PURPOSES OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

Spiritual gifts are given so that every Christian can experience the joy and fulfillment of God working through him and her. (1)

2. ARE THERE DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF GIFTS?

There are various ways to divide or catalog the gifts. The following way has brought great joy and understanding to many Christians:

A. MINISTRY GIFTS

(“Diversities of administrations”: **DIAKONIA**) (2)

Ministry gifts provide opportunities for recognized Christian service through the church. These gifts are confirmed by church leaders. They include pastors, teachers, church workers, assistants, and administrators. (3)

The church leaders ordained Timothy by the laying on of hands and sent him out to assist Paul. His service to Paul was a ministry gift.

Twice, Paul reminded Timothy about the ministry gifts which he had been given:

“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given to thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.” (4)

“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.” (5)

B. MOTIVATION GIFTS

(“Diversities of operations”: **ENERGEMA**) (6)

Motivation gifts are the unique “energizings” of the Holy Spirit within a believer which give that believer the desire and the power to concentrate on a particular aspect of spiritual concern. They are given by the Holy Spirit in order to carry out the ministry.

Every Christian has one of the seven motivation gifts listed in Romans 12:6-8. Every Christian then views other Christians and circumstances through his or her motivation gift. Christians with the gift of ruling look at things through the eyes of a teacher. The same is true for those with the gift of prophecy, serving, exhortation, giving, and mercy.

- 1) I Corinthians 12:7
- 2) I Corinthians 12:5
- 3) I Corinthians 12:28
- 4) I Timothy 4:14

- 5) II Timothy 1:6
- 6) I Corinthians 12:6

C. MANIFESTATION GIFTS

(“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal”: **PHANEROSIS**) (1)

Manifestation gifts are supernatural results of the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives and also the lives of those to whom we minister.

As we develop and use our motivation gifts through our given ministry, God causes supernatural results to occur. The Holy Spirit may give one person to whom we minister the gift of wisdom; another may receive the gift of discerning of spirits, and still another may be given the manifestation gift of faith. (2)

3. HOW MANY GIFTS DOES EACH CHRISTIAN HAVE?

Every Christian has one motivation gift. However, every Christian can also have one or more ministry gifts, and any number of manifestation gifts.

The ministry gifts are confirmed through the church and the manifestation gifts are determined by God through the Holy Spirit.

4. HOW CAN WE DISCOVER OUR SPIRITUAL GIFT?

There are several important steps in discovering our motivational spiritual gift:

A. MAKE SURE YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN

Our spiritual gift is given to us when we become a Christian. When we are born physically, we are endowed with physical abilities. Similarly, when we are born again, we are endowed with spiritual abilities.

B. BREAK SIN’S POWER

Root sins of pride, bitterness, temporal values, and moral impurity grieve the Holy Spirit and quench His power in our lives. Since it is the Holy Spirit who makes known His gift to us and then works through that gift, it is quite obvious that sin will hinder us from discovering our spiritual gift.

C. CONCENTRATE ON OTHERS

The purpose of our spiritual gifts is to give God’s love to others. If we are not involved in the lives of others, there will be no basis or purpose for discovering what our spiritual gift is. The more we concentrate on the needs of those around us, the more the Holy

Spirit will be free to work through our spiritual gift to meet those needs.

D. DISCERN YOUR MOTIVES

Each spiritual gift prompts its possessor to view others from a different perspective. A prophet, for example, will be aware of needs in the lives of others that a server may not even notice. Meanwhile, a server will notice needs that a prophet may overlook entirely. By asking yourself why you really want to help others, you can narrow your choices in identifying your spiritual gifts.

E. EXAMINE YOUR IRRITATIONS

Every Christian will view people and circumstances from the viewpoint of his or her own spiritual gift. Each one will see needs which will not be seen by those with different gifts. The tendency is to assume that everyone else sees the things that you see. This will result in being irritated with others for not being sensitive to needs or concerned about them.

F. FIND YOUR CHARACTERISTICS

Each spiritual gift exhibits specific characteristics. Those who have the same gift will tend to emphasize and illustrate certain characteristics more than those who have other spiritual gifts. The precise characteristics of each gift are explained in this manual. The list that most describes you is a good indicator of your spiritual gift.

G. GIVE ADEQUATE TIME

Not everyone can identify his or her spiritual gift right away. Sometimes it takes more time to discern which one it really is. Often, the choice will be narrowed down to two possibilities. At this point, it is wise to select one and begin to concentrate on it. In due time, you will know whether it is your gift by the joy and fruitfulness you will receive from exercising it.

H. HUMBLE YOUR HEART

The discovery and exercise of spiritual gifts is accomplished by the grace of God, not by our own desire and power. (1) The more grace that a Christian receives, the more confident and effective that Christian will be with his or her gift. God promises to give grace only to the humble: "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." (2)

1 Romans 12:6

2 James 4:6

I. IDENTIFY GIFT MISUSES

When a mature Christian exercises his or her spiritual gift, there will be spiritual fruitfulness. However, when an immature or carnal Christian exercises his or her spiritual gift, there will often be reaction or misunderstanding. These misuses usually provide the clearest Confirmation of what a person's gift really is. The misuses of gifts are listed on following pages.

5. CAN OTHERS IDENTIFY MY SPIRITUAL GIFT?

Usually not. Others can see your outward actions and responses. However, they cannot be sure of your inward motivation. If you are a good teacher, others may assume that your spiritual gift is teaching, when in reality it could be exhortation or mercy or any other gift. Only you can accurately confirm what your spiritual gift is.

3 STAGES OF DISCOVERING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT

1. YOU ARE NOT SURE

At first you may not be sure what your spiritual gift is.

2. YOU ARE SURE

By following the steps to discover and develop your spiritual gift, you will be sure what it is.

3. YOU CONFUSE OTHERS

As you develop your spiritual gift you must also learn each of the other gifts. This causes others to wonder what your gift really is.

6. HOW CAN I DEVELOP MY SPIRITUAL GIFT?

Begin by practicing all the other gifts. You will never achieve God's purposes through your spiritual gift until you learn how to properly exercise the other six spiritual gifts. God designed the gifts so that we would realize that we need each other just as much as we need each member of our physical body.

If one with the gift of prophecy does not learn from the one with the gift of mercy, he or she may speak the truth, but probably not in love as we are commanded to do. (1) Or if one with the gift of exhortation does not learn from the one with the gift of teaching, he or she may give steps of action for spiritual growth, they may not be scripturally

1) Ephesians 4:15

accurate. Only as we understand this will we avoid the danger of thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. (1)

In Scripture God commands all Christians to

• **PROPHECY:**

“Follow after love, and desire ... that ye may prophesy He that prophesieth edifieth the church.” (2)

• **SERVE:**

“...By love serve one another.” (3)

• **TEACH:**

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom: teaching and admonishing one another...” (4)

• **EXHORT:**

“But exhort one another daily ... lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” (5)

• **GIVE:**

“Give, and it shall be given unto you....” (6)

• **RULE:**

Rule your own spirit. (7)

Rule your own family. (8)

“The hand of the diligent shall bear rule...” (9)

• **SHOW MERCY:**

“Put on therefore... bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.” (10)

Find Christians who are successfully using their gift, and study how they go about doing various things:

- How does a prophet identify and expose sin?
- How does a server see and meet practical needs?
- How does a teacher validate truth?
- How does an exhorter visualize steps of action?
- How does a giver make wise investments?
- How does an organizer get jobs done?
- How does one gifted with mercy know what hurts others?

7. HOW CAN I LEARN TO SEE THROUGH OTHERS' EYES?

Begin asking those with other gifts to tell you what things are important to them. Ask them to describe what they see in a particular situation. Encourage them to point out “blind spots” in your life and service for Christ.

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| 1) Romans 12:3-6 | 6) Luke 6:38 |
| 2) I Corinthians 14:1,4 | 7) Proverbs 25:28 |
| 3) Galatians 5:13 | 8) I Timothy 3:4-5 |
| 4) Colossians 3:16 | 9) Proverbs 12:24 |
| 5) Hebrews 3:13 | 10) Colossians 3:12 |

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFT OF PROPHECY ILLUSTRATED FROM THE LIFE OF PETER

CHARACTERISTICS	ILLUSTRATIONS
1. The need to <i>express</i> thoughts and ideas verbally, especially regarding right and wrong.	Peter spoke more often than any other disciple in the Gospels and became the spokesman of the early church (Acts 2:4; 3:12).
2. The tendency to make <i>quick judgments</i> on what is seen and heard, and to speak up quickly.	Peter spoke <i>first</i> more than any other disciple (Matthew 14:28; 15:15; 16:16; 17:4; 19:27; 26:33; John 6:68; 13:6).
3. An amazing ability to sense when someone or something is not what it appears to be and to react harshly to dishonesty.	Peter's condemnation of the deception of Ananias and Sapphira resulted in their death (Acts 5:3-10).
4. A desire to reject those who offend so that justice will be done and others will be warned.	Peter was reluctant to forgive his offender and asked how long he had to put up with him (Matthew 18:21).
5. An openness about personal faults and failures and an honesty about himself as well as others.	Peter fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8)
6. A tendency to be impulsive in actions and to be wholeheartedly involved in whatever is done.	Peter was eager to walk on water (Matthew 14:28). He forbade Jesus to wash his feet, then wanted Him to wash his hands and head (John 13:6-10).
7. A tendency to be painfully direct when correcting friends.	Peter rebuked Jesus for a course of action which Peter did not think was right for Him to take (Mark 8:31-33)

8. A desire to give open evidences of loyalty and total commitment.	Peter assured Jesus that he would never deny Him, and defended Jesus by cutting off the ear of the high priest's servant (Matthew 26:33; John 18:10).
9. A willingness to suffer for doing what is right.	Peter rejoiced in being counted worthy to suffer shame for Jesus when he was beaten for obeying God rather than man (Acts 5:29-42).
10. An ability to be very persuasive in defining what is right and what is wrong.	God brought conviction to thousands as Peter pointed out. "...ye have taken [Jesus], and by wicked hands have crucified and slain [Him]..." (Acts 2:14-47).

HOW PROPHETS CAN MISUSE THEIR GIFT

- 1) **CORRECTING PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT THEIR RESPONSIBILITY**
Prophets often felt that they are responsible for everyone. It is extra hard for them to hold back when they are things that are wrong.
- 2) **JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS ABOUT WORDS, ACTIONS AND MOTIVES**
Prophets tend to draw conclusions on a few known facts. Based on these and a built-in sense of right and wrong, they may draw hasty conclusions.
- 3) **REINFORCING A CONDEMNING SPIRIT**
Once a hasty conclusion has been made, prophets tend to look for confirming evidence. This can result in taking words and actions of the accused out of context in order to prove a point.
- 4) **JUDGING AND EXPOSING AN OFFENDER RATHER THAN RESTORING THE OFFENDER**
To judge a Christian brother is to pass sentence on him based on the evidence at hand and not to be concerned about helping him overcome his problem. Prophets tend to point out the problems but not see the solutions to them.
- 5) **CUTTING OFF A PERSON WHO HAS FAILED**
Once a person has failed, prophets tend to cut off fellowship with that person and persuade other to do the same. Friends will even be cut off in favor of being true to a cause.
- 6) **DWELLING ON THE NEGATIVE RATHER THAN THE POSITIVE**
Prophets are more sensitive to evil and deception than others are. This often results in their being “against” more things than they are “for,” or at least it may appear that way to others. If something is partly right and partly wrong, prophets tend to see it all wrong. They view things in extremes of either all right or all wrong.
- 7) **LACKING CAUTIOUSNESS AND TACTFULNESS IN EXPRESSING OPINIONS**
Driven by the desire to be totally open and honest, prophets often share opinions which would have been better left unsaid.
- 8) **DEMANDING A POSITIVE RESPONSE TO A HARSH REBUKE**
Prophets tend to expect immediate repentance regardless of whether their rebuke was in love or fully accurate. They tend to magnify failures in order to promote repentance.
- 9) **CONDEMNING THEMSELVES WHEN THEY FAIL**
The harsh judgments which prophets have for others, they tend to be extremely self-critical and feel worthless when they fail.
- 10) **ACCUSING OTHERS OF DECEPTION IF THEY DON'T FULLY REVEAL FAULTS**
If prophets sell a used car or appliance to someone, they will tend to tell all the weaknesses and faults of the item. They expect others to do the same with them and will probably accuse them of dishonesty or deception if they don't.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFT OF SERVING ILLUSTRATED FROM THE LIFE OF TIMOTHY

CHARACTERISTICS	ILLUSTRATIONS
1. An ability to see <u>practical needs</u> and a desire to meet them.	Timothy's <u>desire to meet needs</u> is confirmed by Paul: "for i have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state" (Philippians2:20).
2. A joy in serving when it <u>frees others</u> to do more important things, not just to keep busy.	Timothy <u>served</u> Paul so that <u>Paul could carry out his ministry</u> . He served Paul "as a son with the father" (Philippians 2:22)
3. A tendency to <u>disregard</u> personal <u>health</u> and <u>comfort</u> in serving others.	Timothy's <u>physical ailments</u> were revealed when Paul wrote: "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (I timothy 5:23).
4. A <u>difficulty</u> in saying "no" resulting in a variety of involvements and a tendency to get sidetracked.	Timothy was told <u>twice</u> by Paul not to get sidetracked: "Do thy diligence to come <u>shortly</u> unto me... Do thy diligence to come before winter" (II Timothy 4:9,21).
5. A special enjoyment in providing for <u>physical needs</u> and comforts. An ability to remember likes and dislikes.	Timothy was instructed to bring Paul <u>his cloak, books, and especially the parchments</u> (II timothy 4:13).
6. A need for appreciation to confirm that service is necessary and satisfactory. A desire for clear instructions (without time limits).	Timothy was given more instruction and praise by Paul than any other assistant (I and II Timothy)

7. A strong desire to be with others, thus providing more serving opportunities.	Timothy is almost always <u>working with others</u> (Acts 16:2; 17:14-15; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4).
8. An enjoyment of short-range projects and a tendency to become frustrated with long-range responsibilities.	Timothy was urged to maintain the <u>endurance of a soldier</u> and to continue in the calling that he was given (I Timothy 4:16; II Timothy 2:3).
9. A tendency to fell inadequate and unqualified for spiritual leadership.	Timothy was <u>reassured</u> by Paul that he was <u>qualified</u> by his ordination and by the training of his mother, Grandmother, and Paul (I Timothy 4:14; II Timothy 1:5; II Timothy 3:10-14).

HOW SERVERS CAN MISUSE THEIR GIFT

1. NEGLECTING HOME RESPONSIBILITIES TO HELP OTHERS

Servers tend to disregard their own comforts in order to help others. Other reasons may also cause this: an inability to say “no” to others, and the need for sincere gratefulness from those whom they help (which they may not get at home). This attitude may extend to their own families.

2. ACCEPTING TOO MANY JOBS AT ONE TIME

It is difficult for servers to say “no” to needs. This causes them to get involved in too many projects at the same time.

3. WEARING THEMSELVES OUT PHYSICALLY

In order to assist others, servers will often disregard their own physical limitations. This, in itself, will cause physical exhaustion. However, servers tend to add a further dimension to the problem when they take on more responsibility than they can handle: inner tension which may result in ailments, especially with their stomachs.

4. BEING TOO PERSISTENT IN GIVING UNREQUESTED HELP TO OTHERS

Servers are able to detect needs before others are even aware of them. They get their joy and fulfillment from meeting these needs. Because of this, they may persist in trying to meet a particular need which they see.

5. GOING AROUND PROPER AUTHORITIES IN ORDER TO GET JOBS DONE

The proper channels of people and committees may look like unnecessary “red tape” to servers who want to get jobs done as soon as possible. They will even use personal funds in order to avoid delays in meeting needs.
(Usually they can’t afford the money they spend.)

6. EXCLUDING OTHERS FROM HELPING ON A JOB

Unlike administrators, servers find it extremely difficult to delegate jobs to others. They tend to want to do the jobs themselves.

7. INTERFERING WITH GOD’S DISCIPLINE BY PREMATURE HELP

If servers see a need in the of another person, their first impulse is to meet it; however, it may be that the need is designed by God to bring that person to repentance. The needs of the prodigal son in the pig sty would illustrate this point. Meeting his physical needs might have hindered his repentance and return to his father. (1)

8. BECOMING HURT BY THE UNGRATEFULNESS OF THOSE WHO WERE HELPED

Servers do not usually desire public recognition. However, they deeply desire sincere appreciation from the ones whom they serve. This may cause them to work for the approval of people more than the approval of God.

9. GETTING “SIDETRACKED” WHILE WORKING ON AN ASSIGNMENT

It is very easy for servers to stop what they are doing and give a “helping hand” to another need which they see. This may cause the ones under whom they serve to become frustrated with them because the assigned tasks are not completed as fast as they should be. (the server should refer all others to his boss and get directions only from him.)

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFT OF TEACHING ILLUSTRATED FROM THE LIFE OF LUKE

CHARACTERISTICS	ILLUSTRATIONS
1. The need to validate truth: to certify statements which have been made by others.	Luke's purpose in writing was "that thou mightest know the <u>certainty</u> of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed" (Luke 1:4).
2. The tendency to validate new truth by established systems of truth.	Luke not only relates Christ's word to Old Testament prophecies, but <u>relates his writings</u> to other Gospel accounts (Luke 1:1-3).
3. The prompting to give teaching credentials before speaking and to get them from others before listening.	Luke emphasized that he was an eyewitness, a <u>qualified</u> minister, and "had perfect understanding of all things from the very first" (Luke 1:2-3).
4. The desire to present truth in a systematic sequence.	Luke emphasized his chronological approach: "... to set forth <u>in order</u> ... from the beginning... to write unto thee in order" (Luke 1:1-3).
5. A delight in researching and reporting as many facts on a subject as possible.	Luke's Gospel is the <u>longest</u> Gospel. It includes material left out of other Gospels. He emphasizes the completeness of his work (Acts 1:1).
6. An emphasis on the importance and accuracy of reporting.	Luke gives <u>precise descriptions</u> of events, conversations, circumstances, and physical conditions, such as noting a "great fever" not just a fever (Luke 4:38).

6. An emphasis on the importance and accuracy of reporting.	Luke gives <u>precise descriptions</u> of events, conversations, circumstances, and physical conditions, such as noting a "great fever" not just a fever (Luke 4:38).
7. An alertness to factual details which are not noticed or mentioned by others.	Luke's account is filled with more details of names, offices, cities, dates, events, and side points than the other Gospels.
8. A tendency to remain silent until information has been heard, observed, and discussed.	Luke is conspicuous in the Gospel by <u>his silence</u> ; none of his statements are recorded.
9. A need to exercise diligence and endurance.	Luke demonstrated his <u>Faithful determination</u> by remaining with Paul in prison until the end: "only Luke is with me" (II Timothy 4:10-11).

HOW TEACHERS CAN MISUSE THEIR GIFT

1. BECOMING PROUD OF THEIR KNOWLEDGE

It would be easy for teachers to develop an attitude of pride as a result of all their learning. "Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth." (1)

2. DESPISING PRACTICAL WISDOM OF UNEDUCATED PEOPLE

A teacher may tend to discount any learning which does not take place in the classroom. "And the Jews marveled, saying 'How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?'" (2)

3. COMMUNICATING SKEPTICISM TOWARD THEIR TEACHERS

The attitude of a teacher can easily be, "It isn't right until I check it out and say it is right." A teacher may communicate the impression that he or she is the only source of truth.

4. CRITICIZING SOUND TEACHING BECAUSE OF TECHNICAL FLAWS

It is difficult for a teacher to endorse the teaching of others if he is able to spot little factual errors. Teachers may, in this case, give a general criticism of the entire teaching.

- 1) I Corinthians 8:1
- 2) John 7:15
- 3) Proverbs 3:5

5. DEPENDING ON HUMAN REASONING RATHER THAN THE HOLY SPIRIT'S TEACHING

The primary tool of teachers is their mind, yet God warns that we are not to lean on our own understanding (3) because our thoughts are not his thoughts, (4) and there is a way which seems right to a man's mind, but it leads to death. (5) Actually, the reasonings of man are foolishness with God. (6) Morality is essential for spiritual understanding. (7) true understanding is essentially a spiritual matter – not a mental matter. God's truth is "spiritually discerned." (8)

6. GIVING INFORMATION WHICH LACKS PRACTICAL APPLICATION

The purpose of all teaching must be to exalt Christ and to promote conformity to His image. (9) Teachers tend to avoid wider applications beyond the actual wording of the text. This limits the use of Scripture as a daily lamp to our feet and light to our path.

- 4) Isaiah 55:8
- 5) Proverbs 14:12
- 6) I Corinthians 1:20
- 7) II Thessalonians 2:10-11
- 8) I Corinthians 2:4
- 9) Romans 8:29

7. BORING LISTENERS WITH DETAILS OF RESEARCH

The great delight of teachers is their research. What they enjoy, they assume others will enjoy. Teachers may give extensive background details to validate a point or to display their research ability and knowledge. In most cases, however, it is not as important to the listeners as it is to them. Sometimes it wearies the listeners to the point where they miss the purpose of the teaching

8. RETREATING INTO THEIR OWN WORLD OF BOOKS

Teachers not only enjoy research, but they see it as the basis of their effectiveness as a teacher. They assume that the more knowledgeable they are in their field, the more prepared they are to evaluate new ideas and refute error. Research is very consuming of time and concentration. This may cause them to shut themselves up in their own world and close out those who are around them.

4. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFT OF EXHORTATION ILLUSTRATED FROM THE LIFE OF PAUL

CHARACTERISTICS	ILLUSTRATIONS
1. A motivation to urge to their <u>full spiritual maturity</u> in Christ.	Paul's goal was to "present every man <u>perfect</u> in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28-29)
2. An ability to discern <u>where a person is</u> in spiritual growth and speak on that level.	Paul saw the Corinthians as spiritual infants: "And I, brethren, <u>could not speak</u> unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ" (I Corinthians 3:1).
3. A desire to give <u>precise steps</u> of action in urging people toward spiritual maturity.	Paul's writings are filled with <u>practical counsel</u> and precise steps of action on how to grow spiritually.
4. A drive to explain truth with <u>logical reasoning</u> in order to make it accepted.	Paul's writing on the resurrection in I Corinthians 15 are classic in <u>logical thinking</u> . Reasoning was his basic method when dealing with the Jews, the Greeks, King Agrippa, and others (Acts 18:4, 26:28).
5. An ability to <u>Visualize spiritual achievement</u> for people and to use this to motivate them to action.	Paul was a master in <u>picturing spiritual goals</u> for his workers and his churches. He reinforced goals by the example of his own life (Philippians 3:17).
6. A desire for face to face discussion in order to determine and insure a positive response.	Paul's longing to see his fellow-believers was constantly reaffirmed (I Thessalonians 2:17; 3:10; I I Timothy 1:4). He used <u>personal conferences</u> extensively (I Thessalonians 2:11-12).

7. An ability to identify with people of different types and backgrounds in order to gain a wider hearing.	Paul explained, "...I am made <u>all things</u> to all men, that I might by all means save some" (I Corinthians 9:19-23).
8. A motivation to bring harmony between diverse groups of Christians, and an awareness that harmony is basic to spiritual maturity.	Paul worked constantly to <u>resolve conflicts</u> and <u>divisions</u> between individuals, churches, and groups (I Corinthians 3:3,4; Philippians 2:2). The money he raised united Jews and Gentiles (II Corinthians 9:12-14).
9. An ability to welcome personal tribulation as a chief motivator of spiritual growth.	Paul <u>gloried</u> in his <u>infirmities</u> , because he saw that they brought Christ's power and a far greater weight of glory (II Corinthians 1:5; 4:17; 12:9).

HOW EXHORTERS CAN MISUSE THEIR GIFT

- 1. RAISING THE EXPECTATIONS OF OTHERS PREMATURELY**
Exhorters can visualize long-range projects and goals for people. These are often explained without reference to the amount of time that will be required to work them out. The people involved are led to assume that these projects and goals will be reached much sooner than they can be.
- 2. TAKING “FAMILY TIME” TO COUNSEL OTHERS**
The delight of exhorters is helping people with problems. Exhorters are willing to give whatever time is required to achieve results. All too often, this time cuts into family responsibilities. Exhorters assume their families will understand – until they learn differently.
- 3. TREATING FAMILY AND FRIENDS AS “PROJECTS” RATHER THAN PERSONS**
Because exhorters put confidence in steps of action which have proven effective, they are usually ready to share these steps to others, including family and friends. Rather than making them feel like special people, the exhorter may give the impression that friends and family are just more “counseling projects.”
- 4. SHARING PRIVATE ILLUSTRATIONS WITHOUT PERMISSION**
The importance and effectiveness of personal illustrations is well known to exhorters. Illustrations explain how to apply steps of action and also motivate the listener to take them . Exhorters tend to use recent illustrations which are either premature or without permission.
- 5. JUMPING INTO NEW PROJECTS WITHOUT FINISHING EXISTING ONES**
Projects are often used by exhorters to reach ultimate goals. Exhorters tend to motivate others to get involved in a project and then abandon it for a “better” project. This often disillusion those who were involved in the first project.
- 6. ENCOURAGING OTHERS TO DEPEND ON THEM RATHER THAN GOD AND THEIR AUTHORITIES**
People who receive help by following counsel that is given by exhorters tend to rely on those who gave it. Exhorters tend to encourage this because of their joy in being around those who are growing spiritually.
- 7. TRUSTING VISIBLE RESULTS RATHER THAN A TURE CHANGE OF HEART**
Exhorters tend to communicate acceptance and approval when those they are trying to help respond to the steps of action which are given. This can encourage outward conformity without an actual change of hearts within.
- 8. NEGLECTING PROPER EMPHASIS ON BASIC BIBLE DOCTRINES**
Any teaching which neglects practical application tends to be minimized by exhorters. Because doctrinal teaching has been (wrongly) separated from its moral applications, exhorters have neglected it in favor of “life related” teachings.
- 9. GIVING COUNSEL BEFORE DISCERNING THE TYPE OF PERSON OR PROBLEM**
Exhorters tend to categorize the problem in their mind before hearing all the important facts. This results in the shame of answering a matter before fully hearing it . Exhorters also tend to have more confidence in their own counsel than in God’s warnings on whom not to give counsel to.

5. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFT OF GIVING ILLUSTRATED FROM THE LIFE OF MATTHEW

CHARACTERISTICS	ILLUSTRATIONS
1. A keen ability to discern <u>wise investments</u> in order to have more money available to give away.	Matthew included more counsel on the wise use of money than any other Gospel writer (Matthew 6:19-20; 25:14-30).
2. A desire to <u>give quietly</u> without public notice.	Matthew is the only Gospel writer who emphasizes that a person should <u>give secretly</u> so that God can reward him openly (Matthew 6:1-4).
3. A motivation to give as unto the Lord at His promptings, not at man's appeals.	Matthew notes that when we give to the needs of fellow Christians which God reveals, <u>we give to Christ</u> (Matthew 25:35-46).
4. A desire to give gifts which are of <u>high quality</u> .	Matthew records in greater detail the <u>costly gifts</u> given to Jesus: gold, frankincense, myrrh, precious ointment, new sepulcher (Matthew 2:11; 26:6-13; 27:57-60).
5. An ability to <u>test faithfulness</u> and wisdom by how people handle funds.	Matthew <u>reveals</u> the foolishness and rebellion of those who misused what they were given (Matthew 21:33-34; 25:14-30).
6. A tendency to practice personal frugality. An ability to be content with the basic necessities of life.	Matthew had wealth and wealthy friends; however, he " <u>left all</u> " to follow Jesus (Luke 5:27-32).
7. An alertness to see what other people do with their money.	Matthew is the only Gospel writer to explain <u>what the religious leaders did</u> with Judas' thirty pieces of silver and also how they paid the soldier to lie (Matthew 27:3-8; 28:1-15).

8. An Ability to see financial needs which others tend to overlook.	Matthew records Christ's Condemnation of the Pharisees for <u>not supporting</u> their aged parents (Matthew 15:3-7). He also details the fairness of <u>paying all</u> the laborers the same wage (Matthew 20:1-16).
9. A desire to use giving as a way to motivate others to give.	Matthew was a tax collector. His job was to motivate <u>people to give</u> (Luke 5:29). His is the only Gospel to record Christ's condemnation of the man who was forgiven much but refused to forgive another who owed him little (Matthew 18:23-35).

HOW GIVERS CAN MISUSE THEIR GIFT

1. **GIVING TOO SPARINGLY TO THEIR OWN FAMILY**

Givers are very aware of the potential of money to corrupt people. They understand the need for those in their own family to work for money and to appreciate its value. In attempting to achieve these balances, givers may be too frugal with their own family.

2. **CAUSING FAMILY TO RESENT GIFTS TO OTHERS**

If givers are too frugal with their own families and then give large gifts to others, they can cause their families to resent those to whom gifts are given. To avoid this, it is essential for givers to have their marriage partners confirm the amount that a gift should be.

3. **LISTENING TO UNSCRIPTURAL COUNSEL ON MONEY MANAGEMENT**

When givers exercise their ability to increase funds and give away money, they tend to attract people with wrong motives and unscriptural counsel. Unless givers are firmly grounded in God's principles of finances, they can be deceived by these people or their methods.

4. **PUTTING PRESSURE ON PEOPLE WHO HAVE LESS TO GIVE**

One of the motivations of givers is to encourage others to give. Various methods may be used to accomplish this such as "matching gifts" or fund raising programs. In the counsel of doing this, givers may put excessive pressure on others to give.

5. **FAILING TO DISCERN GOD'S PROMPTINGS FOR A GIFT**

It is God who gives Christians power to get wealth. It is also God Who will prompt givers when to give, how to give, and how much to give. If givers are not responsive or obedient to these promptings, Satan is given admittance into their financial dealings.

6. **JUDGING THOSE WHO MISUSE FUNDS RATHER THAN ADVISING THEM**

Givers are very alert to how funds are misused. In the course of discerning where their own funds should go, givers can overlook the valuable ministry they could have in advising Christians in the use of their money.

7. **CONTROLLING PEOPLE OR MINISTRIES BY GIFTS**

In an attempt to make sure their gifts are wisely invested, givers may sponsor projects or buy items which are not in God's plan for a ministry.

8. **CORRUPTING PEOPLE BY GIVING TOO MUCH**

Givers will always run the risk of corrupting people with funds. Those who receive them can too easily begin looking to givers rather to God, and doing things with easily gotten money which is contrary to God's will.

9. **INVESTING IN PROJECTS WHICH DO NOT BENEFIT THE LIVES OF PEOPLE**

Givers tend to be more attracted to project than they are to the daily needs of Christians. Sometimes these projects build an organization but not the people in the organization or those reached through the organization

6. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFT OF ADMINISTRATION ILLUSTRATED FROM THE LIFE OF NEHEMIAH

CHARACTERISTICS	ILLUSTRATIONS
1. An ability to <u>visualize</u> the <u>final result</u> of a major undertaking.	Nehemiah <u>visualized the goal</u> of removing the “great affliction and reproach” of God’s people by rebuilding the walls (Nehemiah 1:2-3; 2:5).
2. An ability to break down major goals into smaller, achievable tasks.	Nehemiah accomplished the huge task of rebuilding the walls by having <u>many groups</u> working on <u>smaller sections</u> (Nehemiah 3:1-32).
3. An ability to know what <u>resources are available and needed</u> to reach a goal.	Nehemiah requested from the king <u>resources needed</u> to rebuild the walls: a certain time, letters of introduction, and timber (Nehemiah 2:6-8).
4. A tendency to remove himself from <u>distracting details</u> in order to focus on the ultimate goal.	Nehemiah did not get involved in the building itself but <u>removed obstacles</u> which would hinder the workers, such as removing financial pressures (Nehemiah 5:1-18).
5. A willingness to <u>endure reaction</u> from insiders and outsiders in order to reach an ultimate goal.	Nehemiah had <u>opposition</u> from within and without in his efforts to rebuild the walls (Nehemiah 4:8-18).
6. A need for loyalty and confidence from those who are being directed and served.	Nehemiah brought a great assembly of people against the nobles and rulers who discouraged the people. He <u>required oaths</u> of cooperation from them (Nehemiah 5:1-13).

7. An ability to know what he should and should not delegate to others.	Nehemiah delegated the work on the walls, but he <u>retained the responsibility</u> of dealing with the enemies and guarding the walls (Nehemiah 4:13).
8. An ability to inspire and encourage workers by cheerfulness, approval, praise, and challenges.	Nehemiah had a cheerful spirit (Nehemiah 2:1). He was skillful in <u>challenging</u> and encouraging his workers (Nehemiah 4:14).
9. A joy and fulfillment in seeing all the parts come together in a finished product.	Nehemiah expressed his joy in the <u>completed task</u> by appointing singers and uniting the people in a revival and celebration (Nehemiah 7:1-2; 8:1-18).

HOW ADMINISTRATORS CAN MISUSE THEIR GIFT

1. VIEWING PEOPLE AS “HUMAN RESOURCES” RATHER THAN HUMAN BEINGS

Administrators need to know that people and materials are available to them in order to accomplish a task. It is easy for them to overlook the individual needs of the workers and simply view them as “resources” for the job.

2. USING PEOPLE TO ACCOMPLISH PERSONAL AMBITIONS

When administrators have people, money and materials at their disposal to accomplish group “goals,” it is all too easy to divert these resources to accomplish personal goals or ambitions.

3. SHOWING FAVORITISM TO THOSE WHO APPEAR TO BE MORE LOYAL

The single most important quality to administrators is loyalty. They need to know whom they can count on to get jobs done. They want to know where they stand with each person who works for them. At the same time administrators must be fair and impartial. Rewarding loyalty without favoritism is a special challenge for administrators.

4. TAKING CHARGE OF PROJECTS WHICH WERE NOT GOD’S DIRECTION

Ordinarily, administrators will stay on the “side lines” until they are asked to be in charge of a project. There is a reason for this: they need to have full support of those who appoint them. It is difficult, however, for administrators to stand by and watch mismanagement and inefficiency, and they can take charge prematurely.

5. DELEGATING TOO MUCH WORK TO OTHERS

The chief talent of administrators is knowing how to delegate jobs to others. This leaves administrators free to focus on the overall projects and to see how all the parts are fitting together. However, if administrators delegate too much work to others and are not sensitive to their personal needs and schedules, then the workers will become resentful and feel like they are doing all the work

6. OVERLOOKING SERIOUS CHARACTER FAULTS IN VALUABLE WORKERS

The primary objective of administrators is to coordinate everyone’s effort in order to see a project completed. In the process, they may be willing to overlook major character faults in the lives of those who are useful in reaching their goal.

7. BEING UNRESPONSIVE TO SUGGESTIONS AND APPEALS

Administrators have the ability to withstand much reaction in order to get a job done. However, they can carry this too far and become closed to valid suggestions and complaints of those who are working with them

8. FAILING TO GIVE PROPER EXPLANATIONS AND PRAISE TO WORKERS

Workers want to feel like they are a part of the overall project by learning how their jobs fit into the final goal and by receiving proper praise and encouragement as the work is being done.

7. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFT OF MERCY ILLUSTRATED FROM THE LIFE OF JOHN

CHARACTERISTICS	ILLUSTRATIONS
1. An ability to sense <u>genuine love</u> . A greater vulnerability to deeper and more frequent hurts from the lack of love.	John's teachings and personal relationships illustrate that his <u>primary focus</u> was on <u>love</u> . He uses the word "love" more than any other disciple (gospel of John; Epistles of John).
2. A need for <u>deep friendships</u> in which there is mutual commitment.	John established a <u>very close relationship</u> with Christ and with Peter. He often refers to himself as the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7; 21:20).
3. A tendency to react <u>harshly</u> when intimate friends are rejected.	John and James asked Christ if they should call down fire from heaven and consume the Samaritans who rejected Christ (Luke 9:54).
4. A greater concern over <u>Mental Joy or distress</u> than physical concerns.	John wrote to give his readers " <u>joy</u> ," " <u>fellowship</u> ," " <u>hope</u> ," " <u>confidence</u> ," and to cast out " <u>fear</u> " and " <u>torment</u> " (I John 1:3,4; 3:2; 4:18; 5:13-14). Meeting physical needs proves love (I John 3:17).
5. A tendency to <u>attract</u> people who are having mental and emotional distress.	John's deep understanding, love, and acceptance <u>made it easy to understand why others would confide in him</u> as Christ did during the last supper (John 13:23-26).

6. A need to measure acceptance by physical closeness and quality time together.	John sought out the <u>closest place to Christ</u> : "Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples..." (John 13:23). His need for closeness may have prompted his request to sit next to Christ in glory. (Mark 10:35-37).
7. A Desire to remove the causes of hurts rather than to look for benefits from them.	John's message was to get Christians to <u>stop hating</u> and hurting each other (I John 3:11,15).
8. A tendency to avoid decisions and firmness unless they will eliminate greater hurts.	John was a <u>follower</u> until it came to denying Jesus; then he was <u>bold and decisive</u> (Acts 4:13; 19-20).
9. A tendency to be attracted to those with the spiritual gift of prophecy.	John spent <u>more time with Peter</u> than with any other disciple (Luke 22:8; Acts 3:1-11; 4:13-19; 8:14).

HOW THOSE GIFTED WITH MERCY CAN MISUSE THEIR GIFT

1. FAILING TO BE FIRM AND DECISIVE WHEN NECESSARY

Those with the gift of mercy find it hard to be firm and decisive because they do not want to hurt or offend other people. Very often, the lack of firmness or decisiveness only causes greater hurt and disappointment.

2. TAKING UP OFFENSES FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN HURT

When those with the gift of mercy see or hear about someone hurting another person, they can feel the hurt as well. They will tend to take up offenses, especially if it is a friend who is being hurt.

3. BASING DECISIONS ON EMOTIONS RATHER THAN ON REASON

Because those with the gift of mercy have such strong emotions and feelings, they tend to base the decisions which they do make on them rather than on objective logic.

4. PROMOTING IMPROPER AFFECTIONS FROM THOSE OF THE OPPOSITE SEX

A person of the opposite sex tends to be drawn to those with the gift of mercy because of their ability to be sensitive, understanding and responsive listeners. This must be considered in any counseling which is done, and safeguards must be established in order to avoid improper emotional attachments

5. CUTTING OFF FELLOWSHIP WITH THOSE WHO ARE INSENSITIVE TO OTHERS

Words and actions which reflect insensitivity to the feelings of other people are quickly recognized and reacted to by those with the gift of mercy who will tend to close their spirits to these people.

6. REACTING TO GOD'S PURPOSES IN ALLOWING PEOPLE TO SUFFER

Unlike exhorters who look at suffering as a means of growing spiritually, those with the gift of mercy tend to react to the idea that God would allow a person to suffer for any good purpose. Their main concern is usually to remove the cause of suffering as soon as possible.

7. SYMPATHIZING WITH THOSE WHO ARE VIOLATING GOD'S STANDERS

If those with the gift of mercy are not discerning 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.

8. ESTABLISHING POSSESSIVE FRIENDSHIPS WITH OTHERS

There is a deep need for commitment and closeness in the friendships of those with the gift of mercy. This can easily result in possessiveness of friendships with others, and the tendency to be deeply hurt when there is not a mutual commitment to the friendship. Disappointments in one friendship tend to create greater expectations and possessiveness in a new friendship.