ChristAssembly.org

SPIRITUAL GIFTS SERIES

The Spiritual Gift of Exhortation

Class of Gift: Counseling

"or he who exhorts, in his exhortation;"

Romans 12:8, Page 1775

Section One

Introduction

1.1 Every Born-Again Christian Has at Least One Spiritual Gift. Every born-again believer in Jesus Christ has received a spiritual gift from the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 12:4-11, page 1796). **Please recall also that one spiritual gift may have a variety of ministries, with a variety of spiritual effects (1 Corinthians 12:4-7, page 1796).** Therefore, if you have the spiritual gift of exhortation, that single gift may result in a variety of ministries, producing a variety of effects. Furthermore, if you have the spiritual gift of exhortation, your ministry may look very different from another believer with the same gift of exhortation. Your ministries of the same spiritual gift

may produce very different effects. So, one gift may result in different ministries, and each ministry may produce very different spiritual effects.

1.2 Meaning of the Term "Exhortation." The term used to describe the gift of exhortation in Romans 12:8, page 1775, literally means to call along side of you ("παρακαλῶν"). In Romans 12:8, page 1775, Paul did not define this term. Therefore, I understand that Paul recognized that his readers would be familiar with the normal usage of this term "exhorting," preserved for us in Scripture, and it would serve as our guide to understanding this spiritual gift of exhortation.

1.3 The New Testament Diversity of the Term "Exhortation." The Greek term translated here as exhortation has diverse applications in the New Testament. As you read through these varying uses of the term "to call along side," please keep in mind that I interpret these passages below as examples on the one hand of spiritual activities all believers will do at times; but, on the other hand, the person with the spiritual gift of exhortation in the forms described below will have a special gift from God to edify believers and build up unity. Let us explore some of those uses to gain insight into the different ways God gifts people to exhort in His name and in His ministry to the Body of Christ. We will see below that the spiritual gift of exhortation involves different major areas of ministry. We will look at them one at a time.

Section Two

The Ministry of Exhortation: Foundations

2.1 Exhort: Basic Meaning. Exhortation has the traditional meaning of advising, instructing, and calling upon urgently. In the New Testament, the spiritual gift of exhortation has many ministries and effects (1 Corinthians 12:4-6, page 1796).

2.2 Exhortation: Teaching and Refuting. As we hold fast the faithful word of God's teaching, we will be able both to exhort ("παρακαλεῖν") in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict (Titus 1:9, page 1866). In this case, the spiritual gift of exhortation focuses upon taking action (encouraging sound doctrine and refuting those who contradict) based upon the teaching and applying the word of God.

2.3 Exhortation: Preaching. Biblical preaching includes exhorting ("παρακαλέσας") believers from the Word of God. Paul exhorted believers as he preached the Bible to them (Acts 20:1-2, page 1739). The spiritual gift of exhortation includes taking the Word of God to elders and other believers to strengthen them and prepare them for further service.

2.4 Exhortation: Godly Living. Paul also exhorted ("παρακαλοῦμεν") the Thessalonians to Godly living (1 Thessalonians 4:1, page 1849). Likewise, in Hebrews

13:22, page 1887, we see a similar idea of urging believers to bear with all the word of exhortation contained in the New Testament book of Hebrews. In passing, please note that the spiritual gift of prophecy also relates to the spiritual gift of exhortation. Exhortation does not relate to new revelation from God (the spiritual gift of prophecy), but rather the use of the Word of God (revealed through spiritual gift of prophecy e prophecy) to edify the lives of believers and promote sound doctrine. The spiritual gift of exhortation includes the proper, spiritual application of expository teaching from the Word of God (1 Corinthians 14:31, page 1800). This spiritual gift links the Word of God with action based upon it. That action can be refutation, instruction, and application of teaching.

Section Three

The Ministry of Imploring

3.1 Exhortation: Imploring. The spiritual gift of exhortation includes, at times, the act of imploring someone to do something. The term "implore" means to beg or request with urgency and in a serious manner to do something.

3.2 Exhortation: Imploring God To Act Now. Consider the centurion who came to Jesus, imploring Him to help a tormented servant (Matthew 8:6, page 1512). Although that centurion was not demonstrating the spiritual gift of

exhortation, he does illustrate the passion and urgency of the gift of exhortation when it comes to imploring. The centurion stands for the concept that the spiritual gift of exhortation includes, at times, an urgent, forceful appeal for help from God.

3.3 Exhortation: Imploring Believers To Walk Worthy of Their Calling by the Lord Jesus. Paul implored ("Παρακαλῶ") the Ephesians to walk worthy of their calling (Ephesians 4:1, page 1830). One aspect of the spiritual gift of exhortation includes the gift of imploring people to take action, and specifically, to do the will of God. In your life, you may recall a time when someone implored you to walk with God, to do His will.

Section Four

Exhortation: The Ministry of Comfort

4.1 Exhortation: Comforting. Believers blessed with the ministry of comforting show one aspect of the spiritual gift of Exhortation. Comfort can result in a variety of ministries and a variety of effects.

4.1.1 Exhortation: Comforting the Afflicted. God Himself really cares about each believer and comforts them. He also provides the spiritual gift of comforting, which goes beyond the duty and privilege of every believer to comfort others. Some believers who have the spiritual gift of comforting have been trained by God using affliction

in their lives. In 2 Corinthians 1:4, page 1804, we read: "God comforts ("παρακαλῶν") believers in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort ("παρακαλεῖν") those who are in any affliction with the comfort ("παρακλήσεως") with which we ourselves are comforted ("παρακαλούμεθα") by God." Even while they are still suffering with their own afflictions, by God's strength and gift, they reach out and call alongside others suffering their own afflictions and comfort them with God's comfort that they have experienced firsthand (2 Corinthians 1:4, page 1804). When believers face serious affliction and need comforting, God sends a person with the spiritual gift of comforting.

4.1.2 <u>Exhortation: Comforting the Grieving</u>. When believers see a loved one die, we do not grieve as other people who have no hope. We comfort ("παρακαλεῖτε") one another with the knowledge that each believer who has left the body is present with the Lord. Furthermore, each body will be resurrected in glory when Christ Jesus comes in the clouds to rapture His saints in Christ. The saint with the spiritual gift of comfort will apply God's gracious truth to the grieving in a special outpouring of spiritual activity (1 Thessalonians 4:18, page 1850).

4.1.3 <u>Exhortation:</u> Comforting the Repentant. Every believer must comfort ("παρακαλέσαι") believers who confess their sins, so that they will not be overwhelmed by sorrows (2 Corinthians 2:7, page 1806). Yet, this spiritual gift of exhortation provides special comfort for restoring

the repentant soul as it hurts from sin. Indeed, when the church imposes discipline upon a believer, the goal will always be restoration (Galatians 6:1, 1826). After repentance, restoration comes with comforting. In contrast to the exhortation gift that implores, or exhorts in the narrow sense, this gift follows up with people who have strayed, repented and now need comforting.

4.1.4 Exhortation: Comforting the Depressed. God comforts ("παρακαλῶν") the depressed, and sent Titus who comforted ("παρεκάλεσεν") Paul. (2 Corinthians 7:6, page 1811). The word used for depression here ("ταπεινοὺς") means low, humble, or brought low with grief. God used the arrival of Titus to encourage Paul and his companions. The spiritual gift here brings comfort to the grieving, the lowly, the emotionally turmoiled and downtrodden.

Section Five

Exhortation: The Ministry of Appealing

5.1 Exhortation: Appealing. Another area of exhortation includes appealing. Jude wrote to believers, appealing ("παρακαλῶν") to them to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints (Jude 1:3, page 1912). Compare the effect of love motivating Paul to appeal to Philemon for Onesimus his runaway slave (Philemon 1:9, page 1868; compare Philemon 1:10 for the same word used to appeal). Some believers

possess the special gift of interceding for another person, and appealing for them and appealing to another believer to do the gracious thing.

Section Six

Exhortation: The Ministry of Urging

6.1 Exhortation: Urging. The ministry of urging believers falls into four related areas.

6.1.1 Exhortation: Urging Sensible Living. Paul urged ("παρακάλει") the young men to be sensible ("σωφρονεῖν") (Titus 2:6, page 1866). At times, we all need urging to live a more sensible, and less unrestrained, life. In particular, this word sensible includes the idea of restraining passions. God gifts some people to urge you to live under control, and not in runaway passions. While this gift may be full of emotion like imploring, it also brings all emotions under the control of God. The spiritual gift of exhortation includes the ministry of urging believers to live sensibly.

6.1.2 Exhortation: Urging Completion. Likewise, Paul and his group urged ("παρακαλέσαι") Titus that he may complete ("ἐπιτελέσῃ") the collection for the poor begun among the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 8:6, page 1812). The spiritual gift of exhortation includes the ministry of urging believers to complete the spiritual work they have begun.

6.1.3 Exhortation: Urging Believers to Get Along. This urging may be directed to fellow believers to get along: "I urge ("παρακαλῶ") Euodia and I("παρακαλῶ") urge Syntyche to live in harmony ("τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν") in the Lord" (Philippians 4:2, page 1839). Some believers possess the gift of urging people to reconcile their differences and live together in peace. The spiritual gift of exhortation includes the ministry of urging believers to get along with each other so that they live in harmony.

6.1.4 Exhortation: Urging Believers to Abstain from Fleshly Lusts. Peter wrote: "I urge you ("παρακαλῶ")" . . . to abstain from fleshly lusts (1 Peter 2:11, page 1895). Fleshly lusts plague all believers, but some believers God empowers with a special gift to urge us to abstain from indulging the desires of the flesh and the mind. The spiritual gift of exhortation includes the ministry of urging believers to abstain from fleshly lusts.

Section Seven

Exhortation: The Ministry of Encouraging

7.1 Exhortation: Encouraging. In contrast to what many believers think and practice, God wants to encourage your life. Believers must encourage one another and build up one another in Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:11, page 1850). The spiritual gift of encouragement often includes a note of urgency.

7.1.1 Exhortation: Encouraging Today. Because of the deceitfulness of sin, and the way it hardens our hearts, we need encouragement right now, today. We must encourage ("παρακαλεῖτε") one another as long is it is "Today," so that no one will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:13, page 1872). The spiritual gift of exhortation includes the ministry of encouraging believers today.

7.1.2 Exhortation: Encouraging Strength and Faith. Paul sent Timothy ahead to Thessalonica to strengthen and encourage ("παρακαλέσαι") their faith (1 Thessalonians 3:2, page 1848). The spiritual gift of exhortation includes the ministry of encouraging strength and faith in believers.

7.1.3 Exhortation: Encouraging To Endure Tribulations. Paul and Silas returned to cities, "strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging ("παρακαλοῦντες") them to continue in their faith, and saying 'Through many trials and tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God'" (Acts 14:22, page 1728). As believers, tribulations will come into our lives, and we should consider ourselves blessed. God has already made us more than conquerors, and believers gifted by God with encouragement remind us of that fact all the time. The spiritual gift of exhortation includes the ministry of encouraging believers to continue in their faith, even when they encounter tribulations, knowing that they will enter the kingdom of God after suffering on earth.

Section Eight

Exhortation: The Ministry of Conciliating

8.1 Exhortation: Conciliating. Finally, consider the ministry of conciliating. Paul said: "When we are slandered ("δυσφημούμενοι"), we try to conciliate ("παρακαλοῦμεν");" (1 Corinthians 4:13, page 1786). While we all should follow the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12, page 1506), God provides a special gift of reaching out to people who are speaking evil untruths about you. This type of conciliation touches the lives of the believers who have created significant distance in their relationships with other Christians. Conciliation brings them together, even in the face of one person being sinful. The spiritual gift of exhortation includes the ministry of conciliation.

Section Nine

Summary of the Spiritual Gift of Exhortation

9.1 Summary. Summarizing this spiritual gift of exhortation does not seem easy, except to make the following points.

9.1.1 Exhortation: Many Ministries. The Spiritual Gift of Exhortation comes in many Biblical forms, producing a variety of effects, and a variety of ministries.

9.1.2. Exhortation: Up Close and Personal. The Spiritual Gift of Exhortation is up close and personal. It often rests upon establishing a personal relationship.

9.1.3 Exhortation: Calling Love, with Purpose. Exhortation literally involves getting close to people in love, and calling to them in love, with a purpose.

Section Ten

Hallmarks of the Spiritual Gift of Exhortation

10.1 Exhortation: Understanding the Spiritual Gift. Beverly, my wife, went through this study with me recently. She said: "Wow, I may have this spiritual gift now that I understand it." Sometimes careful study may lead you to know more about how God has gifted you for service. Remember that our spiritual unity and maturity depend upon all of the saints, and not the "clergy," doing the work of service to God by ministering to the Body of Christ. Please recall that the list below indicates some of the ministries exhortation-gifted believers perform in service to Jesus Christ our Lord.

♦ Exhortation-gifted believers teach and refute.

♦ Exhortation-gifted believers preach.

♦ Exhortation-gifted believers encourage Godly-living.

♦ Exhortation-gifted believers encourage other believers to act now.

♦ Exhortation-gifted believers to walk worthy of their calling in Jesus Christ.

♦ Exhortation-gifted believers comfort the afflicted.

♦ Exhortation-gifted believers comfort the grieving.

♦ Exhortation-gifted believers comfort the repentant.

♦ Exhortation-gifted believers comfort the depressed.

♦ Exhortation-gifted believers appeal to other believers.

♦ Exhortation-gifted believers urge sensible living.

♦ Exhortation-gifted believers urge completion.

♦ Exhortation-gifted believers urge completion.

♦ Exhortation-gifted believers urge believers to get along.

♦ Exhortation-gifted believers urge believers to abstain from fleshly lusts.

♦ Exhortation-gifted believers encourage believers today.

♦ Exhortation-gifted believers encourage strength and faith.

- Exhortation-gifted believers to endure tribulation.
- Exhortation-gifted believers conciliate.