

Chapter 17

IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING YOUR GIFTS 8

- I. The gift of teaching meets mental needs and so is sometimes called the mind of the Body of Christ. Those with the gift of teaching like to clarify truth. They have the ability to impart knowledge and lead others into revealed truth. They are also very motivated to search out and validate declared truths, and then they will want to share with others what they have discovered. The gift of teaching aims more at the mind rather than the heart. (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11-14; Romans 12:7; Acts 18:24-28, Acts 20:20-21)
- A. Let's look at some characteristics of those with the gift of teaching. They believe that their gift is foundational to other gifts. They very much enjoy word studies and put a great deal of emphasis on the accuracy of words. Those with the gift of teaching actually delight in research in order to validate truth. Because of the time required to do the research they feel is necessary, this can be a more full-time gift than some of the other gifts. They like to learn, but will test the knowledge of those that teach them. Presenting truth in a systematic sequence is important to those with the gift of teaching. They will also tend to avoid non-Biblical illustrations and they will want these Biblical illustrations that they do use to be in context. They are quite happy to spend hours shut away by themselves with their Bible and study books. They really enjoy the research more than the presentation. (Acts 17:11)
- B. As with all gifts there are some misunderstandings that come with the exercising of the gift of teaching. For some the emphasis on the accuracy of Scriptural interpretation may appear to neglect its practical application. They do not usually offer any "how to's" with their teaching. Their use of knowledge in testing others may appear to some to be pride of learning. They will have a concern and a desire to present many of the details they have learned in research and these details may seem unnecessary to those listening. Also, their need to be objective in research may appear to lack warmth and feeling when speaking. They will mostly just want to deliver facts. Because of this teachers will tend to resist free and open discussion. (John 8:32)
- C. Developing the gift of teaching is important for the individual that has the gift as well as for the Body of Christ. One important thing to remember if you have this gift is that just giving information is not enough. The person with the gift of teaching needs to be a "Learning Enabler." They need to be able to enable another person to take the information given and then be able to use it in their own lives. Develop the ability as a teacher of offering the how-to-do-it aspect to your teaching. To more fully develop this gift of teaching, you must always be a learner and a doer yourself. (James 3:1)

***A WISE TEACHER MAKES LEARNING A JOY.
PROVERBS 15:2 NLT***

- D. Some Biblical examples that we can look at for the gift of teaching are Ezra and Apollos.
1. *For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel. (Ezra 7:10)* We see from this portion of

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scripture that Ezra studied for himself, then did it himself before he began to teach others.

2. Apollos greatly helped the believers. Teachers are indispensable to the body of Christ. He “watered”, but other gifts (prophets, apostles) did the planting. Apollos was accurate, careful, systematic, and diligent in his study and sharing what he knew from God. He was willing to learn from others (Priscilla and Aquila). Teachers are great students but tend to become authoritarian for “knowledge puffs up.” (Acts 18:24-28; 1 Corinthians 3:6)

II. The gift of wisdom is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to know the mind of the Holy Spirit in such a way as to receive insight into how given knowledge may best be applied to specific needs arising in the body of Christ. Those with the gift of wisdom often know what to do with knowledge or how to respond in a particular situation.. These people tend to live a well-ordered life and serve as a good example to others. Their pattern of life has been learning good judgment in the things they have experienced. They will learn from life’s experiences and learn from mistakes they make and others around them make. (1 Corinthians 2:1-13, 1 Corinthians 12:8; Acts 6:3, 10; James 1:5-6; 2 Peter 3:15)

- A. To better develop the gift of wisdom read the Wisdom books in the Bible; Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. Remember to ask God for wisdom in all situations. Learn how best to share your insights of wisdom in a helpful and non-threatening way. Always be open to instruction and correction.
- B. Some helpful Biblical illustrations are, of course the books of wisdom listed above. In the book of Proverbs especially we can see folly and wisdom being compared. A study of this will help you to see the order of wisdom and how to grow in the function of the gift of wisdom in your own life. The book of James in the New Testament is also very helpful.

III. The gift of knowledge is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to discover, accumulate, analyze, and clarify information and ideas which are pertinent to the growth and well-being of the body. The information that is given by the Holy Spirit is received by revelation. Knowing something is not necessarily the same as understanding it. Be careful to avoid jumping to conclusions. Simply share what you have received by revelation without trying to figure everything out. Know also that a word of knowledge will never contradict the Bible, the Word of God. (1 Corinthians 2:14, 1 Corinthians 12:8; Acts 5:1-11; Colossians 2:2-3; 2 Corinthians 11:6)

- A. The gift of knowledge can be especially helpful in healing, counseling, and deliverance ministries. If you have this gift, you must be must beware of pride. Knowledge can puff up and make us feel more important than we are. This is not always an easy or even pleasant gift. Some of things you receive by revelation might not always be easy to share or even for you to know how best to share. Trust God for grace.
- B. In developing the gift of knowledge, begin to ask God for revelation. As you do begin to receive insights and revelation, share the knowledge you believe you have received and check its accuracy. Don’t allow yourself to become proud of your gift. Always concentrate on using it to help others.
- C. Of course we see Jesus using the gift of knowledge many times. His closeness to the Father kept Him open to receive instruction and revelation from God. We also see Paul

exercising this gift in Acts 14:8-12.

- IV. The gift of exhortation or encouragement is like the mouth of the body. They encourage and they do it with words. This person will encourage others to grow and to meet successfully the experiences of life. They can and will stimulate faith and growth in others. (Romans 12:8; 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:2; Hebrews 10:25; Acts 14:22)
- A. The gift of exhortation or encouragement is a life-related gift. For them the Word of God must become flesh; be usable in the everyday world that people live in. They will talk to individuals even when they are teaching or sharing with a group because they need the attention and full interest of those they are teaching or talking to. Their concern is the person.
- B. Some of the characteristics of the person with the gift of exhortation, encouragement is that they like to visualize achievement and prescribe steps of action. They are not usually upset by trials. To them trials produce growth and they can see that as the purpose of trials. They learn from life and will validate human experience by scripture. They like discussions that result in new insights. Can be quite philosophical.
- C. Misunderstandings of how the gift of exhortation or encouragement functions may be that an emphasis on steps of action may appear to over-simplify the problem. Also the emphasis to win non-Christians by life examples may appear as lack of interest in personal evangelism. People with this gift are quite "diagnostic" in their approach. The steps of action they give may seem to disregard the feelings of those with whom they are talking. People with this gift may also be quite opinionated.
- D. To develop the gift of exhortation, encouragement simply begin to encourage those you have relationship with. Practice looking for the good points in people and situations. Learn to listen more, before offering your steps of action. (Acts 11:23; Hebrews 10:25)
- E. Of course the Biblical example for the gift of exhortation and encouragement has to be Barnabas. He aimed at the believer's growth and successful living. (Acts 14:22) We see him being very practical and personal. (Acts 9:27; Acts 15:39) Barnabas was always positive and never "gave up" on people (Paul and John Mark). (Acts 15:39)
- V. The gift of discernment is the divine enablement to distinguish between the truth and error. There are two kinds of discernment; eyesight, that which we see naturally, and insight, that which is given by the Holy Spirit. Discernment technically refers to distinguishing between different spirits or the ability to know the source of a spiritual manifestation. The gift of discernment is especially helpful in deliverance ministry, with counseling, and for leadership people. There is the caution to be careful not to develop a critical attitude. (1 Corinthians 12:10; Acts 5:1-11; Acts 16:16-18; 1 John 4:1-6; Matthew 16:21-23)
- A. Developing the gift of discernment will require a dependence on God through the Holy Spirit. When there is a spiritual manifestation in a situation you are involved in, ask God to reveal to you the source. Develop a sensitivity to how you feel in your own spirit concerning spiritual manifestations. If possible, find a mature Christian with discernment and learn from them.
- B. Elisha in 2 Kings 6:8-23 shows us discernment in helping the king of Israel against the Arameans. Some other scriptures to study are Luke 10:19-20; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15;

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

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1. If you have the gift of teaching, what are the most important things you can do to prepare for the effective use of the gift? What are some ways a gift of teaching can be used? What should one learn in order to be a good steward of the gift?
2. In the lesson we stated that the gift of encouragement is like the mouth of the Body of Christ? Do you agree with this statement? Why? How can the gift of encouragement be used effectively?