

## Elder Training Series

### Session 13 - The Spiritual Gifts of 'Showing Mercy', 'Faith', 'Encouraging' (NIV based)

(Repeating) NOTES: - - Perhaps it would be prudent for you to mark or highlight the items in this document that you suspect you need to study further, or accept, or correct, or develop, or work on, or improve in your life.

- - It is important to note that Scriptures do very little to describe, expound, or explain what some of these individual gifts are and how they are manifested in believers' lives.

- - Consequently, many of the following descriptions of these spiritual gifts are based on a combination of biblically-based logic and reasoning, defining of original Greek words, relating Biblical statements, experiential evidence and observations, Holy Spirit-guided insights, and the supporting opinions of several well-respected authors.

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#### SHOWING MERCY:

**"...if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully."** - Romans 12:8

- - The spiritual 'gift of **showing mercy**' involves showing "pity, mercy, and compassion". (MacArthur 142)

- - A believer with the 'gift of showing mercy' has the Holy Spirit-given special capacity to display "compassion, empathy, weeping, and a genuine, deep, infectious joy" as he/she identifies with, sympathizes with, and suffers alongside those who have fallen into grievous affliction. (Hillman 73, 74; Gangel 97)

- - Not overcome by sorrow, the believer with the spiritual 'gift of showing mercy' is steadfast in cheerfulness as he/she endeavors to ease and console others who are in misery, adversity, and pain. (Hillman 74; Gangel 96)

- - From a technical sense, the spiritual 'gift of showing mercy' applies primarily to situations in which the suffering is a consequence due to sin in the person's life. (Zodhiates p.563, Strong's #1653 - 'mercy' - Romans 12:8; e.g. see v.14 in John 5:2-15)

- - By means of the empowering of this spiritual gift by the Holy Spirit, then, the believer possesses an innate understanding of what the suffering person is experiencing as consequence of the person's own sin, an innate appreciation for the reality that God wants this person to go through the suffering in an effort to refine the person, and that circumventing this refining process in reality subverts these refining activities of God in the person's life. (Hebrews 12:10-12)

- - So in consequence-for-sin situations, the believer is very careful not to subvert the refining activities of God in the person's life but yet extends to the suffering person compassion, "empathy, caring, sensitivity", and cheerfulness - being genuinely glad that God is actively working to produce righteousness in the life of the suffering person. (Strong's #1653 - 'mercy'; AHD 'compassionate')

- - The believer with the spiritual 'gift of showing mercy' is also careful not to make statements that attempt to predict the future for the suffering person, or predict an optimistic outcome, or predict an unrealistic outcome, or minimize the sin of the person.

- - God has a spiritual objective to be accomplished in the life of the suffering person, and therefore, the believer with the spiritual 'gift of showing mercy' should be looking for and striving to facilitate that spiritual objective of God while refraining from the desire and temptation of trying to remove the suffering of the person without the person dealing adequately with the sin that is the source cause of the suffering from God.

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## FAITH:

**"...to another [there is given through the Spirit] faith by the same Spirit,..."** -

1 Corinthians 12:9

- - The definition of spiritual "**faith**" is summarized in Hebrews 11:1, "**Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.**"

- - "**Being sure of**" or "**being... certain of**" are phrases that indicate being confidently persuaded - strongly and firmly accepting and believing as true, valid, and trustworthy what God says in the Scriptures, and then relying on what is taken by faith, whether or not there exists empirical evidence to support the confident persuasion. (Hebrews 11:1; 1 Corinthians 12:9, from Strong's #4102 with *AHD* 'faith' and 'credence')

- - In essence, faith is firm and loyal belief and trust in God, and in all that He is, all that He does past / present / future, and all that He says as recorded in the Holy Bible - even though there may be little or no physical evidence or proof to support such belief and trust.

- - The spiritual 'gift of faith' is the Holy Spirit-given special ability to believe in an unusual or extraordinary way in God's promises and power to supply specific needs or accomplish specific objectives.

- - This spiritual gift involves the intensive ability to trust and believe God in the face of enormous obstacles, and to determine with extraordinary confidence the will and purposes of God for the future of His work.

- - This kind of faith is connected with prayer and with God's response to prayer, with the objective of laying hold of God's promises for the benefit of other persons.

- - It is important to note that every believer has been given 'saving' faith and a measure of 'general' faith by which to live (Romans 12:3), but not everyone has been given this extraordinary spiritual 'gift of faith'.

- - With utter dependence on the Lord, a believer with the spiritual 'gift of faith' is able to envision what others cannot see and endure what others cannot endure.

- - This believer maintains high personal integrity in his/her life, goals, and motives while steadfastly trusting God even when there seems to be no human or natural basis for that trust.

- - This believer is usually more interested in the future than in history, is a goal-centered possibility thinker, and is patiently undaunted by hindering circumstances, suffering, or obstacles.

- - In exercising this spiritual gift properly, the believer with the spiritual 'gift of faith' does not receive or expect a direct audible or visual supernatural revelation or supernatural confirmation from God, nor ever asserts that a supernatural revelation or supernatural confirmation has been given to this believer.

- - Asking God for a supernatural revelation, or a supernatural confirmation, or a supernatural verifying sign is an exercise of gross unbelief - a gross **lack** of faith. (see v.4 in Matthew 16:1-4)

- - Furthermore, this believer does not inappropriately or hastily interpret aspects of unfolding events or occurrences as being affirmative verifying signs from God.

- - And regarding subjects for which the Scriptures do not give direct specific guidance, the believer with the spiritual 'gift of faith' never makes declarative statements such as, "God wants us to do this...!", but the believer can make statements such as, "I am fully convinced that God wants us to do this...!".

- - Within the process of dealing with a potential objective that pertains to some aspect of ministering or ministry functioning, the believer with the spiritual 'gift of faith' naturally possesses a rock-solid confidence that God has far more than enough supernatural power, ability, and knowledge to do what is being requested of Him in prayer to accomplish the potential objective (like the centurion in Matthew 8:5-10). (Ephesians 3:20)
- - The question that remains to be ascertained, though, is, "Is God willing to do this - to cause this to be accomplished?" (like the man with leprosy in Matthew 8:1-3).
- - So this believer consistently and persistently continues to ask God (in prayer) to grant this request (the accomplishing of the potential objective), and then watches to determine if God is granting this request in some form or manner, while maintaining flexibility in case God wants to accomplish the request but with some modifications and alterations from the original request.
- - After fully bathing the request in prayer before God for a length of time and subsequently receiving no seeming indications from God for or against the accomplishing of the request, the believer subsequently takes an initiating step of faith to 'test the waters' (so to speak) - to determine if God is willing, approving, on board, and proceeding to grant the request.
- Even though success is the foremost desired outcome of the request, the believer does remain aware that there may be times when God wants a believer to attempt to do something but ultimately fail in accomplishing the outcome objective of the request.
- - - - Failures can accomplish objectives that God has.
- - - - And failures can and do give direction as to what God wants to accomplish, just as well as successes can and do give direction.
- - This believer also is supremely patient and self-controlled in the exercising of the spiritual 'gift of faith', accepting and implementing the dynamic of proceeding with blinders on - "walking by faith and not by sight", in other words, actually seeing no more than only one step ahead to move forward by faith as God reveals it, and then waiting to see and move forward by faith with the next step as God reveals it, and so on. (2 Corinthians 5:7 with Strong's #4043)
- - The believer with the spiritual 'gift of faith' likewise exercises supreme patience in waiting upon God to distinctly impress upon the believer an intuition of what the next potential ministry objective might be, that of course again requires properly exercising this spiritual 'gift of faith'.
- - Furthermore, this believer must exert additional and protracted patience with other ministry personnel, waiting for them to favorably respond because they do not readily recognize that God is attempting to use this believer with the spiritual 'gift of faith' to nudge them forward into initiating the pursuit process of the next potential ministry objective.

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### ENCOURAGING:

**"...if it is encouraging, let him encourage;..."** - Romans 12:8

- - The meaning of the original Greek word that is translated as "**encouraging**" is "exhorting - to call near, in other words: invite, invoke (by imploration, exhortation or consolation)", "to urge by strong, often stirring argument, admonition, advice, or appeal; to move to action". (Romans 12:8; Strong's #3870; *AHD* 'exhort')
- - Within the use of the spiritual 'gift of encouraging/exhorting', there is a distinct characteristic and quality of earnest and urgent appeal for the listeners to be moved

from their current way of thinking, and moved into a different way of thinking that aligns with what God wants and says in His Word.

- - In essence, the spiritual 'gift of encouraging/exhorting' primarily is a pursuit to spur others into a life of thinking, believing, obeying, and acting in alignment to God's Word and His will. (Gangel 36)

- - "Urging, admonishing, challenging, requesting, counseling, reasoning", advising, exhorting, and etcetera, as well as "consoling, comforting, cheering up", and encouraging, are utilized to present and apply the Word of God to the listeners and their situation by means of addressing their thinking and beliefs. (Hillman 43, Gangel 33)

- - There does exist secular encouraging/exhorting that unbelievers utilize, but this 'gift of encouraging/exhorting' possesses a spiritual component that comes from and is empowered by the Holy Spirit, who is within the believer that is exercising this gift.

- - Therefore, from and by this innate spiritual propensity, orientation, and drive, a believer with this gift actively seeks situations and appropriately-timed opportunities to bring divinely-incited encouragement/exhortation, even though secular encouraging/exhorting could be presented and utilized instead.

- - The spiritual 'gift of encouraging/exhorting' can be used in both the private and public arenas, within such formats as conversations, social media, social gatherings, preaching, teaching, evangelism, counseling, songs, and etcetera. (Gangel 34; Hillman 44)

- - In order to fully and effectively exercise this spiritual 'gift of encouraging/exhorting', the believer with this spiritual gift will need to either possess substantial knowledge of Scriptures that apply to discouraging situations or conditions that people commonly experience, or else carry with him/her a Bible that has a good concordance to easily and quickly find, reference, and utilize applicable Scripture verses.

- - And of course, the application of Scripture verses, concepts, doctrines, commands, and etcetera always requires that those scriptural elements contain complete truth, correctness, and appropriateness, because any falseness, incorrectness, or inappropriateness immediately and effectively quench the activities and the releasing of influencing power by the Holy Spirit in that presentation. (John 7:18; Ephesians 4:25,30)

- - Another impropriety or unpleasantry that believers with the spiritual 'gift of encouraging/exhorting' commonly commit is they get into the habit of always so immediately verbally responding to every situation with a spiritual comment that is intended to be encouraging, that they fail to stop and consider if the comment fits the situation, or if the comment is realistic, or if the comment is truthful, or if the comment contains false doctrine, or if the comment is sounding like a platitude because it is too frequently stated by the believer.

- - Therefore, believers with the spiritual 'gift of encouraging/exhorting' need to constantly self-monitor and self-critique what they are saying within their encouraging/exhorting statements so that truth, sound doctrine, correctness, and appropriateness are always being adhered to.

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(Repeating) APPLICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS:

- - Do any of these 3 spiritual gifts jump out at you, inciting in you a reaction of "I think I have this spiritual gift."? If so, think about, meditate on, and pray about whether there are any improvements or adjustments you can make to maximize appropriateness,

effectiveness, and productivity of your engaging in each of these 3 spiritual gifts that you think you might have.

- - Do you know of any other believers in your church or ministry from which you see evidence that they might have one or more of these 3 spiritual gifts? If so, do you think God would want you to speak up to each of those persons, and express your opinion and cite specific examples to them that you see evidence that they may have one (or more) of these 3 spiritual gifts?

- - How about your spouse, or children, or parents, or relatives, or friends who are true believers? In this same above manner, can you speak to them about your observations that seem to indicate that they may have one (or more) of these 3 spiritual gifts?

- - And when you encounter one of these people you are talking to who seems to agree that your evaluation of them may be correct, you could offer to go through the description from this document with them, pertaining to the spiritual gift(s) that they seem to agree they may have.

-- As may be evident, the big hurdle to overcome here is for each true believer to correctly ascertain (as soon as possible) which spiritual gift(s) he (or she) has.

- - - - Upon that realization, then they can forthrightly look for and pursue opportunities to exercise that (or those) spiritual gift(s).

- - - - Thereby, you will have significantly helped each of those true believers to get on the path to becoming a fruit-bearing disciple, doing ministry work that God has gifted and is empowering them to do.

- - - - Do these actions sound like some things that you could or should do now, as an actual or a potential future elder, overseer, pastor, or ministry leader?

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