

The Baptism in The Holy Spirit Spring Bible Study Series

“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit”
Ephesians 5:18

Week Focus: The Holy Spirit and His Gifts-Part 2-Motivational Gifts

Text: Romans 12

Resource: <https://iblp.org/questions/what-are-seven-motivational-gifts>

Objective:

1. To gain a greater understanding of the Holy Spirit and Me

Bellringer:

Spiritual Gifts Inventory

This week Introduction:

Today we look at the **EXHORTING Motivational spiritual gifts**. Each Christian receives one at the time of salvation, and it is the tool through which God **works in us**.

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.

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.

Following are some traits commonly observed in those who have the [motivational spiritual gift of exhortation](#). [These traits can be used to benefit others, or they can be misused and thereby cause discord in the Body of Christ.](#)

When a believer walks according to the Spirit (see Galatians 5:25), his unique perspective (in this case, exhorting) is demonstrated through traits that reflect the character of Christ. However, when a believer walks in "the flesh," making choices that are determined by his sinful nature, his unique perspective is demonstrated through undesirable, ungodly traits. (See Galatians 5:16–17.)

Read these examples thoughtfully and prayerfully, and **ask God to help you discern if your motivational gift is exhorting**. If it is, be encouraged as you learn about the special virtue and wisdom that God has given you with this gift. Be warned of the temptation to misapply these Godly traits when you fail to walk in the grace God gives you to use them righteously. (See Hebrews 12:15.)

Committed to Spiritual Growth

The motivation of an exhorter is to see spiritual growth take place in practical living, and he is willing to become personally involved to see it achieved.

The Apostle Paul demonstrated the gift of exhorting. His words in Galatians 4:19 reflect his desire to see spiritual growth among believers, as well as his willingness to be personally involved in their lives: "*My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.*" In his letter to the church in Colosse, Paul declared that he worked night and day, "*warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect [mature] in Christ Jesus*"(Colossians 1:28).

Misuse of this trait: *Keeps others waiting for him while he is busy ministering*
Due to an exhorter's willingness to give people whatever time is necessary to help them grow spiritually, his ministry often cuts into family time and personal responsibilities. He often assumes that his family will understand—until major resentments surface. Paul understood the sacrifices that he was making in his ministry. If an exhorter is married, his priority must be his marriage. (See I Corinthians 7:32–40.)

Identifies Root Problems

An exhorter can often discern the spiritual maturity of another person. Based on this, **the exhorter will identify obstacles in the lives of those who are not growing spiritually** and give encouragement to those who are growing. Paul saw the Corinthians as spiritual infants and therefore could not speak to them "*as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ*" (I Corinthians 3:1).

Misuse of this trait: *Looks to himself for solutions*

*As an exhorter gains experience and success in counseling, he tends to categorize problems and arrive at conclusions before getting all the facts. If he **fails to listen completely and sense direction from the Holy Spirit**, an exhorter can be guilty of giving wrong direction. (See Proverbs 18:13.)*

Sees Steps of Action

An exhorter has **the ability to visualize spiritual achievement for another Christian** and then help him work out practical steps of action to achieve it. These steps are designed to remove hindrances and develop personal disciplines through which the Holy Spirit can work. Paul told Timothy to flee youthful lusts, to avoid foolish questions, and to follow righteousness with a pure heart. (See II Timothy 2:22–23.)

Misuse of this trait: *Being proud of visible results*

*When an exhorter shares steps of action, he assumes that they will be carried out. He bases this expectation on the fact that he has come alongside and is working with the person to achieve agreed-upon goals. As spiritual growth takes place, **it is easy for an exhorter to take personal credit for it**. He may also be tempted to settle for outward conformity rather than true inward change.*

Raises Hope for Solutions

An exhorter **uses examples from the lives of others** to help Christians see the potential of daily victory. Paul used the testimony of one church to motivate another church. (See II Corinthians 9:2.) He used his own life to illustrate God's grace, since he was the chief of all sinners.

Misuse of this trait: *Starts projects prematurely*

*Exhorters tend to use projects to motivate others, and then when others are involved, the exhorter finds something else to work on. They **jump into new projects without finishing existing ones**. After being assigned several projects, those who are working on them may become frustrated. The exhorter can be insensitive and inefficient, even though he sees all the projects as a means to accomplish a bigger goal.*

Turns Problems Into Benefits

Mature exhorters have learned by experience that God gives special grace during trials. They are champions of faith who **direct believers to God's redemptive power and purposes in all circumstances**. They take great pleasure in helping others recognize the benefits of all suffering and sorrow, as God lovingly redeems each painful or bewildering circumstance. Paul gloried in tribulation. His credentials were the persecutions that he experienced and the counseling God gave him during his afflictions. (See II Corinthians 1:1–17.)

Misuse of this trait: *Treats people as projects*

The exhorter is constantly on the lookout for steps of action that will bring lasting results. Therefore, as he works with his family or friends, they may get the impression that they are simply another counseling project rather than real people who need personal attention.

Desires to Be Transparent

An exhorter knows that true spiritual growth will not take place where there is a stronghold of guilt. Paul told Timothy to maintain a “good conscience.” (See I Timothy 1:19.) **An exhorter is willing to be vulnerable to others**, sharing with them his own shortcomings and weaknesses in order to gain a wider hearing for the Gospel. (See James 4:6 and I Peter 5:5.)

Misuse of this trait: *Shares private illustrations*

Sometimes the exhorter tells other people knowledge he gains during his counseling experiences—information that was meant for his ears only. Exhorters depend heavily on illustrations to communicate their messages. However, when these illustrations are shared without permission, listeners become uneasy, and those who were counseled become resentful.

Gains Insight Through Experience

As the exhorter studies Scripture and life experience, **he is alert to cause-and-effect sequences**. Through these patterns he discovers underlying principles of life.

Misuse of this trait: *Presents truth out of balance*

Exhorters tend to avoid heavy doctrinal teaching that does not have immediate practical application. This emphasis can result in an imbalance of teaching content, which will eventually show up as doctrinal error. Thus, the exhorter needs the balancing ministry of the teacher, who is sensitive to doctrinal integrity.

Explains the Truth in Logical Steps

An exhorter tends to explain truth using logical reasoning in order to motivate people to act upon it. **He sees clear steps of action that can be taken**, and he urges people to act on them quickly. Because of his logic, Paul’s writings in I Corinthians 15 have been studied in law schools. He reasoned with the Jews, the Greeks, King Agrippa, and others. (See Acts 18:4, 26:28.)

Misuse of this trait: *Sets unrealistic goals*

An exhorter often visualizes long-range projects and goals for people. However, he often doesn’t present the goals with a realistic timetable. When others assume that the goals will be accomplished much sooner than they can be achieved, the situation raises expectations and breeds disillusionment.

Desires to Share Face to Face

An exhorter needs to see the facial expressions of his listeners in order to determine their responses and to confirm positive results. Paul’s longing to see his fellow believers was constantly reaffirmed. (See I Thessalonians 2:17, 3:10; II Timothy 1:4.) He used personal conferences extensively. (See I Thessalonians 2:11–12.)

Misuse of this trait: *Gives up on uncooperative people*

Exhorters tend to lose hope for people who do not quickly and consistently take steps of action toward spiritual growth. By surrounding themselves with only those who respond quickly, they forfeit valuable personal character training and insights that God will then teach them in other ways.

Are You an Exhorter?

Do you recognize any of these positive characteristics or their misapplications as ones that *you* have demonstrated? **Do the motivations of an exhorter guide your decisions and actions?** If so, rejoice, because God has given you a unique responsibility in the Body of Christ!

If these characteristics, and their misuses, do *not* reflect your motivations, we encourage you to **read and study similar information about each of the other six spiritual motivational gifts** ([prophecy](#), [serving](#), [teaching](#), [giving](#), [organizing](#), and [mercy](#)). Ask the Lord to reveal your spiritual gift to you. God will show you how He has gifted you. Be diligent!

As each of us identifies his or her motivational gift, he or she will be better equipped to achieve maximum fruitfulness with minimum weariness. **As we exercise our gifts, we experience personal fulfillment and a deep sense of joy.**

Russell Kelfer, in his book titled *Discovering Your Spiritual Gift*, gives us an excellent word picture related to the motivational spiritual gifts assigned by God: "This isn't a gift for you to put on the mantle like a trophy to admire. **It is like a certain kind of glove that you put on that allows your hands to do the work of the ministry they were called to do.** It is like a certain kind of spiritual shoes you wear to take you where you need to go" ([Kelfer, page 10](#)). [Let's put on those custom-designed gloves and shoes and get to work!](#)