

# What are the seven motivational gifts?

## An overview of seven spiritual gifts

In his letter to the Roman Christians, the Apostle Paul challenges them to use their spiritual gifts: *“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*

*“Having then **gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us**, whether **prophecy**, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or **ministry**, let us wait on our ministering: or he that **teacheth**, on teaching; or he that **exhorteth** on exhortation: he that **giveth**, let him do it with simplicity; he that **ruleth**, with diligence; he that **showeth mercy**, with cheerfulness” (Romans 12:4–8).*

The gifts mentioned here are **seven motivational spiritual gifts**. Each Christian receives one at the time of salvation, and it is the tool through which God works in him or her to see needs and to do something to meet them.

These gifts equip believers to take a vital role in the Church.

Below are details about each of the seven motivational gifts, including Biblical examples of those who had the gifts, exhortations from Romans 12 about properly exercising the gifts, and the life principles that best complement the strengths and weaknesses of the gifts.

# Prophecy

A person with the motivational gift of prophecy applies the Word of God to a situation so that **sin is exposed and relationships are restored**. He or she has a strong sense of right and wrong and speaks out against compromise and evil.

- **Biblical Example**

The Apostle Peter played a significant role in the establishment of the early Church. Through his preaching, ministry, and writing, Peter encouraged men and women to believe in Christ, repent, and live according to the truth of God's Word. *"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord"* (Acts 3:19).

- **Guidelines in Romans 12**

The exhortation of Romans 12:9 particularly relates to the gift of prophecy: *"Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good"*(ESV).

- **Life Principle to Apply**

It is especially important for a prophet to apply the principle of responsibility and maintain a clear conscience. This discipline equips the prophet to speak the truth boldly with love.

# Serving

A person with the motivational gift of serving is **driven to demonstrate love by meeting practical needs**. The server is available to see a project through to the end and enjoys doing physical work.

- **Biblical Example**

Timothy had a great desire to serve the Church of God, and he ministered to the Apostle Paul in many ways. Paul said: *“I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you . . . . I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel”* (Philippians 2:19–22).

- **Guidelines in Romans 12**

The exhortation of Romans 12:10 particularly relates to the gift of serving: *“Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor”*(ESV).

- **Life Principle to Apply**

A server needs to diligently apply the principle of authority. As he honors the directions and wishes of authority figures, the server is better equipped to maintain proper priorities in time management and is often protected from individuals who might take advantage of his eagerness to help meet physical needs.

# Teaching

A person with the motivational gift of teaching is **passionate about discovering and validating truth**. A teacher is particularly concerned with the accuracy of information, especially church doctrine, and is often gifted with research abilities.

- **Biblical Example**

Luke's work in writing Scriptural accounts was driven by a desire to verify and preserve the truth about both Jesus' life and the formation of the Church so that the faith of believers would be strengthened. *"It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed"* (Luke 1:3–4).

- **Guidelines in Romans 12**

The exhortation of Romans 12:11 particularly relates to the gift of serving: *"Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord"*(ESV).

- **Life Principle to Apply**

A teacher should faithfully apply the principle of success and invest time in meditation on Scripture. The discipline of meditation helps the teacher stay focused on the truth of God's Word instead of on the strength of his own mind.

# Exhorting

A person with the motivational gift of exhortation **wants to see believers grow to spiritual maturity**. An exhorter is an encourager at heart and is often involved in the ministries of counseling, teaching, and discipleship.

- **Biblical Example**

The epistles of the Apostle Paul demonstrate his love for the Church and his concern that believers all over the world grow to spiritual maturity. Paul addressed the questions and concerns of the early believers and challenged them to be faithful in their walks with God. “. . . *Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily*” (Colossians 1:27–29).

- **Guidelines in Romans 12**

The exhortation of Romans 12:12 particularly relates to the gift of exhortation: “*Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer*”(ESV).

- **Life Principle to Apply**

It is essential for an exhorter to understand the principle of God’s design and to accept God’s design in his own life. An understanding of this principle establishes a firm foundation for understanding and accepting the sovereignty of God, which is a key to the exhorter’s ministry.

# Giving

A person with the motivational gift of giving **wants to use financial resources wisely in order to give to meet the needs of others**. A giver is usually good at finding the best buy, noticing overlooked needs, and maintaining a budget.

- **Biblical Example**

When Jesus called Matthew to become a disciple, Matthew immediately gave up his lucrative job, that of being a tax collector for the Romans. *“As Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him”* (Matthew 9:9). Givers often avoid the limelight, so it is not surprising that even in the Gospel written by Matthew we find very little personal information about him.

- **Guidelines in Romans 12**

The exhortation of Romans 12:13 particularly relates to the gift of giving: *“Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality”*(ESV).

- **Life Principle to Apply**

A giver must learn to wisely apply the principle of ownership. When a giver understands that all things belong to God and should be used to bring glory to Him, he is ready to share his resources as God directs him to give.

# Organizing

A person with the motivational gift of organizing is **able to accomplish tasks and solve problems through analysis and delegation**. An organizer often discerns the talents and abilities of others and knows how those individuals can best serve within a ministry or on a particular project.

- **Biblical Example**

When the Apostle Paul and his fellow missionaries brought the Gospel to Philippi, a woman named Lydia heard them preach and responded with faith in God. As a business owner and persuasive woman of faith, Lydia used her resources to help meet Paul's needs and she welcomed the missionaries into her home. *"When she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us"* (Acts 16:15).

- **Guidelines in Romans 12**

The exhortation of Romans 12:14 particularly relates to the gift of organization and the life principle of suffering: *"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them"*(ESV).

- **Life Principle to Apply**

A person with the gift of organization needs to understand the principle of suffering. Trusting God to use the tests and trials of life to develop his character and strengthen his faith helps an organizer respond to unexpected events with patience and wisdom and increases his sensitivity to the needs of others.

# Mercy

A person with the motivational gift of mercy is **sensitive to the emotional and spiritual needs of others**. A mercy-giver is drawn to people in need and seeks to demonstrate compassion, understanding, and love to them.

- **Biblical Example**

The Apostle John had the gift of mercy. The Gospel of John and the epistles I, II, and III John share a unique perspective of Jesus' ministry and include many insights into the love of God and His work in the heart of a believer. *"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"* (John 13:34–35).

- **Guidelines in Romans 12**

The exhortation of Romans 12:15 particularly relates to the gift of mercy: *"Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep"*(ESV).

- **Life Principle to Apply**

It is important for a mercy-motivated person to apply the principle of moral freedom. An understanding of this principle will protect the mercy-giver from developing improper relationships or giving false impressions to those to whom they minister.



# What is the spiritual gift of teaching?

## Understanding the spiritual gift of teaching

A Christian's *motivational spiritual gift* represents what God does in him to shape his perspective on life and motivate his words and actions. Romans 12:3–8 describes “basic motivations,” which are characterized by inherent qualities or abilities within a believer—the Creator’s unique workmanship in him or her.

Through the motivational gifts, **God makes believers aware of needs that He wants to meet through them**, for His glory. Then, believers can minister to others through the ministry and manifestation gifts of the Spirit, in ways beyond mere human capability and ingenuity, with maximum effectiveness and minimum weariness.

Each person’s behavior will vary according to factors such as temperament, background, age, gender, culture, and circumstances. However, it is not unusual for individuals who share the same motivational gift to demonstrate common characteristics. Below are some **general characteristics that are typically exhibited** by those who have the motivational gift of teaching.

## General Characteristics

A teacher’s **basic motivational drive is to discover and validate truth**.

Teachers are very sensitive to doctrinal integrity, they have great research skills, and they are sincere.

- Christians who have the gift of teaching **search for truth**.
- **Teachers study diligently**, “sifting through” the Scriptures as an archaeologist would carefully sift through artifacts from past civilizations, hoping to find answers to numerous questions.

- A teacher's **passion to discover and validate truth** is commendable, but he must not become so focused on his mission that he loses balance in his perspective about his role.
- Teachers help **keep the Church focused on truth**. They are alert to false doctrine and do not honor experience over the authority of Scripture.
- A teacher instinctively questions anything that seems inaccurate, and usually that **doubt motivates him to search out the answers needed to establish truth**.

## A Teacher's Strengths

- A teacher **carries out research to gain information and insights**. He views Bible study primarily as an academic activity with a spiritual benefit, rather than a spiritual activity with an academic benefit.
- He is **passionate about correcting error** before it leads to apostasy.
- A teacher receives special delight in uncovering facts or insights that others have either overlooked or considered insignificant.
- A teacher **places a great deal of emphasis on original language**—the original words used and their meanings.
- Usually, an individual with this motivational gift is not hesitant to challenge statements made or ideas presented by other teachers. This is an example of “iron sharpening iron” (see [Proverbs 27:17](#)), which is a positive outcome of the teacher's passion for verifying information.
- Teachers have **excellent study habits**, including orderly investigation and the ability to document information in an organized manner. They are usually neither sloppy nor slothful when it comes to research.
- Although the teacher's passion is to prove that facts are either true or false, he usually receives far more satisfaction from his research than he does from presenting what he has discovered in his research.
- Teachers are known to **faithfully study the Word of God**, because researching truth is a source of great joy for them. Unlike many of the rest of us, who must work hard to set aside time to study the Bible, the teacher often has to work hard to *quit* studying long enough to carry

out other necessities of life! For example, many believers with this motivational gift would much *rather* research a topic than do their laundry, entertain guests, fix their meals, or go shopping for basic needs.

- A teacher **solves problems by studying more**.
- The person with the gift of teaching is **diligent, steadfast, and sincere**.

## A Teacher's Weaknesses

- A teacher **may be tempted to equate or confuse knowledge with wisdom**. Knowledge is information; wisdom is seeing life from God's perspective. The two are neither equivalent nor worthy of the same esteem.
- Teachers tend to be exclusive, preferring to limit their interaction and support to individuals or groups who share *their* doctrinal beliefs. Their **concentration on facts rather than people** sometimes makes them appear to be cold or insensitive.
- Teachers **can harbor disdain toward instructors who use illustrations to get attention** rather than to illustrate truth in a meaningful, memorable manner. They can easily reject unbiblical illustrations, condemning them as irrelevant and distracting.
- A teacher, more than most of us, can be tempted to be content with having accurate knowledge and be uninterested in taking the next step: application of that knowledge.
- Because a teacher is able to accumulate knowledge skillfully and apparently with ease, he **can easily be tempted to be prideful** and have a condescending attitude toward others who do not demonstrate these gifts.
- A teacher's quest for truth, which motivates him to constantly question (what seems like everything) often earns him the reputation of being a critical, negative person.
- Teachers are often **impractical, analytical, and unemotional**. They tend to not be very interested in social activities and consequently may

be regarded as a snobbish or selfish person. Enthusiasm is seldom a strength of a person with this gift.

- Teachers have a tendency to **give you more information than you asked for**. They can easily be boring, since their hearers are not nearly as interested in the details as they are.

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## General Characteristics

A server’s **basic motivational drive is to demonstrate love by meeting practical needs**. A server is diligent and willing to sacrifice his time and energy in order to complete a task.

- A server **expresses himself most satisfactorily by doing tangible work**. He serves by doing, not by explaining or teaching or discussing or giving or organizing, though he may do some or all of those things.
- Servers **prefer short-term tasks**. Because their spiritual fulfillment comes from completing a task, they like projects that have beginnings and endings that can be acknowledged.

- A server will often volunteer to serve in church-related or group-related projects, and **you can count on him** to be one of the people who are still around at the end of the project, to see it through to completion.
- **Servers would rather carry out responsibilities themselves**, and be done with them, than assigning the tasks to someone else.
- “They are the ones washing dishes after we’ve gone home. They are the ones putting up the chairs while we crawl over them to get to the exits. They are the ones who ask if they can help carry or clean or deliver while everyone else is in their cars heading home. They enjoy the party best if they’re in the kitchen or at the barbecue pit or handing out the food. We want to *be* served. They want to *serve*” (Kelfer, p. 55).

## A Server’s Strengths

- Servers **tend to be one-man armies**.
- God seems to give special grace to servers to **exercise humility**, especially when it comes to doing menial chores.
- Availability is one of the server’s strongest character qualities. He almost never says no when asked to help others.
- **Order is essential for a server**. However, he will sacrifice order temporarily if that is necessary to get the job done.
- Servers have a God-given strength to do physical tasks. You’d better get out of the way when a server’s around!

## A Server’s Weaknesses

- Servers constantly have to **deal with the temptation to become over-committed**, which can lead to stress and frustration for them and for their families.
- Servers **easily can become frustrated by time limitations**. If those frustrations get carried into the arena of personalities, their relationships with others may suffer.
- If a server feels unappreciated, he can quickly become bitter or resentful.

- The server's desire to serve makes him a **poor delegator** and sometimes even a poor co-worker. Servers work best when they can fulfill a responsibility on their own, without having to depend on others, who usually are not as diligent or loyal as they are.
- Sometimes servers **get their priorities out of order** because they are so tuned in to physical needs. Consequently, spiritual priorities may take a back seat, at least temporarily. Given a choice of leading a prayer meeting or cleaning the home of someone who is in the hospital, a server would usually choose to clean the home.
- Servers **tend to be demanding of others who are supposed to be helping—but aren't**. They have disdain for people who are lazy or uncommitted and don't like to work with them.
- Servers tend to be **perfectionists**. They can drive the rest of us crazy because they want to cover all the bases—even ones we think are unimportant.
- If a server has been pouring his life out for others and feels misunderstood or unappreciated, he **can easily be tempted with thoughts of rebellion or jealousy**.

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## General Characteristics

A prophet’s **basic motivational drive is to apply the Word of God to a situation so that sin is exposed** and relationships are restored. Prophets might be considered the “trumpets” of the Body of Christ who sound the alarm in the face of sin and compromise.

- A prophet **calls attention to sin and wrong attitudes**.
- The prophet is passionate about exposing sin, but not primarily so that sinners can be punished. Rather, he is passionate about exposing sin *so that truth can be revealed and fellowship with God can be restored*.



- A prophet has a **God-given ability to sense when compromises are being made**, and his nature demands that action be taken—something must be done. This action may take the form of an overt protest or confrontation, or it may take the form of a conversation or correspondence.
- For a prophet, any solution that involves compromise is unacceptable.
- For the prophet, **to observe or discern sin and say nothing is, of itself, sin**. Naturally, knowing that a prophet has this perspective tends to make some of us feel intimidated or uncomfortable around them—even when we are guiltless! The prophet’s abhorrence of sin can easily be viewed as a judgmental spirit, and no one wants to be the object of that judgment.
- The prophet often displays the spiritual gift of discerning of spirits; he is able to discern true motives as the Holy Spirit gives him divine insights. As a general rule, the prophet is more interested in whether or not the heart is pure than whether or not the activity in question is acceptable.
- Prophets are usually **outspoken, sometimes brash**; they tell it like it is.
- They tend to see issues as “black or white,” not “gray.”

## A Prophet’s Strengths

- A prophet is **confident in his use of Scripture**, because he regards Scripture as the only source of truth.
- A mature prophet easily discerns hypocrisy, because God has gifted him to discern Truth.
- He is **usually more teachable than others**, especially when discipline or correction is required. When a wise prophet is confronted with his sin, he sees it as God sees it and consequently is crushed (if he is walking in the Spirit and not in the flesh).
- The prophet accepts absolutes easily. The rest of us try to explain them away; prophets simply take God at His Word.
- He is **not easily swayed by emotions**.

- A prophet has a **deep capacity to trust God**, based on what God has promised. This is the prophet's attitude: "If it's right, do it. Trust God for the outcome—it's His responsibility."

## A Prophet's Weaknesses

- A prophet's need to be "painfully truthful" may result in **insensitivity or harshness**.
- Prophets often have **little sympathy and patience with people** who do not respond objectively.
- A prophet's sense of conviction may tempt him or her to become **intolerant or prideful**.
- Because of the prophet's deep consciousness of sin, he sometimes seems to have a **negative, "gloomy" approach to life**.

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## General Characteristics

An organizer’s **basic motivational drive is to lead others to get a project done**. He is able to solve problems and accomplish tasks through analysis and delegation.

- The organizer leads others to complete projects. He might not necessarily do the job, but through organization and delegation, **he makes sure the job gets done**.
- A person with the gift of organizing has the **ability to discern the strengths, weaknesses, and talents of others**. When a project is launched, the organizer does not focus on *how* the job can be done but rather on *who can do it best*.

- As a general rule, organizers tend to judge spirituality (including their own) on the basis of accomplishment, and they evaluate accomplishment on the basis of doing the best job with the fewest resources in the shortest amount of time.
- They are **masterful at making long-range goals**.
- Organizers **always see the big picture**. They can look past today's circumstances and see where the group needs to be tomorrow or next week or next year.
- Organizers are **willing to take whatever time is needed to do the job well**.
- Organizers are **goal-oriented**, and sometimes an organizer's goals may not match everyone else's goals. For example, if the goal is to construct a water tank, the organizer will oversee the construction of an efficient, sturdy water tank, but it may not be an *attractive* water tank. However, the goal—to build a functional water tank—would be accomplished. If the goal had been to construct an *attractive* water tank, the organizer would have focused on that goal.
- An organizer is even-keeled—it takes a lot to ruffle his feathers. He **sees emotional expressions—good or bad—as a waste of time**.
- Although organizers are designed to lead, they **don't always have the personality of an obvious leader**. Therefore, they can easily go unnoticed when the need for a leader arises, and the job will frequently be given to an aggressive prophet or server.

## An Organizer's Strengths

- An organizer is efficient, thorough, and loyal.
- An organizer **invests his time wisely**. Since he measures spirituality by the accomplishment of tasks—crossing them off of his list as fast as possible—to him, to waste time is to be an unprofitable servant. (See [Luke 17:7–10](#).)
- God gave organizers “thick skin.” They patiently address the frustrations of their workers, and **they can handle pressure**

**extremely well.** Even if he is misunderstood, he will press on toward the goal.

- They seem to be **able to implement the impossible** and use the unusable.
- He delegates in order to achieve maximum efficiency, not as a means to express favoritism or avoid work.
- An organizer **makes decisions based on what is best for the sake of the project**, not what is most convenient for the laborers.
- As a result of his God-given **ability to discern true character**, an organizer can quickly recognize a sloth and remove him from the team, if necessary.

## An Organizer's Weaknesses

- Because of their need to constantly be “conquering new mountains,” organizers **can easily frustrate others who do not share their vision.** Family members or co-workers may interpret the organizer's insatiable desire to plan ahead as a reflection of discontentment, which is not actually the case.
- On his priority list, he **tends to put projects before people.**
- The organizer tends to take an interest in others in order to find out the best way to use them rather than the best way to serve them. People tend to feel used and discarded when their usefulness is over.
- He sees unnecessary expressions of emotion—good or bad—as a waste of time. This can earn him the **reputation of being cold-hearted or unconcerned.** This is not actually true, however. The organizer is simply preoccupied with tasks, not with feelings.
- As a result of their focus on the big picture, organizers **often appear to be uninvolved and/or uninterested.**
- Rather than accepting responsibility if something goes wrong, immature organizers will delegate the blame too—not just the work assignments.

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## General Characteristics

A mercy-giver’s **basic motivational drive is to sense and respond to the emotional and spiritual needs of others**. Those with the mercy motivational gift have a divine ability to sense hurt and respond to it with love and understanding.

- The mature mercy-giver is **kind and gentle**.
- Mercy-givers **sense and reflect the spiritual and emotional atmosphere around them**. Whereas prophets, organizers, and teachers tend to project their attitudes to others, individuals who have the gifts of mercy and exhorting are more likely to sense how others are feeling.

- Mercies **need to be needed**. People with this gift must reach out and get involved, or their mercy will turn inward, resulting in an introspective focus that concentrates on their own hurts or fears.
- To the mercy-giver, spirituality is not a textbook analysis but rather is an emotional confirmation of God's presence in his life. He is interested in learning doctrine mainly so that he can act on it and then feel that he has been obedient. If no feelings accompany his experience, he tends to downplay its significance.
- Mercies are **drawn to other sensitive people**.
- Believers who have the gift of mercy are the backbone of the prayer power in the Church. **They feel they *must* pray**. To them, prayer is an expression of their hearts to God, and nothing else they can do releases these emotions and captures God's heart better than prayer.

## A Mercy's Strengths

- Mercies have a God-given ability to sense a person's spirit or the atmosphere among a group of people. They recognize the feelings that may be at work in others' minds and hearts. When mercies are walking in the Spirit, **this gift equips them to reach out to people who are suffering** but who would likely be reluctant to tell others about their needs.
- Mercy-givers are **attracted to people in distress**; they love the people that most of us tend to run away from.
- Mercies love the unlovable, such as the handicapped, the elderly, the seriously ill, and the wounded in spirit. They are drawn to the outcast, the out of fellowship, and the rebellious. *Mercy-givers run toward people who are unpleasant or unresponsive*, reflecting the heart of God toward needy people.
- Because of their sensitivity, mercies **do not take sin lightly**—their own or someone else's.
- Mercies **tend to embrace humility**, because of their sensitive spirits and awareness of their own weaknesses and failures.

# A Mercy's Weaknesses

- Mercies can be indecisive, tossed to and fro by their emotions.  
(See James 1:5–8.)
- Mercy-givers can easily allow others to become dependent on them, when the individuals should be dependent on God. They **often become rescuers of those who do not need to be rescued**.
- The mercy-giver's warmth can be falsely interpreted as personal, intimate affection. **They must learn to temper their demonstration of affections** based on the mindset of those to whom they are ministering. If they fail to do this, both parties may be led into temptation.
- Mercies are **quick to take up others' offenses**, which can quickly lead to anger and bitterness.
- Because mercy-givers try to **avoid conflict of any kind**, they often avoid confrontation that is needed. Mercy-givers would rather hide from or ignore their enemies than confront them, even when they are in authority over those enemies. Delaying the inevitable always leads to more trouble—for everyone.
- **Immature or rebellious mercies tend to be harsh and impatient**, reflecting their *own* self-condemnation by lashing out at others whom they judge to be as weak or sinful as they are.
- Mercies tend to be **introspective**. As a person who is sensitive to hurts, it is easy for him to become overly sensitive to his own. If a mercy falls into this trap, he will wallow in past offenses, cling to past bitternesses, and dwell on past mistakes or sins.
- It is **easy for mercies to develop a poor self-image**, since they tend to be introspective and remain acutely aware of their own failures. The longer the mercy dwells on his failures, the more worthless and wicked he feels.
- Mercies tend to be worriers as a result of focusing on their own failures.



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## General Characteristics

A giver’s **basic motivational drive is to conserve and share resources in order to meet needs**. Givers take special delight in discovering needs that others overlook and then meeting those needs.

- Givers particularly enjoy preventing waste by exercising wisdom and accountability.
- A giver **gets joy by finding less costly ways to do things**, whether the cost is measured in time, money, or energy.
- Their families often think givers are very stingy—much too concerned about counting pennies—but the people to whom they give think they are extremely generous.

- **Givers like to stay out of the limelight**, often giving anonymously in order to avoid recognition for their giving.
- Givers evaluate spirituality in terms of resources, accountability, and dependability.
- Saving resources brings a giver almost as much pleasure as giving them, because they regard saving as the key that opens the door to even more resources. They seem to be **able to accumulate savings, even in hard times**.

## A Giver's Strengths

- A giver **saves money by making wise purchases**. He also tends to avoid impulsive spending.
- Givers tend to have an excellent understanding of authority and accountability. More than those with other motivational gifts, givers expect to be held accountable and diligently hold others accountable.
- They usually are **hard workers** and tend to have **conservative values**.
- Givers often like to become personally involved in the lives of the people to whom they give support.
- Regardless of his economic status, a giver hardly ever spends more than he makes. Consequently, he **rarely incurs debt**.
- Givers love to motivate others to save and to give generously.

## A Giver's Weaknesses

- Sometimes **their efforts to conserve resources can turn into being "plain cheap."**
- Givers can react negatively to pressure to give, assuming that others can and should meet a need, since the need is well publicized.
- If a giver has been offended or has lost confidence in a person or a ministry, **he may allow his feelings to interfere with God-given opportunities** to give.

- A giver can easily be tempted to judge a person or ministry based on a single incident that appears to reflect poor stewardship or lack of accountability, rather than taking the steps necessary to get an accurate account of the situation.
- Just as is true of any other spiritual gift, **if a giver becomes too focused on issues he sees as priorities, his perspective will reflect “tunnel vision”** instead of wise understanding. For a giver, this would often involve placing too much attention on getting the best deal rather than the final goal, whatever that would be.

# What is the spiritual gift of exhorting?

## Understanding the spiritual gift of exhorting

A Christian's *motivational spiritual gift* represents what God does in him to shape his perspective on life and motivate his words and actions. Romans 12:3–8 describes “basic motivations,” which are characterized by inherent qualities or abilities within a believer—the Creator’s unique workmanship within him or her.

Through the motivational gifts, **God makes believers aware of needs that He wants to meet through them**, for His glory. Then, believers can minister to others through the ministry and manifestation gifts of the Spirit, in ways beyond mere human capability and ingenuity, with maximum effectiveness and minimum weariness.

Each person’s behavior will vary according to factors such as temperament, background, age, gender, culture, and circumstances. However, it is not unusual for individuals who share the same motivational gift to demonstrate common characteristics. Below are some **general characteristics that are typically exhibited** by those who have the motivational gift of exhorting.

## General Characteristics

An exhorter’s central motivational drive is to encourage believers to mature in Christ and to grow spiritually. Exhorters often seek to stimulate that development by discipling, teaching, and counseling others.

- An exhorter regards God’s sovereignty as his “favorite” characteristic of God.
- Exhorters regard trials as opportunities for growth. Since God is in control, they recognize that whatever happens has potential to glorify God and conform believers to the image of Jesus Christ. The exhorter sympathizes with the suffering Christian, but he sees the pain through the lens of God’s sovereignty rather than through the lens of suffering.

(A person with the motivational gift of mercy, on the other hand, would see the pain through the lens of suffering.)

- Exhorters express love through availability.
- Given a choice of helping someone “spiritually” or helping him with a physical need (such as taking a meal to him or mowing his lawn while he’s in the hospital), the exhorter prefers to offer spiritual help. Given a choice of encouraging by empathy or encouraging by exhortation, a person with this motivational gift will exhort every time.
- Wise counsel flows from the heart of an exhorter who can identify precepts and principles in God’s Word skillfully.
- Exhorters love to encourage, encourage, encourage!
- Exhorters and mercy-givers make a good team for counseling someone who is discouraged. The person with the gift of mercy empathizes—he knows how the downhearted person feels. The exhorter exhorts—he knows how the person *needs* to feel! The exhorter’s job is to give hope by sharing a Biblical perspective on the situation and reminding people of God’s power, love, and faithfulness. An exhorter avoids weeping with others (as the mercy-giver would weep) because he sees empathy as encouragement to wallow in self-pity. The exhorter wants to “move on” past the pain and take advantage of the opportunity to become more Christlike.
- An exhorter responds to problems by prescribing specific steps of action; His goal is to make the plan so easy to comprehend that people will understand it, see its potential, embrace it, and grow as a result of carrying it out.

## An Exhorter’s Strengths

- An exhorter uses Scripture to validate the experience.
- Exhorters are willing and eager to come alongside a brother or sister in Christ during difficult circumstances.

- Memorization of, and meditation on, Scripture are usually very important to the exhorter, because he wants to be able to draw wisdom from the well of truth stored in his spirit.
- An exhorter sees every little detail, including the timing of every event, as part of God's good and loving plan.
- Because an exhorter sees trials in a positive light, which is opposite of the world's way of seeing them, an exhorter continually reminds people of God's sovereignty and love.
- Exhorters focus on balance; they avoid extremes, especially in doctrine.
- An exhorter seems to be able to give thanks in all seasons and circumstances, including the darkest ones.
- Exhorters understand that time reading and studying the Word of God brings more than information; it brings transformation.

## An Exhorter's Weaknesses

- Exhorters tend to need visible evidence of acceptance and affirmation.
- They can easily oversimplify solutions, which ultimately results in discouragement rather than encouragement.
- Surprisingly, exhorters can be poor listeners, even though they make excellent counselors. Sometimes they are so intent on telling you how to view your situation from God's perspective that they fail to listen to *your* viewpoint.
- Mature exhorters give wise counsel from the Word of God. Therefore, their counsel usually proves to be effective. Unfortunately, their success often tempts exhorters to promote principles as formulas, and the formulas as cure-alls.
- Exhorters are often naïve and easily manipulated.

- Because an exhorter wants so badly for Scripture to provide a successful step of action to eliminate a problem, he may quote Scripture out of context or imply that it says something that it doesn't mean, rationalizing that the end justifies the means. This is a devastating trap for the exhorter.