



THE MOTIVATIONAL GIFTS

This is a study of Romans 12:3–8. Romans 12 describes gifts from the Father, known as "Motivational Gifts" or "Creational Gifts." They have to do with our basic inward driving bent in life. A proper understanding of this passage and its gifts can truly transform our image of ourselves, for so much of our self-image is tied into understanding how God has "wired" us. "Why do I always just seem to want to give?" "Why am I so tuned in with people's emotions?" "Why do I always want to see to it that people 'learn their lessons' and 'play by the rules'?" "Why aren't I as good an organizer as Brother John or as effective a speaker as Sister Jane?" This is what understanding Creational Gifts is all about.

Each life is unique to God, and His intent is that each person live out that very special and precious uniqueness (Ps. 139:13–18; Jer. 1:5). It is not His intention that people go through life endlessly searching for their place in society or the church, constantly in turmoil in their spirit as to who they are—jumping from career to career or ministry to ministry to try to find themselves. Nor is it God's intent that anyone in His body feel that he/she is the only one or best one in the body because of a particular gift. Born out of a misunderstanding of God's intended design for His church, this pride can be as sinful a tendency as having a low self-image.

We need to keep this in mind as we study each of these gifts, "For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another" (Rom. 12:4, 5). There is no hierarchy with these gifts; our tendency is to opt to have what we deem to be the more "glamorous" gifts, such as prophecy or teaching; but God knows no such hierarchical distinction. Each person is vital as is each gift.



THE MOTIVATIONAL GIFTS

THE GIFTS

The Romans 12 gifts are given by God as Creator of mankind. They are intrinsic tendencies and motivations that make each person unique. The Romans 12 gifts do not refer to ministries in the church but are meant to be used in the Body of Christ in everyday life. These gifts bring order and balance.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A GIFT AND A CALLING?

Gift = what you will do or the “want to”

Calling = where God calls you to make a difference

Personality = how it will look Gifts vary within your lifetime

We each have 2 or 3 gifts. This is called a “gift mix or gift profile”. During our lifetime, the effect of these 2-3 gifts vary. Gifts affect your roles in life, both occupations and relationships. Wise employers hire on gifts, then abilities, and train the needed skills.

WHY DO GIFTS LOOK DIFFERENT?

God the Father deposits gifts in our spirit. Those gifts determine the “spin” or uniqueness to our natural abilities and talents. Gifts are in our spirit but are filtered through our soul (mind, will, and emotions) into the actions of our body. If our mind is not renewed, as Rom. 12:2 tells us, those actions and attitudes are not what God intended.



PROPHET / PERCEIVER

“If prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith” (Rom. 12:6)

Prophecies, propheteia. From pro, “forth,” and phemi, “to speak.” The primary use of the word is not predictive, in the sense of foretelling, but interpretive, declaring, or forth-telling the will and counsel of God. It has to do with becoming aware of God’s undisclosed truths and proclaiming them as they are disclosed. Tremendous spiritual perception accompanies prophetic utterance. On occasion in the Old Testament a person with prophetic insight was called a “seer” (1 Sam. 9:18; 2 Chr. 33:18).

Prophecy in the Bible is very diverse. It can function all the way from the arch-Prophet, Jesus Christ, to the Old Testament classical prophets, to ongoing prophetic ministries in the church, to a Creational Gift, to a manifestation of the Spirit. Therefore, the precise understanding of prophecy, especially in the gift lists, is determined according to the overall context of the list. Therefore, a person with the Romans 12:6 gift of prophecy would be a person endowed by God with an exceptional ability to perceive matters, not based on any ministry office or particular manifestation of the Spirit. He/she sees all of life with special prophetic insight. Some have therefore renamed this particular Creational Gift “insight” to distinguish it from the Ephesians 4:11 and 1 Corinthians 12:10 gifts. Such is linguistically and contextually legitimate.



PROPHET / PERCEIVER

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1 Corinthians 14:24, 25, though talking about the manifestation of the Spirit gift of prophecy, gives valuable information about the nature of prophecy in general that is transferable to this gift as well. Read that section and answer the following.

What is the result of this prophetic disclosure? (v. 25b)

According to verse 24, what two things does prophecy do?

According to verses 24, 25a, what is the relationship between prophetic insight and secret intents or motives of the heart?

Because no gift operates in perfection without intervention from the flesh, what is Paul’s warning attached to this gift? (v. 26)



PROPHET / PERCEIVER

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WHO ARE PROPHETS?

A person with the gift of prophecy sees right and wrong like day and night. They will view all of life with a desire to see others take accountability, repent, confess, and gain a keen awareness of God in all things. Prophets can provide moral and intellectual instruction by revealing God’s truth in specific areas or situations in the way they interpret Scripture. Because of their deep concern over people’s motives and for people to face the truth about themselves, prophets can become judgmental instead of prayerful, and can be seen as direct, blunt, or inconsiderate of the feelings of others. Individuals with this gift must learn to channel their messages in a positive direction and exercise their gift with humility and an ear close to God. Prophets also tend to be very introspective, have intense emotions, and a strong internal sense of justice, integrity, and righteousness.

From your understanding of this gift, what special application do you think Colossians 3:12, 13 might have in the lives of those with this particular gift?



SERVANT

“Or ministry, let us use it in our ministering” (Rom. 12:7)

Ministry, diakonia. Diakonia occurs some thirty-four times in the New Testament. Its basic meaning is “rendering personal help, aid or assistance to others.” In secular Greek it was used for the activity of waiting on tables, caring for household needs or serving in general. It is from the same Greek root as the word for “deacon” (1 Tim. 3:8).

How did those from “the household of Stephanas” minister? (1 Cor. 16:15)

Using Jesus as our Model, what is to be the attitude of those with this gift? (Matt. 20:28)



SERVANT

A LOOK AT MARTHA

According to John 12:2, what is one way Martha is remembered?

According to Luke 10:38, what is one way those with this gift demonstrate it?

According to Luke 10:39, 40, what seems to be the preference of those with this gift?

According to Luke 10:40, what seems to be a possible liability associated with this gift?

According to the exhortation accompanying this gift in Romans 12:7, what seems to be another possible liability associated with this gift?



SERVANT

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WHO ARE SERVANTS?

Those who are servants, those with the gift of ministry, possess a special way of showing God’s love by meeting practical needs and rendering assistance. They are sometimes called “servers” and find great satisfaction in doing things for others. In fact, they are energized when exercising their gift and want to continue serving even more. They are the “hands and feet” of the body of Christ in an extraordinary way, often preferring to do something with their hands over speaking. Servants multiply efficiency, keep things moving, quickly recognize needs, and assist in meeting those needs. These individuals have an ability to look ahead and see or plan what will be needed as natural event planners. Servants may become task driven as opposed to being Spirit led and can become easily irritated if they feel others are not doing their share of work. As servants are typically in supporting roles, they may easily submit to a co-leader to avoid conflict.

Take a look at Matthew 14:13–36. The disciples just witnessed the miracle of Jesus feeding the Five Thousand. You would think that their faith was strengthened by witnessing such an amazing event. Yet, shortly after, they expressed doubts about crossing the lake safely. Based on our study of servants, why do you think the disciples doubted after serving the people alongside Jesus?



TEACHER

“He who teaches, in teaching”
(Rom. 12:7)

Teach, didasko. In classical Greek the root meaning of didasko suggested the idea of causing someone to accept something. It can be translated “to teach, inform, instruct, demonstrate or prescribe.” It has as its aim that of systematically communicating knowledge and skill so as to develop people. Teachers give themselves to facts and systematic instruction. In the New Testament the focus of teaching is how to live out God’s will.

People with this Romans 12:7 gift are those who, regardless of their office or particular ministry in the body of Christ, are motivated by a desire to clarify and expound truth. They enjoy mental challenges and learning. They are generally able to communicate well and will always have a driving need for biblical truth to be accurately explained with well-documented proof of any conclusions drawn.

(Rom. 12:7) What might this indicate about those with this gift speaking up and releasing it?



TEACHER

"He who teaches, in teaching"
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From Jesus, the Great Teacher, we learn many truths about teaching in general that apply to this gift as well.

What was the essential source of ability for Jesus' teachings? (Luke 4:17)

What were His two primary objectives in teaching? (Matt. 22:34–40)

In what sense of the word teach might it be an activity true of all believers? (Col. 3:16) What exhortation is given those with this gift?



TEACHER

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(Rom. 12:7)

WHO ARE TEACHERS?

Some are found in classrooms, but not all. Teachers explain the truth and take difficult concepts to make them easy to understand. They use sound, rational, and intrusive reasoning to convince and help others learn. Those with the teaching gift are skilled debaters; this is also a way they help others learn although it may cause them to appear argumentative. Additionally, teachers can over-analyze an issue and can struggle with intellectual pride. Teachers tend to be self-motivators and self-starters who possess an ability to synthesize ideas resulting in a constant flow of mental information. Routine tasks bore them and they require intellectual stimulation. They do not take anything at face value and research, with the goal of discovering truth, is a top priority because a teacher has the conviction that the main problem in the world is that people lack understanding. If people could just understand, they would know and live the truth. Teachers may even be inclined to think that the world could be saved through education. The rest of us may find this naive. But that is the point; we see the world differently and have a different vocation. Teachers believe that transformation comes through learning.



ENCOURAGER

“He who exhorts, in exhortation”
(Rom. 12:8)

Exhort, parakaleo. A calling alongside to help, to comfort, to give consolation or encouragement, to appeal to, to urge or to cheer up; an exhorter offers a strengthening presence and upholds those appealing for assistance while urging them to pursue a certain course of conduct. Paraklesis (“exhortation”) can come to us by the Holy Spirit, by the Scriptures or by other people with this gift (2 Cor. 5:20).

Someone with this particular Romans 12 gift is motivated to see people encouraged toward growth in the Lord. They are equipped with the special grace of stimulating or guiding people (cf. Acts 8:31) to worthy conduct and personal progress; they make doctrine practical. They tend to be very positive people with a basically positive outlook on life. They are always interested in seeing how tribulation or adversity can be turned into successful living and maturity in the Lord.



ENCOURAGER

“He who exhorts, in exhortation”
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According to 1 Thessalonians 2:11, 12 and 4:9, 10, what are some specific areas in which exhorters are interested in seeing growth and success?

According to Acts 14:22, what is another area?

We’re told in Acts 4:36 that one “Joses ... was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement).” What do we learn from his life about those with the gift of exhortation?

Acts 9:27

Acts 15:39 with Col. 4:10



ENCOURAGER

“He who exhorts, in exhortation”
(Rom. 12:8)

WHO ARE ENCOURAGERS?

Encouragers, or exhorters, make very effective preachers; although these gifts are independent of ecclesiastical office. Encouragers build up the Body of Christ by bringing out the best in others through encouraging but also prescribing practical advice and bringing new perspectives. They desire to see others fulfill their God-given potential and bring new life to people who have lost their determination or feel burnt out. Encouragers can be easily offended when people are not considerate or encouraging towards them and can be over-talkative. People seek out encouragers for advice with relational problems, making those with this gift the most social of all the gifts as they have many friends. The mindset of an encourager also allows them to get out of their comfort-zone to reach out to others.

An example of a great encourager is Barnabas. After his conversion, Paul went to Jerusalem to join the disciples. As a former persecutor of Christians, the Church refused to let Paul into their group because many suffered from his previous actions. Barnabas was the one who vouched for Paul, insisting that they should give him a second chance just as God gives them second chances. Without Barnabas who understood that God was bringing non-Israelites, Gentiles, into the Church, Paul would have had a more difficult time facing intense opposition.



GIVER

“He who gives, with liberality” (Rom. 12:8)

Gives, metadidomi. To give, share, impart, distribute, grant. The word implies liberality or generosity. It is used to exhort those with two outer tunics to give one to someone who has none (Luke 3:11); to encourage people to give with cheerful outflow (Rom. 12:8); and to urge workers to labor with industry in order to give to him who has a need (Eph. 4:28). It also has the idea of supporting or spending yourself for someone else. Those with this Romans 12 gift are not just financial givers; they are more overall contributors with a grace gift to give material, physical, emotional, and psychological support to others. They are special sharers, sharing of themselves to lend supportive encouragement to people. They stand with and undergird people and projects; their chief desire is to make sure people are supported.

Read the following passages and note what is to be shared or imparted to others through this gift.

Luke 3:11

Rom. 1:11

Eph. 4:28

1 Thess. 2:8



GIVER

A LOOK AT ABRAHAM

Abraham models the gift of giving. Since he was a real contributor, let's look at his life.

What does Genesis 13:2 say about his being entrusted with assets? What does Genesis 14:11–16 say about his willingness to act on behalf of others in need?

What does Genesis 14:11–16 say about his willingness to act on behalf of others in need?

What does Genesis 23:1–16 say about his awareness of the value of things and a desire to be honest with a purchase?

What does Genesis 14:17–20 say about his attitude toward tithing?

What does Genesis 22:1–3 say about his willingness to give sacrificially?



GIVER

“He who gives, with liberality” (Rom. 12:8)

WHO ARE GIVERS?

Givers recognize that without funding much that is important does not happen. Sometimes these individuals are even inclined to think that finances make everything work! They are as often as not people who know how to make money, but who know how to give generously. The rest of us might think of them as a bit one-sided in their thinking, but it is not our call. And they are right; we need financial savvy and generosity to sustain the life and ministry of the church, non-profit organizations that respond to human need, the educational institutions that provide centers of learning, and the community organizations that sustain our common life together in neighborhoods. Without the generosity of those who have the means to give, our lives would be significantly impoverished. All of us are called to give generously, but some have the unique ability and vision both to give materially, but also give emotional, psychological, and spiritual support.

Those who give, then, see to it that we have access to adequate resources and receive supportive encouragement to get things done for Christ. They're exhorted to give “with liberality.” The word has the idea of being liberal, generous, and free-flowing. Givers impart resources charitably, contributing to the less fortunate. Their generous and hospitable attitude prompt them to donate personal income, time, and other immaterial things. They are fulfilled knowing what they gave brought joy or aid to another whether the recipient knows the source or not. They tend to have more patience and continue to be gracious, especially when patience and generosity of others have run out, making them ideal people to work with those whom others may find difficult to work with. Givers tend to be frugal, industrious, and independent in nature.

Depending on their secondary gift, the giver may have trouble setting boundaries or seeking God in where to give. In other words, those with this gift must watch the temptation to give selfishly or to give hoping to get something back or expecting others to do the same.



LEADER

“He who leads, with diligence”
(Rom. 12:8)

Leads, *prohistemi*. *Prohistemi* means to be at the head of, to rule, to direct, to manage or to give leadership aid. It was often used for people in the position of superintendence or those who were leaders in an army, a state or a political party. Another word might be “facilitators.” These Romans 12:8 people are gifted to coordinate people to carry out activities and goals. They are particularly gifted at sensing overall problems, surveying needs, enlisting others to do work, assessing the time needed to complete a goal, organizing resources, proceeding under opposition and pressure and delegating authority. They provide the necessary ingredient for God’s people to effectively organize and carry out their goals.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:12 this word describes those who do what?

In 1 Timothy 3:4 it describes an elder’s management of what?

How is one to lead? (Rom. 12:8)

“Diligence” has the idea of striving for, being zealous for, or industriously seeking to do something (2 Tim. 2:15; 4:9).



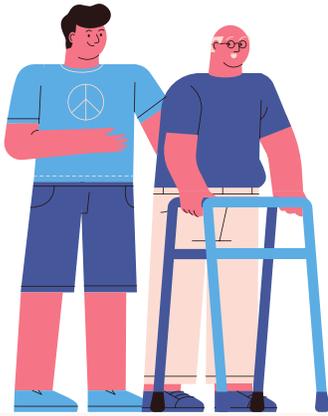
LEADER

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WHO ARE LEADERS?

Leaders bring order, set up structures and systems, and create methods to guide others under their care. They have an ability to see the big picture and like a shepherd guiding sheep, there is an anointing for authority and protection. They have a unique passion for contributing to administration and management so that the organizations can flourish and allow everyone to fulfill their giftedness. Those who are leaders are servants of a different kind- bringing together the gifts of others to enable us all to achieve something greater than the sum of the parts. They help us work together to fulfill our individual mission and our common mission in a manner that reflects the fundamental values we hold together.

Because of the role they play, leaders have an assertive, take-charge attitude, which may come across as controlling instead of guiding. Leaders need to learn how to trust members more, and members under the leader's care need to allow them to share their vision in order to work effectively. Leaders are designed to protect and enable life-giving “dominion” rather than “domination”.



MERCY

“He who shows mercy, with cheerfulness” (Rom. 12:8)

Mercy, *eleeo*. *Eleeo* means to have mercy or pity on someone, to be merciful or compassionate or to help someone out of pity. In classical Greek it often described the emotions felt by contact with an affliction that came undeservedly on someone.

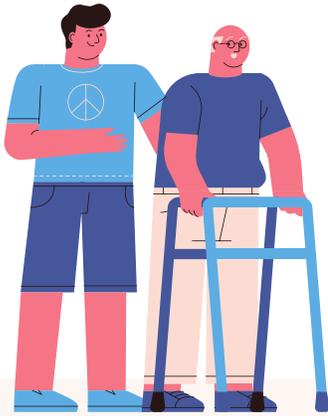
Romans 12 tells us that these people are those whom God has endowed with a special measure of faith to emotionally identify with people so as to show compassion. They are strong “feelers,” with a marked ability to perceive where people are emotionally and to identify with what they are feeling or going through. They aim at doing good and helping others through the motivation of empathy. They shun hard-heartedness; they’re the “heart” of the church in a special way.

According to Mark 5:19, why was the demoniac at Gerasa delivered?

According to Matthew 23:23, mercy is regarded as what?

According to James 3:17, mercy is a sign of what?

According to Romans 12:8, how is this mercy to be extended?



MERCY

A LOOK AT THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Read Luke 10:25–37 and note the following about the gift of mercy in action.

What did the lawyer ask Jesus to define? What was Jesus' response?

How did the Samaritan respond to the victim's distress?

What did he do to help?

How and why do you think the Samaritan was willing to get involved?

Who are you in the parable?



MERCY

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WHO ARE THOSE WHO HAVE MERCY?

Individuals with the gift of mercy understand that the central need of those around them, and of the world, is for others to stand with them; to mourn with those who mourn and weep with those who weep. Those with this gift offer extra measures of grace and comfort and have a strong desire to relieve the pain of others. They are effective and comfortable in roles that require compassion, such as physical therapists, social workers, counselors, or human resources, where they listen to the concern of others. Like the giver, this gift has a large amount of patience and grace; such individuals with this gift are less likely to be frustrated when people repeatedly come to them for problems. In fact, those with the gift of mercy attract hurt and emotionally needy people and must learn to set boundaries so they do not get overwhelmed by the problems of others. They also tend to avoid conflict, can be easily offended, and may often be taken advantage of due to their gracious nature.

The exhortation to cheerfulness likely accompanies the gift of mercy because the strong feeling base of the gift makes it subject to moroseness or emotional depression. Cheerfulness” means gladness or graciousness; it’s being a sunbeam of light in a sickroom. While others may wonder how this solves problems and brings resolution to the issues before us, those who are called to show mercy recognize the transforming power of emphatic identification. They know that the demonstration of mercy is itself life and strength to another.



WHAT ABOUT YOU?



List 10 things that brought you the greatest joy (either single events or activities you have opportunity to do regularly, something you did for a time, or a past experience).

Complete the following sections. Compare your responses to the explanations and what you discovered for each motivational gift to help you determine your giftings.

What is a topic or situation that could keep you talking late into the night?

What would you most like to do for others, have an affect on, or do something about? □

What is it that breaks the heart of God and also breaks your heart?

What is the pain you want to heal or the injustice that you see?

The people I would like to help most are... □

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

6)

7)

8)

9)

10)