

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 **MERCY Motivational spiritual gift**. Each Christian receives one at the time of salvation, and it is the tool through which God **works in us**.

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.**

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.

Are You a Mercy-Giver?

Following are some traits commonly observed in those who have the [motivational spiritual gift of mercy](#). *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, mercy) 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 mercy**. 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.)

Deep Loyalty to Friends

A person with the gift of mercy **will demonstrate loyalty to a friend**, including reacting harshly toward those who attack the friend. When the Apostle John (who had the motivational gift of mercy) watched the Samaritans reject Jesus, Whom he loved, John wanted to call down fire from heaven to consume them. (See Luke 9:54.)

Misuse of this trait: *Takes up offenses*

Mercy-givers tend to take up an offense for someone who is being hurt by another person, especially if the one being hurt is a friend. This response can easily lead to bitterness.

Needs Deep Friendships

The nature of a mercy-giver usually requires close friendships. These **friendships must be based on mutual commitment that is reaffirmed often**. John enjoyed such a friendship with Christ. He was not only closer to Christ than most of the other disciples, but he referred to himself as "*the disciple whom Jesus loved.*" (See John 21:20, 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7.)

Misuse of this trait: *Becomes possessive*

The mercy's deep need for commitment in a close friendship can cause him to monopolize the time and attention of others. When he experiences disappointments in one friendship, the mercy-giver tends to place greater demands on a new friendship.

Empathizes With Hurting People

A mercy is **able to sense which individuals are hurting and to share the pain with them**. Along with pain, a mercy senses the full scope of emotions. John wrote his first epistle to give joy, fellowship, hope, and confidence and to cast out fear and torment. (See I John 1:3-4, 3:2-3, 4:18, 5:13-15.)

Misuse to this trait: *Tolerates evil*

If mercy-givers do not have spiritual discernment about why people suffer, they may give sympathy and encouragement to those who suffer because they violated God's moral laws. A mercy can learn discernment by seeing people in light of God's Word and through the perspective of the other spiritual gifts.

Makes Decisions Based on Benefits

Mercies find it hard to be firm, because they do not want to offend other people. Therefore, **the mercy must see that greater hurt and offenses will occur if he fails to be decisive**. When John was faced with denying Jesus, he demonstrated boldness and decisiveness, which caused the Sadducees to marvel. (See Acts 4:13.)

Misuse of this trait: *Fails to be firm*

When a mercy-giver is given a position of leadership, he will tend to avoid disciplinary action that is needed. As a result, the person who should have been disciplined is not brought to repentance, others react to his leadership, and more conflicts develop.

Deeply Sensitive to Loved Ones

The gift of mercy carries with it the ability to sense genuine love. Therefore, it carries a **greater vulnerability to deeper and more frequent hurts** from those who fail to demonstrate sincere love. In his writings, John used the word *love* more frequently than any other writer of the New Testament books.

Misuse of this trait: *Leans on emotions vs. reason*

Because those with the gift of mercy have such sensitive feelings, they tend to base their decisions on emotions rather than on principles. Their subjective reasoning can easily cause them to reject Biblical doctrines that seem harsh to them.

Attracts People Who Are in Distress

A mercy-giver **has a deep sense of compassion for people who are going through mental or emotional distress**. This sensitivity causes those with hurts to be drawn to him and to confide in him. As Christ was dying, He transferred to John responsibility for His grieving mother.

Misuse of this trait: *Defrauding the opposite sex*

A person of the opposite sex tends to be drawn to one who has the gift of mercy because of the mercy's ability to be a sensitive, understanding, and responsive listener. The possibility of defrauding others must be considered in any relationship that a mercy has with a person of the opposite sex.

Desires to Remove Hurts

Whereas an exhorter will try to help a person find benefit from his hurts, **a mercy-giver will try to remove the source of the hurts**. A key message from John's first epistle was for Christians to stop hurting and hating each other. (See I John 3:11, 15; 4:7-12.)

Misuse of this trait: *Reacts to God's purposes*

Unlike exhorters, who look at suffering as a means of receiving more grace and growing spiritually, mercies tend to react to the idea that God would allow a good person to suffer. Unless the person with the gift of mercy maintains a proper perspective, he can easily become bitter toward God.

Measures Acceptance by Closeness

A person with the gift of mercy **tends to need physical closeness in order to be reassured of acceptance.** The closeness includes times of rich fellowship. John sought out the closest place to Christ at the Last Supper and leaned upon the Lord. His need for physical closeness may also have prompted his request to sit next to Christ in glory. (See Mark 10:35–37.)

Misuse of this trait: *Failing to show deference*

When a person with the gift of mercy demands physical closeness in a friendship, he may fail to consider the desires of other individuals who need that person's time and attention. John was gently reprimanded for his request to be next to Jesus in His kingdom.

Attracted to Prophets

The statement that "opposites attract" is certainly true with the motivational gifts. Those with the gift of mercy are often attracted to those with the gift of prophecy. **The firm truth of the prophet is thus balanced with the gentle love of the mercy.** John spent more time with Peter than with any other disciple. (See Luke 22:8, Acts 3:1–11, 4:13–22, 8:14.)

Misuse of this trait: *Cuts off insensitive people*

A mercy quickly recognizes and reacts to people whose words and actions reflect insensitivity to the feelings of others. Rather than trying to help this insensitive person, the mercy will tend to cut off fellowship with him.

Are You a Mercy-Giver?

Do you recognize any of these positive characteristics or their misapplications as ones that you have demonstrated? **Do the motivations of a mercy-giver 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](#), [exhorting](#), [giving](#), and [organizing](#)). [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 excellent 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!](#)