

Christians Gone Wild!
1st Corinthians, week 30

Spiritual Gifts IV: Encouragement, Giving, Leadership, Mercy, Hospitality (Romans
12:6–8, 13)

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We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.
Romans 12:6

This is part four in a seven-part series on the spiritual gifts. This week we are departing from our study of 1 Corinthians to examine the spiritual gifts of encouragement, giving, leadership, mercy, and hospitality from Romans 12:6–8,13.

Encouragement

Place in Scripture: Romans 12:8

Defined: The gift of encouragement (also called the gift of exhortation) involves motivating, encouraging, and consoling others so they mature in their walk with Jesus.

General makeup: Christians with this gift have an unusual sensitivity for and are attracted to those who are discouraged or struggling. As a result, people tend to pursue them for healing words, gracious truth, and compassionate counsel. These people also tend to have a high degree of patience and optimism. They may have a knack for one-on-one relationships and prefer working with an individual or small group.

Seen in Jesus' ministry: Jesus told us to love even our enemies and do good to them (Luke 6:27–35), and exhorted people to “leave your life of sin” (John 8:11).

Illustrated biblically: Barnabas, whose name means “Son of Encouragement” (Acts 4:36), encouraged Paul (Acts 9:27) and John Mark (Acts 15:39). Paul had this gift (Acts 14:21–22; 16:40; 20:1) as did Judas and Silas (Acts 15:31–32).

Do you have this gift? (1) Do people seek you out for advice and encouragement? (2) Do you enjoy walking with someone through difficulties? (3) Are you attracted to those who are hurting and needy? (4) Are you patient with people? (5) Would you rather speak personally with someone about their problems rather than send them to someone else for help? (6) Do you find it easy to express joy in the presence of those who are suffering?

Giving

Place in Scripture: Romans 12:8

Defined: The gift of giving is the ability to give money and other forms of wealth joyfully, wisely, and generously to meet the needs of others and help support ministries.

General makeup: Regardless of the amount, people with this gift genuinely view their treasures, talents, and time as on loan from God and not their own. They are often moved to meet the physical needs of others. They enjoy giving of themselves and what they have. Even if they do not possess the resources to help, they earnestly pray for those needs to be met.

Seen in Jesus' ministry: Roughly 25 percent of Jesus' words in the gospels are related to our resources and stewardship of them. Though He was poor, Jesus not only fed thousands (Mark 6:41) but also gave us His life as a gift (John 15:13).

Illustrated biblically: The widow (Mark 12:42–43), Tabitha (Acts 9:36), Barnabas (Acts 4:34–37), and the Macedonian church (2 Cor. 8:1–2) all had this gift.

Do you have this gift? (1) Do you tend to see the needs of others more than other people? (2) Do you enjoy giving your time, talent, and treasure to others? (3) Do you see giving to a worthwhile project as an exciting honor and privilege? (4) Do you give to the church regularly, cheerfully, and sacrificially? (5) Do you often hear people commenting that you are a generous person? (6) Do you find yourself looking for opportunities to give your money—even when no one asks?

Leadership

Place in Scripture: Romans 12:8

Defined: The spiritual gift of leadership is found in people who have a clear, significant vision from God and are able to communicate it publicly or privately in such a way that they influence others to pursue that vision.

General makeup: These people tend to gravitate toward the “point position” in a ministry. Others tend to have trust and confidence in their abilities. They best serve others by leading them. They tend to operate with a strong sense of destiny.

Seen in Jesus' ministry: Jesus was such a gifted leader that in His day thousands followed Him and today billions follow Him as the greatest leader who has ever lived.

Illustrated biblically: Examples abound, including Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Daniel, Josiah, Paul, Peter, and James.

Do you have this gift? (1) Do others have confidence in your ability to lead? (2) Do you enjoy being the “final voice” or the one with the overall responsibility for the direction and success of a group or organization? (3) When a difficult situation arises, do others look to you for input and leadership? (4) Do you usually take leadership in a group where none exists? (5) Do you find leadership enjoyable rather than frustrating and difficult? (6) Do others look to you to make the major decisions for a group or organization?

Mercy

Place in Scripture: Romans 12:8

Defined: The gift of mercy is the capacity to feel and express unusual compassion and sympathy for those in difficult or crisis situations and provide them with the necessary help and support to see them through tough times.

General makeup: They have the ability to “walk in another's shoes” and to feel the pain and burdens they carry. They desire to make a difference in the lives of hurting people without being judgmental. They may have a difficult time evaluating the intentions of others and at times appear naïve.

Seen in Jesus' ministry: Jesus taught on mercy (Matt. 5:7; 9:13; 23:23). He is repeatedly described as having compassion (Matt. 9:36; 15:32; 23:37; Luke 7:13) and was so filled with mercy that He sometimes wept (John 11:35). Jesus' mercy included an attentiveness to and concern for children (Matt. 19:14).

Illustrated biblically: Dorcas “was always doing good and helping the poor” (Acts 9:36). Also, the good Samaritan is one of the most classic stories ever told on the subject of mercy (Luke 10:30–37).

Do you have this gift? (1) Do you find yourself being drawn to people who are needy, hurting, sick, disabled, or elderly? (2) Do you often think of ways to minister to those who are suffering? (3) Do you sense a great deal of compassion for people having personal and emotional problems? (4) Do you find that when you visit those who are suffering it brings you joy rather than depressing you? (5) Do you find yourself responding to people more out of compassion than judgment?

Hospitality

Place in Scripture: Romans 12:13

Defined: The spiritual gift of hospitality is the ability to welcome strangers and entertain guests, often in your home, with great joy and kindness so that they become friends. Hospitality is supposed to include one’s family (1 Tim. 5:8), friends (Prov. 27:10), Christians (Gal. 6:10), and strangers who may not be Christians (Lev. 19:34).

General makeup: These people tend to have an “open home” where others are welcome to visit. This gift is often combined with the natural talents of interior design, cooking, and event planning. Importantly, hospitality is NOT to be extended to false teachers and the like, who are a danger (2 John 10–11).

Seen in Jesus’ ministry: Jesus spent time befriending social outcasts (Matt. 11:19), often ate with His disciples, and has welcomed us into the family of God, which includes an eternal home (John 14:2) and an eternal party (Isa. 25:6–9; Rev. 19:6–9).

Illustrated biblically: Elders/pastors are commanded to exercise hospitality (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8). Peter enjoyed the hospitality of Simon (Acts 9:43) and Cornelius (Acts 10:48). Paul enjoyed the hospitality of Lydia (Acts 16:15) and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:34).

Do you have this gift? (1) Do you enjoy having people in your home? (2) Do you enjoy watching people meet and have fun at parties and events you helped to plan and host? (3) Is your home the kind that most people feel comfortable in and drop by to visit unannounced? (4) Do you feel that something is really missing in your life when you cannot have guests into your home? (5) When you think of your home do you view it from the perspective of guests who will visit? (6) Do you consider your home as a place of ministry?