

**Through His power working in us, He can
accomplish far more than we can ask or imagine.**

THE MOTIVATIONAL GIFTS

**An examination of the various gifts the Lord has given us to
produce unity and build up the Church**

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MOTIVATIONAL GIFTS

Prior to the twentieth century, nothing was written about the motivational gifts except for the New Testament references. It has only been in the last twenty years that these gifts have been “rediscovered.” The term motivational gifts as used here, primarily refers to the gifts that are spelled out by Paul in the twelfth chapter of Romans. As we proceed to understand these gifts, it will become clear that each one can be identified and has its own set of observable qualities. Paul tells us about the gifts in Romans 12: 4-13.

*For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having **gifts** that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if **prophecy**, in proportion to our faith; if **service**, in our serving; he who **teaches**, in his teaching, he who **exhorts**, in his exhortation; he who **contributes**, in liberality; he who **gives aid**, with zeal; he who does acts of **mercy**, with cheerfulness.”*

It is important to notice that the gifts are given by God and that their ultimate purpose is to create unity. Peter, reflecting on the gifts, says:

“As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God’s grace. Whoever speaks as one who utters the oracles of God; whoever renders service, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies, whereby in everything God may be glorified through Christ.”

Peter, like Paul, suggests that each one has received a gift and that the gift should be employed for one another and that we are to be good stewards of these God-given gifts.

Paul goes on to say more about the purposes of gifts, both motivational and ministerial in Eph 4:12-13, saying they are: “*to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God*”. The ultimate goal of the gifts is that God be glorified through Jesus Christ.

We may sum up by saying that the purpose of the gifts are:

- 1) To equip for work. That is, the possessor of a particular gift is equipped to accomplish a specific task;
- 2) To build up the body. This may be interpreted as strengthening the body or encouraging the body or abetting the growth of the body from childhood to maturity;
- 3) To create unity in the organization in which the gifts are being employed;
- 4) To lead to knowledge of the Son of God; which increases the person’s faith in Christ.

IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING THE GIFTS

Purpose of the Gift: The chief purpose of the gifts has to do with society. Their ultimate purpose is to produce unity. It is the glue that holds society together and causes it to function smoothly, whether in the church, business or the community. Because this is so, the gifts are best understood in group situations and experiences; for it is in a social-religious context that they were given.

The gifts have a profound effect upon our lives. This is not surprising when we consider examples from other areas of our lives. The Lord gives each of us certain physical attributes even before we're born, how tall or short we will be, black or white, high IQ or low, etc. All these physical and mental details affect our vocation, education, and even the correction that takes place in our lives. So it is with the gifts; they influence our hearts, minds, and spirits. They serve as filters screening every stimulus that is taken in. Our decisions, indecisions, our judgments are all colored by our gifts. As these qualities are exercised and used, they become stronger and more potent. If left unused, they deteriorate and fade. They should not be confused with personality traits. Personality traits are the result of habitual behavior and thought process. Though the direction one goes may be influenced by his gift, the choices he exercises eventually determine his personality.

There is one major occurrence that gives long-term direction to the gift: That decision is the one made in the heart when one submits to Jesus. This singular decision has a lifelong effect, not only on the gift, but on all areas of our lives. Whereas the non-Christian is self-willed, the Christian who is submissive to Jesus is controlled by Him. This is a dimension that transcends all other influences.

One should not underestimate the value of knowing the gifts. It provides insight into why a person makes the kind of decisions that are made. The gift God gives us influences how we perceive the world around us. It is called 'motivational,' because it is a driving force in our behavior. Understanding this affects our willingness to accept and forgive certain behaviors in family and friends. This knowledge prepares one to communicate more effectively. Here are some areas in which an understanding of the gifts facilitates effective action.

Individual and Family: As parents, we find that it takes considerable insight and understanding to raise our children properly. Understanding of the gifts, how they work and how they affect the lives of our children, provide us with discernment as to the most effective means of discipline and correction which leads to effective training. The traits of the gift are even seen early in childhood. For example I have counseled with countless families with children of all ages in family sessions. I have observed children under the age of ten months exhibit specific traits attributable to their gift. I remember one family with an eighteen month old. The family was very upset due to a tragic incident that had occurred. Three of the family members were crying. This child went to each one with a Kleenex, got in their laps, and started drying their tears and begging for them not to cry. A brother, somewhat older, went and sat in a corner when the emotional moment occurred and started playing with some toys. These two children clearly demonstrated the difference one's gift can make.

Understanding the gifts can also heal family relationships. In my experience, when people recognize that the Lord has given them a gift and they see its importance, it has a profound affect on how they interpret the past events in their life and the choices they make about the future. Feelings about parents and siblings are altered as one sees that God gives each one a special way of seeing and interpreting the world about them.

Marital: In the area of marriage counseling, I have found that problems with communication skills are most often traced to a lack of understanding of the other person's motivational gift. When the couple understands this, then they may allow one another greater latitude in solving problems. This knowledge may even introduce a new paradigm that allows acceptance or change. For example, Servers tend to have a difficult time communicating. They find it difficult to express themselves, particularly when it involves negative feelings. If married to a Prophet this problem is magnified. The prophet demands verbal communication skills not possessed by the Server. At the same time, the Server feels unappreciated and confused but cannot communicate verbally these feelings. This leads to conflict between the two that they cannot resolve. Once they understand about each other's gift and how to communicate with that gift, then doors are open to understanding once again.

Occupational: A person's occupation is strongly affected by his gift. People who work in settings that use their gift abilities tend to be happy and productive in their work. However, if people are in settings that go against the traits associated with their gifts, then they are often unhappy, frequently confused, and find that they become fatigued easily. Take the example of a Server whose work is exceptional. Because of her good work she is promoted to a leadership position. Suddenly she starts functioning poorly and begins to have problems with coworkers. Why? Because the Server is not a leader and if put in this position for an extended period of time will often fail because the skills that make a good worker tend to make an ineffective leader. Knowing this, management can find other ways to reward the Server besides promotion to leadership positions.

Congregational: The main purpose for the gifts finds its fulfillment in the congregational setting. The verses we referred to in the beginning speak to this very issue. Leaders, understanding that the Prophet, Giver, and the Mercy do best in personal work, motivate those with these gifts to participate in evangelistic programs. The Prophet, Teachers, and Exhorters enjoy teaching others in classroom settings and tend to draw others to their classes. Knowing this allows one to set up more effective teaching programs and enlist the aid of those who derive joy from teaching. Knowing that Servers enjoy helping others with the boring, everyday tasks necessary for any endeavor to succeed helps the leaders place them in the most productive areas.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE GIFTS

Spiritual laws: There are certain laws of God that control the gifts:

- you reap what you sow;
- the measure you use will be the measure you get;
- to the person who has still more will be given;
- to him who has not (to him who uses it not), then that which he has will be taken away.

As the gift is used, it increases in intensity and effectiveness; it seems to glow brighter and brighter and blesses others in the process because as Jesus said, the measure you give will be the measure you get. In contrast when the gift is put aside and left unused, it tends to wither away. When this happens, it becomes difficult to discover a person's specific gift.

Significant others: The intensity of our gift is affected by the presence of those we consider significant people in our lives, both past and present. This would include our parents, guardians, people we admire, and sometimes the minister of the congregation of which we are part. As we interact with these people we find we have a desire to emulate some of their traits and so we begin to acquire some of the qualities of their gift which we admire.

We may also be influenced by leaders or ministers whom we listen to on a regular basis. For example, in one congregation where the test for discerning motivational gifts was administered, a very large number indicated high levels of the prophet gift. After checking, it was discovered that the minister of the congregation was a very strong prophet. He influenced the members of the congregation to the extent that they themselves were picking up some of the characteristics of the prophet.

In another congregation, one of the elders was a strong giver and very influential among the members. Numerous people of this congregation who took the test reflected many characteristics of the giver. Now these people were not givers or prophets, but they were influenced by the presence of those exhibiting these traits.

Birth-order influences the gifts. This is most apparent with the prophet, mercy and exhorter. The prophet's gift is most intense in a first-born or only child. That means the first-born prophet will tend to be rigid in his perceptions about people and in his decision making. The mercy is most intense in the second-born child. Therefore, mercy's who are second-born, tend to be extra sensitive and trusting others. The exhorter is most intense in third-born children. The ability to see and evaluate the maturity level of others is greater, the tendency to encourage and strengthen others more pronounced. This increase in intensity may happen because the traits of the person's birth order parallel the traits found in a particular gift.

Sin: The type of sin and general areas of weakness seem to have a strong correlation with the foundational characteristics for that specific gift. Put simply, the closer one walks with the Lord, the more intense the positive traits. The farther one is away from the Lord's presence, the greater the amount of sin in one's life, and the weaker these traits will appear.

As one looks closely at a person's strengths and weaknesses, one finds one's strengths are the very areas of greatest temptation. As the individual gifts are reviewed, special attention will be given to the effects of sin.

Anger: Anger is a major obstacle to utilization of the gift. The gifts are oriented for the benefit of others; when used for our gain they weaken and become ineffective. When people become angry it is because they did not get what they expected or they lost something important. This orientation is inward. It desires something for self. This process blocks the gift, for one cannot think two separate thoughts simultaneously. We are not able to think of self and others at the same time. One will take precedence. Anger automatically makes an exclusive choice.

Fear: Fear, much like anger, inhibits the proper use of the gift. Fear like anger is self benefiting. True in some circumstances it serves a protective function, but often this protectiveness is self-serving. Fear misused protects us from closeness. Yet the very purpose of the gifts requires increased socialization. The single purpose of fear in our lives is to fear the Lord. Fear of God protects us and at the same time allows for the full utilization of our gifts, talents and, abilities. Other fear inhibits, interferes and limits our choices. One example might be something most of us have experienced if we drive on freeways. We are on a trip looking for a specific exit and up ahead we see a sign that suggests that this is the proper exit. However we have been given direction and the directions do not match the surroundings. What do we do? Exit? Keep going? Fearful of making a mistake, we are momentarily indecisive. The motivational gifts are instinctive. When we are walking in the Light we 'see' the proper direction. Fear obscures the path.

Envy: When we read "envy," I am afraid we are inclined to rush over it lightly, feeling perhaps that it applies to someone else. We discard the fault as "not ours" before we even examine ourselves. Envy can be a subtle, treacherous thing, creeping in and destroying not only ourselves but also those whom are envied. One of the first most notable things about envy is that it is completely without reward. It doesn't even give pleasure. The thief has something to show for his sin, but the envious person has nothing. Each of the gifts is equal in value. Each target different goals and achieve different purposes. To envy what another has is to destroy what one already has.

Irresponsibility: Responsibility, dependability and trustworthiness are an integral part of the gifts. When one is irresponsible, slothful, undependable, or lacks trustworthiness then ones gift is limited. These traits rob a person a little at a time, until they dwindle one's resources to nothing. Use it or lose it is an old cliché which finds meaning here.

Illness: Illness also affects the gift whether mental, emotional, or physical illness. One's perceptions about that illness or handicap may either enhance or weaken the utilization of the gift.

Cycles: We all experience a variety of different cycles at work in our lives. Major cycles common to most of us include intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual, and hormonal cycles. Most people experience periods when their thinking is very clear, perhaps even creative. At other times our thinking might seem confused perhaps even irrational. Emotionally, we may at times find ourselves moody or more irritable than usual. Physically, we find ourselves on some days at the peak of our abilities. On other days we experience feelings of fatigue. These shifts in our intellect, emotions, physical and spiritual experience are a part of everyday life. They reflect the ups and downs created by the Lord in us. These cycles may heavily influence our decision

making processes, energy levels, and physical abilities, and the manner in which we utilize our gifts.

Women particularly can identify with the hormonal changes that come with the menstrual cycle. Though most men would deny it, I strongly suspect that men have very similar hormonal changes which affect their moods and behavior. Hormonal changes experienced by those with diabetes, thyroid, or other types of hormone difficulties may have impact on the gift or its use. All of these factors individually and collectively affect positively and negatively the gift, its intensity and its use. With this in mind, we turn to an examination of the seven motivational gifts to discover something about what the Lord has given each of us.

Let's begin the study by introducing the seven gifts or the terms that will be employed in describing these gifts. First we will consider the *verbal gifts*. These are people who tend to be very good at talking with others and have the ability to lead through communication with others. There are four of these:

- **Prophet:** This is not a person who foresees the future. It is a descriptive term for a person who sees life in a very restrictive way that is black or white, right or wrong. This person sees very few things in gray. Ultimately the purpose of the prophet is to speak for God. Because the prophet is typically a person who cares to seek after righteousness and holiness and does not like insincerity, he is checking the world for godliness and ungodliness.
- **Teacher:** We are not talking about a school teacher, but rather a person who enjoys studying, learning just for the sake of learning, and sharing the results with others.
- **Exhorter:** A person with this gift makes friends easily and enjoys encouraging and motivating others to do their best. People enjoy having exhorters around.
- **Organizer** (also called Administrator): These are natural-born leaders. People look to them for direction. They have an inborn desire to organize the things around them and tend to be orderly. They have the unique ability of being able to see how things ought to function and then gathering the resources to see that they function in that manner.

The second group, the non-verbal gifts, is made up of three different gifts. Those in this group are frequently referred to as followers; they have little desire to lead others, but they are very good at following directions and supporting those in leadership positions.

- **Server:** Servers have boundless energy. They can out-perform others with ease and can work long hours without fatigue. They enjoy doing things for other.
- **Giver.** Givers often mask themselves as servers because they are very much alike. They like to see that the funds are available to provide for the work of others.
- **Mercy** (also called Compassion): Mercies enjoy taking the burdens off others. Others delight in telling them their problems, because when they do they feel much better afterwards.

These are the seven gifts that Paul introduces us to in Romans 12. As we examine them in more depth, we will find distinguishing behaviors that characterize each of them. We will see how each gift can be employed most effectively in society, in the church, and in a business setting.

Primary and Secondary Gift Traits: Two terms frequently used throughout this study will be that of primary gift and secondary gift. The primary gift is that gift which God gave the person before birth, the gift that God assigned him. Certain traits or characteristics in the person will be

instinctive and without thought. Everything is filtered through one's primary gift. This can be symbolized by the force of a magnet; the magnet automatically attracts certain types of metals that are around it. It was made that way. It selectively ignores, so to speak, other kinds of material. So it is with the gifts. Each one is selectively responsive to situations and stimuli missed or neglected by those with other gifts. This process is natural. In contrast the secondary gift is acquired when the person practices the characteristics of the other gifts, and the Lord most certainly wants us to develop as many of these character qualities in our lives as possible.

The difference between the primary and secondary gift is this: the primary gift is God-given before birth so that it is natural and instinctive whereas the secondary gift is acquired or learned after birth. A secondary gift is like a stop sign; we learn to stop at a stop sign then we do it repetitively over and over again. After a while we do it automatically.

One of the ways we can distinguish whether the trait is primary or secondary is to note whether one fatigues easily while practicing the trait. For instance the server can work long hours under harsh conditions with out fatiguing, yet if subject to emotional clashes, the server immediately shows signs of fatigue.

A second method one might employ in determining primary and secondary is by observing the sense of fulfillment which follows the successful use of the gift. If it is primary then the individual usually feels a deep sense of joy.

The primary gift is an expression of the spirit of man. He has very little control over how his perceptions are colored by the gift. He does, however, control and may even distort its use. The secondary qualities that are acquired through practice, however, come from the mind of man; they are acquired by choice and by choice they are exercised.

The instinctive qualities of the primary gift are trained and refined while those of the secondary are built. The gifts are intensified by the Lord's presence, whether internal or external, in us or in His Presence. They are also intensified by practice where the principles of stewardship, such as reaping what you sow, are applied. The purity and intensity of the motivational gifts reflect the value and the usefulness of that person to the Lord.

THE PROPHET

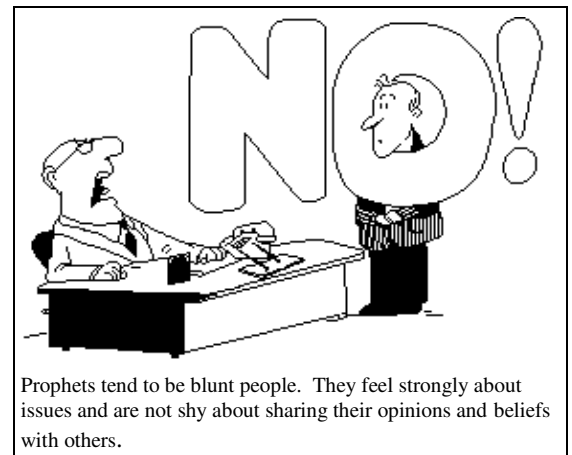
Prophets tend to be very blunt. They see everything as either being right or wrong, black or white. They feel deeply about many things others would pass over. Physically, they experience a tremendous urge to speak when they see injustice, dishonesty, or insincerity.

Other terms used to refer to the prophet are perceiver and spokesman. This type of person at his very best is a person of unimpeachable integrity. Very aware of the importance of one's reputation, they attempt to be transparent. Sincerity in all they do becomes the basic criterion for self-examination. Prophets are open to the correction of others and they expect others to be open to correction. They speak forth without thought to the impact of their words on others.

Honesty: Honesty is the central truth by which the prophet measures the world around him.

The prophet is quick to determine what is right and what is wrong. The prophet lives in a two dimensional world. Behavior is either good or bad. Open with their own failures, they expect others to be the same. The prophet resists attempts to mix or dilute truth. He has a deep sense of loyalty towards truth. Because honesty is held in such esteem, the prophet is willing to sacrifice possessions and even self in its defense.

A biblical example of this may be seen in the incident with John the Baptist and Herod. Herod had married his brother's wife and John confronted Herod with the unlawful nature of this relationship. John challenged Herod and eventually was beheaded because of the confrontation. The prophet possesses this inborn drive to seek out and protect integrity at any price.



This is the prophet at his best. When a prophet is ruled by selfishness, self-centeredness, or self-will, we see a perversion of the gift. Whereas honesty was highly esteemed, with self-centeredness comes deception. Truth is then determined in the eyes of the beholder. Instead of dissemination of truth, the prophet indulges in gossip to enhance his own reputation. He will engage in indiscreet confrontations, outspoken disrespect for the values and opinions of others and harshness towards others.

Obedience: Almost from the very beginning, obedience is of great importance to the prophet. As children, they give the impression of being tattletales. However, the true motivation for the tattletale behavior is not necessarily to get the other person in trouble, but to see that others are honest, upright and sincere. Thus they confront disobedience directly or by telling those in authority when failures in these areas are observed. Prophets want to produce repentance. This is their ultimate goal. Obedience is important not only for themselves but those around them as well.

Instruction and obedience are very important to prophets; disobedience produces an intense feeling of distress. It is almost as if the more they obey, the happier they are and the more they disobey (or even observe disobedience in others), the more distressed they become. Relief comes

in the form of confrontation. None of the other gifts experience distress over disobedience with such intensity.

Some of the mood swings prophets experience may be attributed to this response to obedience or disobedience. The prophet sees the problem or experience as being for the purpose of producing repentance. For instance, when a prophet visits someone who is very ill, the first thing out of his mouth will be: "What have you done that has caused the Lord to make you ill?" It is the same kind of approach that was taken by the friends of Job: "Job, what have you done? You must have sinned or you would not be experiencing these problems in your life." There is an element of truth in this, because the problems that we experience in life are frequently tied directly to obedience or disobedience.

When the prophet is motivated by self-concern or self-will, then the characteristic of obedience turns to one of willfulness. The things he does and the words he uses now become motivated by the desire to acquire something for himself. His philosophy becomes, "What can I get out of it?" He becomes only half-heartedly involved in the activities around him. Prophets may become very passive and unresponsive to the problems that they encounter. They may become very pushy and excessively blunt with others, not because they are concerned with their welfare but because they now derive a certain pleasure from hurting others. Selfishness twists and perverts their sensitivity to obedience into something very ugly. The desire to correct is replaced with argumentativeness, defiance, and resentment. They challenge others over insignificant matters. Rigid personality traits become profound. Change becomes difficult, for now the prophet sets up his own standard and demands that others obey.

Sincerity: Prophets desire that others know their motivation. They are eager to behave in such a manner that others know there is no pretense or impurity of motive. The prophet reacts very harshly to any form of insincerity. He gauges sincerity by the purpose in someone's heart as seen in that person's actions towards others. The biblical writer poses a question which reflects the point of view of the prophet; "Can a fig tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a grapevine figs?" The prophet inspects the works and words of others to discern sincerity.

When the prophet turns away from the path of life, a radical change may be observed. A good example of this is seen with Jesus' confrontation of the Pharisees, a group who esteemed their traditions above all else. They were people who would rather see a person suffer pain, misery, and shame, rather than set aside their rule of behavior. This behavior is seen in the prophet who turns aside from godly standards of behavior and creates other rules. Those rules become more important than life itself. Obedience to profane rules takes precedence over the Lord's instructions.

Virtue: Virtue is defined as that moral excellence and goodness that radiates from the life of a person as they do what is right. The effects of a virtuous life can be seen; they are visibly displayed in facial expressions, in one's eyes, and even how one dresses.

Others are affected by the presence of a person who radiates this quality of goodness. If a virtuous person is in the presence of an evil person, the evil one experiences distress, discomfort, and anxiety. Clues to this reaction can be found in statements such as, "I feel like you are judging me; I feel like you criticize me; I feel like you think you are better than I am." Part of

what others feel when in the presence of a prophet who is a virtuous person is their own self-condemnation or judgment for not living up to their own expectations.

The prophet enhances these feelings by addressing the person in such a manner as to identify areas of weakness. While the prophet's purpose is to bring about change, the perception of the other person is that of being judged. Because the prophet strives for this type of moral excellence, he continually judges himself, looking at his own faults and being transparent about those faults with other people. His desire is to grow in this moral excellence or goodness.

The overall effect of this desire limits the number of friendships that a prophet is able to develop throughout his lifetime. Most people do not enjoy being around someone who they feel is judging and criticizing them, regardless of their motives. So the prophet finds it difficult to find and maintain friends because of this constant striving within for goodness. This striving results in a person who is very blunt and out-spoken. Prophets do not mince words; they want others to know exactly where they stand and why they stand where they do. They hold themselves to the same standard of behavior that is expected of others. Whereas the prophet improves his behavior through this process, others feel judged and condemned. Many see this as discourteous or rude. This to some degree accounts for the few friendships maintained by the prophet. Others find it difficult to relax in the presence of such high standards. Few have little desire to maintain such standards for themselves. Nor is the blunt outspokenness of the prophet tolerated easily. This directness is unpleasant for those who admire diplomacy, compromise and courtesy.

The negative side of this quality comes into play when the prophet is selfish and self-centered. When he abandons virtuosity, he sinks to indiscreet, foul, immoral behavior. It is as if the potential for good is balanced with tremendous evil. The forsaking of the Way leads to great wickedness; the pure becomes very impure. Often the most immoral of persons are those who have the gift of the prophet. With self-centeredness comes a type of pride and exclusiveness that rejects others when they fail to live up to the prophet's standards. They have a "holier-than-thou" attitude which alienates others.

Confidence: The prophet experiences a high level of confidence. This experience of confidence is even greater if he is right and just in the sight of God. If the prophet feels that he is speaking for God, then his own feelings are of no concern. Others easily sense this confidence. The confidence leads prophets to express their thoughts and ideas verbally and in a very clear manner. Confidence is seen in their ability to make quick decisions about what is right and wrong and they make quick judgments about other people in regard to whether they are right or wrong. This confidence leads them to speak first; they do not wait around to see what others say about the situation because they are convinced they know what is right. The prophet is blunt and willing to speak and let others know what he believes and thinks.

This confidence in the self-centered life quickly turns to one of great fearfulness. Fearfulness leads to tactless, reckless, insensitive behavior toward others. The prophet will act rude and brash and make foolhardy decisions in order to cover up his great sense of fear. His confidence is eroded.

Forgiveness: Prophets long to forgive when someone repents. They are anxious to clear their own record when they have wronged someone and easily surrender ill-will or grudges toward

others, especially if the person is repentant. Prophets feel inward distress when they convict themselves of wrong. They find it very difficult to live with themselves when they are doing something that goes against their conscience. Moreover, they become distressed when living in the presence of others who are continually sinning. Lot perhaps was a prophet. It does explain his immediate expression to Abraham about where he wanted to live. It gives some insight into the New Testament assertion that he developed a deeper sense of godliness by his experiences in Sodom.

The prophet's great desire is to promote spiritual growth in others. To this end the prophet tends to be very introspective; he enjoys reading material that leads to self-growth or maturity and he tries to inspire others to read such material. Very much aware of his own need for goodness, he loves to persuade others to be good. Prophets love to knock on doors and speak with complete strangers about the status of their souls. Prophets intercede for others in prayer. They enjoy bringing problems before the throne of God and seeking God's direction.

The prophet experiences self-rejection and rejection of others when moral excellence is put aside. He can become very permissive, allowing others all sorts of latitude to sin. He will delve into drugs and chemical abuse and particularly pornography and immoral behavior, rejecting goodness. Instead of making quick and easy decisions, he becomes very compromising—choosing to accept what is unacceptable and then covering up for his sinfulness.

Persuasion: The Prophet has a unique ability to persuade and convince others. They make great debaters because of this ability to discern right and wrong and to speak out strongly with their opinions. They have an internal drive to verbalize and dramatize their thoughts and ideas. This trait is most evident when a prophet is in the presence of someone who is doing or saying something that is wrong. The prophet feels compelled to challenge wrong doing.

When the prophet turns away from goodness, the ability to convince becomes a strong tendency toward contentiousness. The most capable con-artists are prophets who had the gift and turned away from God to use all their skills and abilities to deceive and steal from others for their own benefit. They become very manipulative, using their ability to force others to do as they wish.

These are the qualities that form the foundation for the gift of the prophet (or spokesperson or perceiver). They are people who tend to be very honest with others, very obedient to that which they know to be right and to basic standards and ethics. They tend to be sincere and desire sincerity in others above all else. They tend to be very virtuous seeking after goodness. This goodness or moral excellence radiates from their lives. They are very confident, knowing what they believe, why they believe it, and wanting others to know it. They are forgiving of others, particularly when they see them as repentant concerning their sins. They have an innate ability to convince or persuade others about certain truths.

SUMMARY FOR THE PROPHET

Positive Characteristics

Expresses thoughts and ideas verbally
Quick to identify good and evil
Sees everything as black or white
Makes decisions quickly
Makes quick judgments
Usually speaks first
Senses insincerity and usually reacts harshly
Tends to be critical of himself and others
Has very few friends
Sees problems as producing repentance
Open about own failures
Has high personal standards
Blunt and outspoken
Very persuasive
Distressed over wrong-doing
Promotes spiritual growth of others
Loyal to the truth regardless of consequences
Introspective
Needs to verbalize or dramatize thoughts and ideas
Has strong opinions and expresses them freely
Prizes obedience
Eager to suffer for the truth
Intercedes for others in prayer

Negative Characteristics

Overly critical of self and others
Frequently has poor self-image
Intolerant of others' opinions
Overreacts to people who are wrong
Jumps to conclusions
Has unrealistic expectations of those who
 have been confronted with wrong
Overly harsh
Impulsive
Vacillates between extremes
Blunt with others
Allows for no shades of gray
Labels others
Judges self too harshly

THE TEACHER

The teacher has a unique ability to tune out physical and emotional distractions in order to reason through problems. Above all else the teacher desires that truth be revealed. He tends to scan others' conversations or written words for evidence of dishonesty. Teachers tend to be very non-emotional, self-controlled individuals. The foundational characteristics for the teacher are:

Discipline: Teachers tend to be very disciplined individuals. This quality is enhanced by the non-emotional characteristic of their make up. Most of us experience a lack of self-discipline because of conflicting emotions. This conflict is much reduced for the teacher. For this same reason they tend to be immune to emotional appeals for mercy by procrastinators. In this sense they share the black and white nature of the prophet.

The blessings of discipline become a curse when it leads to unnecessary harshness. This harshness may be directed towards one's self in the form of compulsive perfectionism or towards others in the form of unnecessary or cruel demands. This most often happens when the teacher is placed in positions of authority.

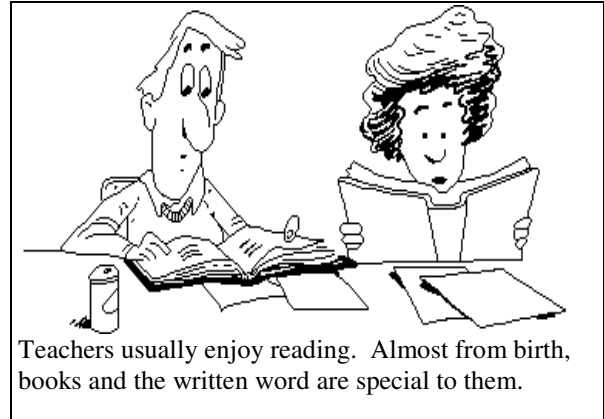
Reverence: Typically, the teacher possesses a reverence for holy things. If a Christian, he emphasizes the scriptures as the source of truth. The teacher prefers biblical illustrations as examples for living. There is a tendency to reject non-biblical examples, especially those from personal experience. The teacher desires purity and truthfulness and upholds these qualities. Once convicted of a truth, the teacher will not deter from that conviction even in the face of contradiction.

These strengths can be destructive when one elevates the traditions of men above the commandments of God. This is the dilemma that Jesus faced with His enemies and eventually resulted in His death. It is a problem frequently experienced by those attempting to evangelize. An example of this blind obedience to non-biblical truths is seen with Mormon missionaries. You may have noted their steadfast rejection of God's Word even to the point of altering God's Word to fit their beliefs. This is not at all unlike the people Jesus was teaching with parables saying He would not explain their meaning because they might repent.

Diligence: Teachers tend to be diligent. Diligence may be defined as that quality which speeds to accomplish a task. Incorporated in this idea is a respect for the task and a high estimation of its value. Thus the teacher displays intensive involvement in the task at hand. For the teacher the task has to be worth striving after. Rarely do they involve themselves in trivial or foolish endeavors. This dedication is reflected in the quality and craftsmanship of the final product.

If the teacher is distracted by self importance then diligence is lost. The teacher tends to jump from topic to topic starting new things, losing interest and leaving a trail of incomplete projects. This eventually degenerates into slothfulness.

Accuracy: Accuracy involves two important ideas for the teacher. The first is an awareness of what is inaccurate and therefore destructive to the project at hand. The second is a zeal for the perfect. Teachers emphasize the importance of clear, logical, systematic presentation of information. The teacher seeks out the smallest details in order to ensure the accuracy of his work. He frequently will go to extraordinary lengths to validate factual information and the primary sources. When the research is completed, the teacher enjoys sharing this learning experience with others. A sense of delight attends the sharing of details that others have missed.



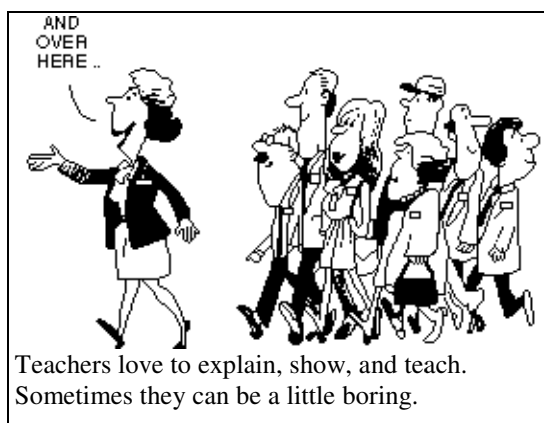
Most often the greatest hindrance to the teacher is an over-emphasis on insignificant details. This trait can become destructive if it becomes an obsessive quality with the teacher.

Authority: Mature teachers exemplify a quality of authority. They speak with authority rooted in a belief that what they have thoroughly studied and researched is accurate and truthful. This quality is more easily seen in the mature teacher because it is more forceful. I suppose we may say that truth has an authority of its own. It most certainly accounts for the diligence and zeal with which a teacher approaches a problem. This authoritativeness is acceptable if accompanied by a sense of humility.

Without humility, authority degenerates into misuse and abuse. This results in a critical, judgmental attitude towards others that destroys the spirit.

Security: Security is the outcome of strong convictions based on research. The objective nature of the teacher excludes the subjective. The objective is anchored in reason and certainty. This gives the teacher a sense of security. From the teacher's perspective, the subjective or emotional is like a cloth blowing in the wind with nothing to hold it down.

Teachers tend to derive security from principles, traditions, and customs. When these are founded in humanistic pursuits, they lead ultimately to insecurity.



Patience: Patience is perhaps one of the qualities that is most visible with the teacher. They long to explain and reveal to others. Therefore they delight in repeating over again to the student the lessons at hand. For the slow learner this can provide the incentive to continue. Even in their own learning they are willing to take the time necessary to acquire the information desired. A synonym for patience is long-suffering. This word emphasizes the idea that

growth may be a painful process which the teacher is willing to endure for the finished project.

Oddly enough, the teacher turned inward often exhibits a quality mistaken for patience. That is a tendency toward pseudo-tolerance. This form of tolerance is an apparent acceptance of the viewpoints of others. When Moses left the wilderness to appear before Pharaoh, he had neglected God's command to circumcise his son. His wife Zipporah performed the circumcision. She tolerated Moses' unwillingness and did what had to be done, but she was angry about it. In much the same way, the teacher frequently tolerates those less knowledgeable than themselves, but with condescension rather than true acceptance and love.

SUMMARY FOR THE TEACHER

Positive Characteristics

Wants material laid out in an orderly manner
Presents information in a logical, systematic way
Validates information by checking out the facts
Prefers to go to primary sources to validate information
Loves to study and do research
Enjoys word studies and develops a large vocabulary
Prefers to use biblical illustrations
Becomes upset when scripture is used out of context
Desires that truth always be established
More objective than subjective
Emphasizes facts and the accuracy of words
Concerned with the credibility of those who teach
Solves problems by beginning with scripture
Intellectually sharp
Self-disciplined
Emotionally self-controlled
Has only a select circle of friends
Has strong convictions and opinions based on research
Believes truth has the power to produce change
Tends to remain silent until information has been heard and verified
Enjoys giving details not noticed by others

Negative Characteristics

May neglect practical applications
Slow to accept others' viewpoints
Tends to become prideful of intellectual ability
May be legalistic or dogmatic
May over-emphasize credentials and regard others as uneducated
May value intellect more than spiritual perception
Assumes that others enjoy research as much as he does
may tend to live in unreal world and interact with facts instead of people
Tends to get things out of balance by not taking into account the life setting

THE ORGANIZER

The gift of administration or organization is also a leadership and verbal gift. There are two important biblical examples of this gift. The first is Joseph. He was sold into slavery by his older brothers, but God used these circumstances to raise him up to the position of second place in Egypt in order that he might preserve his own family in the nation of Israel many years later. Organizers are very important to God's scheme of things. They have unique abilities to achieve what appears to be impossible.

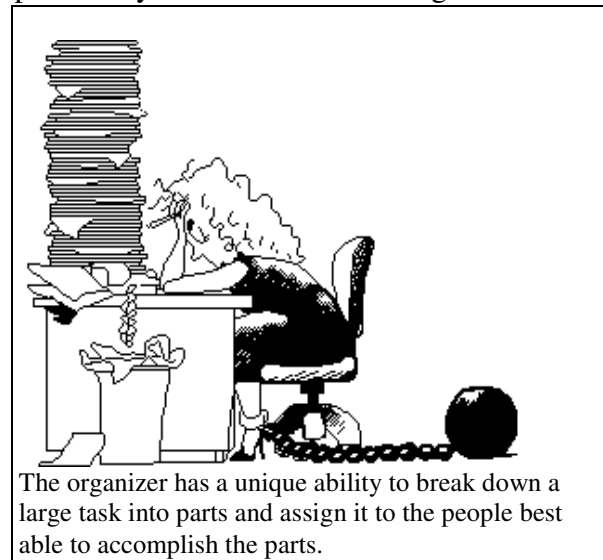
The second example of an organizer is Nehemiah, who Artaxerxes sent to Jerusalem after the captivity. He found the walls of the city completely destroyed and the people in disarray. The situation was one of chaos. As an organizer, the first thing he did was to go out and ride around the city and look at the walls; then he was able to define in his own mind, before he started, the resources available and how to use them in order to achieve the goal. The text says that in less than two months he had rebuilt the walls that had previously taken a whole generation to build.

The underlying characteristics of the organizer are:

Orderliness: The organizer has a need to arrange his surroundings in such a manner that resources can be used efficiently. He is highly motivated to organize the areas of responsibility that are given to him. He does not like taking responsibility that has not been assigned to him because he wants to be under authority. He has unique communication skills and is able to express ideas and organization quite clearly. He is able to take large tasks and break them down into achievable goals and then assign those tasks to the people who are best able to perform them. He tends to be very efficient in the work that he does and in the organizational skills that he employs. He easily facilitates both the material and human resources that are necessary to accomplish the task. He receives a sense of fulfillment in seeing all the parts coming together to accomplish a goal.

When his gift is used selfishly, his orderliness turns to disorganization. This change occurs because he becomes intolerant of others. Whereas he once was able to use people and resources wisely, now because of his inflexibility and insensitivity, his meticulousness becomes destructive.

Initiative: The organizer enjoys seeking out that which needs to be done and then doing it before he is asked. He enjoys working on long-range projects. The organizer is able to put off the immediate need to see success and to look down the road and see how things will come together in the future. In spite of those long-term goals, he is alert to very small details which are essential to the proper completion of a project, and he wants to see the project done well.



He is a natural and capable leader, and others enjoy working under him. He has the ability to see how the finished project will look even before he starts, whereas most people have to physically rearrange things to see how they will look. He can see in his mind's eye the completed project and the resources needed to accomplish it. He wants to accomplish it as soon as possible even though it is a long-term goal.

When he turns away from God, in the area of initiative, he becomes very unresponsive, even impatient with others, pushy with them as opposed to stepping out and leading them. He may become very intrusive in the lives of others.

Responsibility: The organizer is willing to take responsibility, but at the same time, he demands that others in authority delegate those responsibilities to him. He will not go out and take responsibility upon himself without delegation. He tends to maintain a continual accountability with the workers and the resources that he uses, always knowing what has been used and where it has been used and what is needed to complete the task. He derives enjoyment from delegating tasks and responsibilities to others, and from supervising others. If there is either no other leader around or no one with the authority to delegate responsibilities, then he will assume leadership.

When turned inwards, he becomes unreliable. He becomes domineering and oppressive in his responses to others, taking jurisdiction in areas where it has not been granted and demanding that things be done his way because he knows best.

Humility: The organizer recognizes that he cannot accomplish the task without the help of others. He realizes that others are really responsible for his achievements in life. He is willing to let others receive credit in order to get the job done. He enjoys working with and being with people. He enjoys physical settings. He is willing to set aside his own desires to meet the needs of those working under him.

When self-centered, this trait of humility gives way to pride and self-will resulting in the destruction of others. He becomes critical both of himself and others and loses confidence.

Decisiveness: The organizer has the ability to finalize difficult decisions based on his evaluation and assessment of the situation. The decisiveness is based on a naturally broad perspective that he has about the physical world and his ability to take in a multitude of stimuli and process it to make a decision. He is able to place workers according to their strengths and weakness so that maximum productivity is achieved. He knows instinctively what tasks should be delegated and which ones must be done himself. He can quickly evaluate a situation and then make a firm decision.

On the negative side, he can lose his decisiveness because he becomes double-minded in his thinking. He tends to be very inflexible, even ruthless, in his attitude and dealing with others. He is very closed-minded and rigid about decisions that he makes.

Determination: When an organizer purposes to accomplish a goal, he usually determines to do it in an allotted period of time. Then he sets out to reach that goal regardless of opposition. He will endure any criticism in order to complete his goal. He has a great deal of zeal and enthusiasm about the work he does and he sees the life-long purposes of that work. He is willing

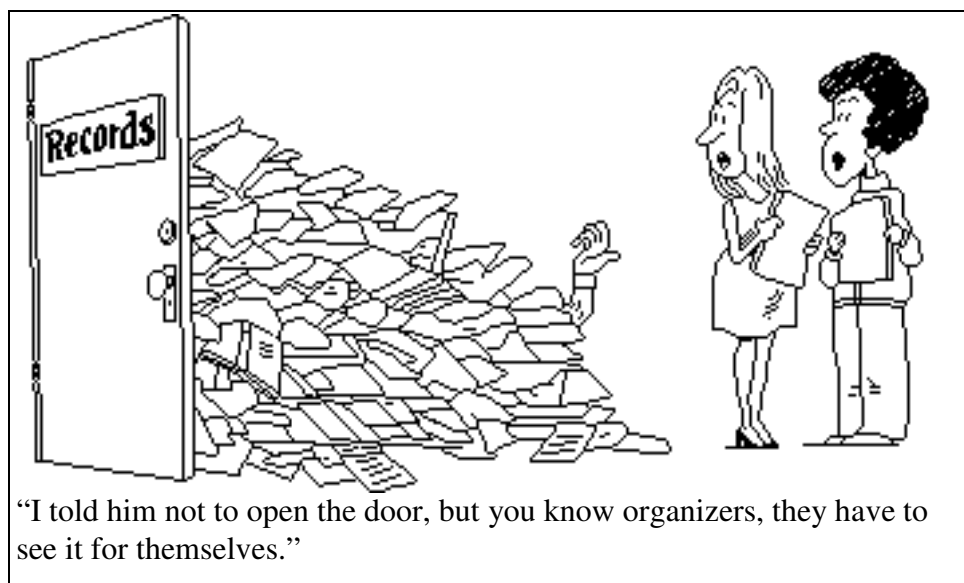
to remove himself from distracting details in order to focus on the ultimate goal. He inspires workers to complete their jobs with approval, praise, and corrections when necessary.

When he turns away from God, he tends to become faint-hearted. If failure looms on the horizon, he tends to reject the cautions of others. Instead of being willing to give credit to others for what they do, he turns to using and misusing people in order to accomplish his own purposes.

Loyalty: Just as trustworthiness is so important to the teacher and sincerity to the mercy and the prophet, so is loyalty important to the organizer. It is easy to overlook the importance of loyalty. Yet if one examines scripture, he discovers that in practical every circumstances where disloyalty occurs, almost always there follows a death, or at least major injury. Time and time again, one sees that disloyalty leads to destruction. The organizer is very cognizant of the need for loyalty among his workers. In fact, the first thing he searches out in an employee is whether or not he is loyal. If he uses a person who turns out to be disloyal or unreliable, then he probably will never use that person again. In this respect he becomes very judgmental and relentless in his refusal to accept one whom he considers untrustworthy.

Because of this drive for loyal workers, once he has established a base of people who are reliable and loyal, he tends to use these people even to the point of over-using them.

The negative side of this characteristic is that the organizer becomes very possessive, demanding blind obedience on the part of others. He can form undue attachments with others. He may lose the ability to see the broad perspective and fail to heed the warning signals which caution about disloyalty or untrustworthiness.



SUMMARY FOR THE ORGANIZER

Positive Characteristics

Highly motivated to organize areas of responsibilities
Expresses ideas and organization clearly
Prefers to be under authority before exercising authority
Will not take responsibility unless it is delegated by one in charge
Assumes responsibilities if no specific leader exists
Enjoys working on long-range goals and projects
Able to take large tasks and break them into achievable goals
Naturally has a broad perspective
Tends to be very efficient
Easily facilitates resources and people to accomplish tasks
Uses a few people whom he or she can count on
Enjoys delegating tasks and supervising people
Places workers according to their strengths and weaknesses so that maximum productivity is achieved
Maintains a continual accountability with workers
Inspires workers to complete a job by approval, praise, and reproof
Knows what tasks to delegate and what tasks to do himself
Will endure criticism in order to accomplish the ultimate goal
Has a great deal of zeal and enthusiasm
Alert to small details which are essential to completing a project properly
Removes himself from distracting details in order to focus on the ultimate goal
Receives fulfillment from seeing all parts coming together to accomplish a goal
Able to quickly evaluate situations and make firm decisions
Willing to let others get credit in order to get a job done
Prefers to move on to something new once a task is completed
Constantly writes himself notes
Natural and capable leader
Knows when to keep old methods and when to introduce new ones
Enjoys being with and working around people
Wants to see things completed as soon as possible
Does not enjoy routine tasks

Negative Characteristics

Becomes upset when others do not share the same goals
Develops outer callousness due to being a target for criticism
Tends to use people to accomplish own goals
Tends to drive himself to the point of neglecting personal and family obligations
Neglects routine responsibilities due to interest in a job
Makes suggestions and then reacts when they are not followed
Shows favoritism or partiality to those he considers important to achieving goals
May cause disharmony by expressing frustration with others
Very sensitive to loyalty and tends to jump to conclusions based on it
Dumps responsibilities on others when not in charge
Rejects suggestions or closes ears to grievances
Show patterns of resentment and pride
Reacts to people who do not have the same talents and abilities, focusing on their inefficiency and disorganization
Reluctant to dismiss valuable workers with serious problems
Becomes discontent with the things she has or has not done
Gives instructions without explanations, causing others to feel used
Neglects to give proper praise or appreciation

THE EXHORTER

The exhorter is a person who commits himself to growth. He looks beyond the immediate problems and surface difficulties to discover the root causes of problems in his own life and in the lives of others. He then defines precise steps of action needed to resolve those root problems. Exhorters are very well-liked because they have a unique desire and ability to encourage others. Other people like to be around them because they lift their spirits. The seven underlying characteristics are:

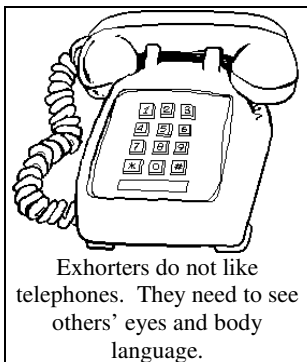
Wisdom: Wisdom may be defined as seeing and responding to situations in life from a broad perspective. The exhorter readily sees potential in people that those people will usually miss in themselves. He can see the long-term consequences of a course of action, both positive and negative. He desires to provide the directions for that person's good. It is very easy for the exhorter to make decisions. When a decision is made it is usually the correct one for the circumstances.

Practicality colors the outlook of the exhorter. "What works?" is his motto. He enjoys prescribing specific steps that a person should take in order to overcome problems and to grow spiritually and emotionally. The exhorter is able to sense the level of maturity in another person and respond to that maturity or lack of it. Since wisdom resides and originates with God, for the exhorter to be successful at giving wise advice, God must be the source to which he turns. If he turns to any other source, then ultimately his wisdom will erode.

If the exhorter becomes self-centered, he turns to a humanistic point of view and instead of having positive advice to share with others, his advice takes on a very negative character. He becomes very contentious and opinionated about what he believes; he sets aside the ideas of others and will not listen to them.

Discernment: Discernment is the ability to understand on a deeper level the reasons why things happen. It is the ability to see past the immediate visible event and delve below the surface. In his eyes, everything has a specific consequence, whether good or bad. It is his desire to learn the under-lying principles that govern cause and effect sequences.

Exhorters prefer to interact with people as opposed to working with inanimate objects such as computers. They view trials and obstacles in life as opportunities to produce personal growth for self and others. As the exhorter considers a situation, he tries to determine what lesson it is that God wants to teach in that situation. When he discerns the lesson, he is quick to turn and thank God for the obstacle or trial that produced the learning and growth.



Exhorters do not like telephones. They need to see others' eyes and body language.

The exhorter has a unique ability to discern the spiritual maturity of another, which helps him discern exactly what approach to take in order to successfully intervene with that person. The eyes are very important to the exhorter. A great deal about a person may be discerned by looking in their eyes. Qualities like sincerity, honesty, morality, courage, and cowardice are apparent to the discerning eye of the exhorter. It is very hard for the exhorter to

communicate with another through the telephone or mail because he wants to be able to look at the person. He discerns deeper messages by observing others' non-verbal language while listening to what is being said and connecting those words with behavior.

When the exhorter turns away from God, he tends to become very judgmental. Normally he is critical of himself anyway, but now he becomes very judgmental and critical of others also.

Faith: Faith is the ability to picture what ones authority figure intends to accomplish with any given situation and to act in harmony with that authority. Faith is trusting ultimately in God, and having faith that He will fulfill his promises and that He indeed is the One who is constructing the cause and effect sequences in life. It is that part of a person that wants to explain truth with logical reasoning in order to motivate people to act. The exhorter realizes the trustworthiness of this type of explanation.

He places a great deal of importance on having a clear conscience both for himself and for others because he knows that where there is guilt, there will be all kinds of destructive emotions that will overcome a person. He expects much from himself and from others. In fact, when working with another, if he outlines a course of action that the person should follow for resolving or getting out of a situation, and that person does not follow his advice, then he may turn away and have nothing more to offer him. He sees this as a clear rejection of the basic principles of life.

When the exhorter is turned inward, he tends to become very presumptuous, relying on his own efforts and disregarding the efforts of others. Success in the lives of others he credits to himself. He becomes very impulsive in his behavior, ridden with anxiety. Normally, exhorters have elevated moods; but when they become consumed with self depression sets in.

Discretion: The exhorter has the ability to avoid words, actions, and attitudes that can result in undesirable consequences with a person with whom he is working. The mercy is careful of what he says or does because he wants to avoid hurting the feelings of others. The exhorter takes care because of the changes he wants to see wrought in another. Discretion is the hallmark of the exhorter. Therefore they make excellent counselors. When a client senses the discreteness of the exhorter it creates a sense of security which dispels barriers. Exhorters are not passive counselors; rather, they tend to be directive with specific instructions. They expect others to be just as transparent about their problems as they are about their own problems and difficulties.

CONFIDENTIAL

Well, maybe; however exhorters have been known to break a confidence now

This out-going nature and discretion typical of the exhorter may become destructive if self-interest sets in. Under these circumstances the exhorter becomes introverted, isolated, and secretive. He may become timid, fearful, and over-cautious as opposed to his normal role of outspoken leader. Decision making abilities are lost for the path is no longer seen. The encourager then becomes a discourager.

Acceptance: The exhorter accepts people as they are without judging them, regardless of the kinds of problems they exhibit. When the exhorter decides to work with a person, he is able and willing to put aside any judgments about the person's behavior, accepting them as they are and starting with them where they are, regardless of the maturity level. Exhorters tend to be very loving and forgiving.

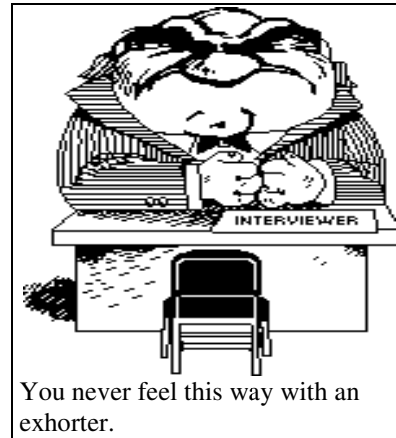
When turned inward, the exhorter desires others' acceptance more than their healing. Fear of man replaces a fear of God. Whereas normally he is very insightful, now he becomes gullible and compromising of principles.

Innovation: The exhorter likes to approach a task from a new perspective. He prefers to apply truth rather than go out and research it like the teacher. He prefers information that has a very practical application. He loves to create practical new ways to deal with old problems. He has the ability to see problems from many perspectives and is always searching for the easiest, most practical, and shortest solution to a problem.

This creativity is lost, however, when the exhorter turns away from God. The tendency becomes to make self into a god. Whereas he was the developer, he now becomes the under-achiever. Instead of giving, he hoards, becoming crafty and devious with others. He attempts to circumvent authorities or basic principles in life for his own ends. As these things occur, his creations crumble and the faith others place in him is lost.

Fervency: The exhorter has a fervency of spirit that loves to seek out and encourage others to live victoriously and to overcome the obstacles in life. Exhorters tend to be fluent communicators, expressing this fervency of spirit verbally and nonverbally. Because of the fervency and encouraging nature, he is usually greatly loved by others. Typically, exhorters are optimistic and positive person.

When turned away from God, the exhorter becomes apathetic. This apathy leads to anxiety about the smallest details. He becomes aggressive towards others. He demands others attention, instead of a willingness to come along side as one who encourages. In this negative mode, the fervency can take on an over-bearing nature, becoming at times even fanatic in nature.



SUMMARY FOR THE EXHORTER

Positive Characteristics

Loves to encourage others to live victoriously
Expects much of self and others
Readily sees potential in people that others miss
Desires a visible response when teaching or speaking
Prefers to apply truth rather than research it
Explains truth with logical reasoning in order to motivate people to act on it
Motivated to learn "cause-and-effect sequences" and through them to discover underlying principles
Prefers information that has practical application
Prescribes precise steps of action to aid personal growth
Greatly prefers to work with people rather than things
Loves to do personal counseling, but will discontinue if no effort is being made by the counselee
Tends to be transparent about own problems
Finds truth in experience and then validates it with scripture
Tends to be a fluent communicator
Views trials and obstacles as opportunities to produce personal growth
Able to discern the spiritual maturity of another person
Accepts people as they are without judging them
Tends to be loving, forgiving, and accepting
Usually is greatly loved because of an optimistic, positive attitude
Prefers to witness with a Christian life rather than with words
Makes decisions easily
Usually makes correct decisions because he is practical and life-related
Usually completes what he starts

Places great importance on having a clear conscience
Wants to clear up problems with others quickly, even if it means taking undeserved blame
Usually sets high goals that will be a challenge to meet
Needs a "sounding board" to bounce off ideas

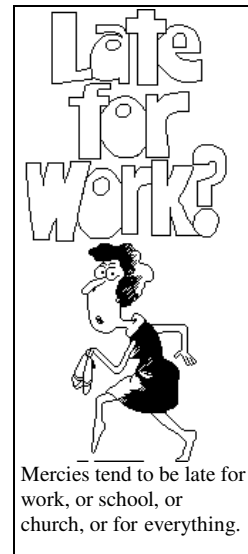
Negative Characteristics

Tends to use scripture out of context to make a point
Tends to be "cut and dried" in prescribing steps of action
Can easily fall into giving "pat" answers
Categorizes problems and arrives at conclusions before getting all the facts
Tends to be gossipy, bossy, over-talkative
Frequently lets his mouth run ahead of his mind
Tends to be overly self-confident with a know-it-all attitude
Giving people whatever time is necessary frequently cuts into own family time
May take personal credit for the progress of one with whom he is working
Jumps into new projects without finishing existing ones
Tends to give others the impression that they are merely projects rather than individuals who need personal attention
Shares private illustrations from counseling experiences to communicate message or point
Tends to avoid doctrinal teaching when no practical application is seen
Breeds disillusionment by failing to warn that a particular project, though sounding simple, is in fact long-term
Loses valuable personal character training due to tendency to surround himself only with those who respond quickly to instructions

THE MERCY

The gift of mercy is a sharp contrast to the prophet both in attitude and outlook. The mercy, also known as compassion, is typically loyal, compassionate and has a unique ability to sense distress, pain, or anguish in others.

One of the most unique characteristics of mercy that helps to identify them is their slowness; they have only one speed and that is slow. This is a quality that can irritate others until they understand why. In the other gifts, the mind or the intellect rules supreme. However, with the mercy, everything is filtered through the emotions first, and then on to the mind or intellect. Because of this, there is a delay that occurs. For the mercy this is very useful. In contrast to others that feel the urge to say something, the mercy is comfortable sitting and listening. The urge to act is absent and this to some extent accounts for the slowness. Sometimes this slowness is interpreted as laziness. Mercies are not lazy. Rather, they live in a different world that is not characterized by sight and sound and movement. It is characterized by feelings. The seven characteristics that form the foundation for this gift are:



Attentiveness: Mercies are very attentive to what another says. When they listen to a person, they give their full attention to what is said. They not only listen to the words, but they are searching for expressions of feeling that identify what is going on with the person. The mercy is attracted to persons who are hurt or in distress, more so for emotional distress than for physical distress, but they are attracted to both. They actively search for anyone who might be distressed.

The mercy is very attentive to words and actions. They are very careful about the words they use with others because they do not want to hurt the feelings of others. They filter their behavior in order to avoid hurting others with something they might say or do.

There is a negative side to this attentiveness. The gifts were intended to be used outside ourselves for other people. When they are turned inward, then they have the capacity or ability to destroy. So with the attention of the mercy: when taken off others it gives way to self-conscious behavior. When turned inward, mercies become unapproachable, no longer able to feel beyond themselves. This leads to isolation and the exclusion of others from their realm. They may become very gullible and naive, undiscerning of the purposes or motivations of others.

Sensitivity: The mercy is able to sense a genuine love on the part of other people. They are able to discern whether people are sincere or insincere and they easily detect wrong motives. They are able to sense the spiritual and emotional atmosphere of others.

The mercy must however bring sensitivity under control. Discovering the emotional volume control connected with the sensitivity helps this trait become a useful tool. There is a proper time and place for full volume; perhaps when working with an extremely distressed person. The increased emotional volume allows the mercy to sense and relieve the anxiety, and distress of the



If you have ever felt like this then you know why the Lord made Mercies

other person. However, full volume is too intense for normal situations and must be disengaged entirely when turned inward. If this is not done then an overload occurs and distortion results.

Because sensitivity is so strong, mercies tend to be ruled by their hearts more than their heads. It is easier for them to feel their way through circumstances than to think their way through. Part of the clash that occurs between the mercy and the other gifts is the lack of ability of a mercy to focus on the logical and reasonable. They tend to put these aside in favor of the emotional, which to the mercy is far more important.

On the negative side, the mercy who turns inwards finds himself angry with others, perhaps because of unmet expectations or trivial hurts. The mercy makes his hurt all important. Bitterness sets in and he over-burdens the emotional side of his life.

Another by-product of obsession with his pain is insensitivity to the experiences and feelings of others. This happens when, over-focused on their own pain, mercies decide they don't intend to feel any more. By refusing to allow the pain of others to creep into their awareness, they become insensitive to all feelings.

Justice: Mercies desire justice. They feel that each person should take personal responsibility for his own actions. Thus you will frequently find mercies in the front lines in any crusade. Because of this desire for justice, they are attracted to people who are frank, outspoken, and hate evil, all of which describes the prophet. And yes, there is a great tendency among mercies to marry prophets. Some suggest this occurs nearly seventy percent of the time. This invariably

leads to tremendous conflict in the first few years of marriage. When you look at the marriages of prophets and mercies that have lasted a long time you observe that the prophet has taken on some mercy qualities. Now they are more gentle and kind. The same thing happens to the mercy they take on some prophet qualities especially in the area of discipline.

The mercy has problems with discipline. Discipline is related to justice for without discipline and correction there is no justice. Yet true justice is rooted in knowledge of God. Without this knowledge one tends to go to either extreme.

In contrast to justice, with selfish and self-centeredness, comes an emphasis on fairness. Fairness is not a godly characteristic. It is a characteristic invented by man to justify imperfection and weakness. So when the mercy turns away from God, they start emphasizing that which is fair as opposed to that which is just. A self-centered mercy will become unjust, insensitive, and harsh.

Meekness: We can describe meekness as willingness to yield personal rights to God. This quality carries a trusting and trustworthy attitude toward other people. Instead of judging, meekness leads one to look for good in others. Mercies, that are meek, tend to be very joyful and cheerful. They look for good in others and emphasize that quality of goodness.

Meekness may carry with it a sense of indecisiveness. The indecisiveness comes from the desire not to hurt others. There is also a sense of vulnerability. The mercy is very easily hurt by others. Sometimes the hurts are intentional and sometimes they are not; but because of their vulnerability, the mercy will perceive them as intentional. Vulnerability presents an opportunity, for real vulnerability, when given to God, becomes a powerful force. If however, it is retained then it eventually decreases sympathy or empathy for others.

The most angry people one may encounter are probably selfish mercies. When they turn inward, they start taking account of all the pain and distress that they have experienced in their lives, and they explode. With this explosion comes a rush of emotions and words which may be very hurtful. Also when mercies turn inward, they may become docile or weak, vacillating between anger and helplessness. Frequently they are considered very weak people, very passive; but this is far from the truth. With meekness comes a deep sense of strength; but when self is exalted the meekness turns to weakness and anger.

Compassion: Mercies desire to invest whatever is necessary to heal the heart and pains of others. They have a tremendous capacity to show love to others, far above that which is normally found among the other gifts. This sense of compassion leads them to be able to relieve suffering in others. The action necessary for this may be a physical or emotional action. With the quality of compassion comes the need for physical closeness. This closeness to the mercy means acceptance and reassurance.

Compassion turns to indifference in the face of selfishness. Apathy in a mercy is frequently misdiagnosed as depression.

Gentleness: Mercies are gentle hearted. They desire to put the other person above themselves. They want to see the other person praised or honored. This brings joy to the mercy. Whereas the prophet seeks out conflict and confrontation to bring about the will of God, the mercy goes the

other direction and avoid conflict at all cost. This quality of gentleness rejoices when it sees others being praised and grieves when others are hurt. They enjoy seeing the needs of others being met.

The negative side of gentleness is displayed in permissiveness, and indulgence. By indulging in a selfish desire to avoid conflict at any price, they allow that which is wrong and the destruction that comes with it.

Deference: Mercies have a basic concern for the respect of others. They do not like stepping on the rights of another. They are willing to give place to others and put them ahead of themselves. This quality carries with it the element of yielding.

However, when they become selfish, the quality of deference turns to rudeness, or it may take on the guise of compliance with no real desire to yield to the desires of others. When turned inwards the mercy may give in to others, but not for righteous reasons. The motivation may be simply to stop confrontation or conflict.

SUMMARY FOR THE MERCY

Positive Characteristics

Has a tremendous capacity to show love
Able to sense genuine love on the part of others
Feels vulnerable and easily hurt
Always looks for the good in people
Senses the spiritual and emotional atmosphere of others
Attracted to people who are hurting or in distress
Empathizes with those who are hurting and senses their emotions
Takes action to remove hurts and relieve distress in others
More concerned for mental and emotional distress than physical distress
Motivates people to have right relationships
Loves opportunities to give preference or place to others
Careful with words and actions to avoid hurting others
Easily detects insincerity or wrong motives
Loves to do thoughtful things for others
Trusting and trustworthy
Tends to be indecisive
Avoids conflicts and confrontations
Tends to be slow and does not like to be rushed
Typically cheerful and joyful
Ruled by heart more than head
Rejoices to see others blessed and grieved to see others hurt
Crusader for good causes
Intercedes for the hurts and problems of others
Demonstrates loyalty to friends by reacting harshly to those who attack them
Needs close friendships which must have mutual commitment
Needs physical closeness in order to be reassured of acceptance
Attracted to people who are frank, outspoken, and hate evil

Negative Characteristics

Easily hurt by others
Empathizes too much with the suffering of others
Affectionate nature often misinterpreted by the opposite sex
Tends to monopolize the time and attention of others because of deep needs for commitment in close friendships
Places greater demands on new friendships when previous friendships have proven disappointing
Sometimes lacks discernment as to why people suffer, and thus gives sympathy and encouragement to those suffering as a result of sin
Tends to avoid giving discipline when in a leadership position
Bases decisions on emotions instead of principles
Reacts and becomes bitter in regard to the idea that God allows a good person to suffer
Reacts to those who are insensitive to the feelings of others

THE SERVER

Servers see the needs of others, especially their physical needs, and desire to meet those needs. They are willing to invest a considerable amount of time and energy into the lives of others. They tend to be followers. Servers are hard workers and because of this tend to be promoted above others. This is a mistake, however, because servers do best when they are under authority and when serving other people. When placed in authority, the server loses his way and what he easily organizes for himself becomes impossible to organize with others. The seven qualities that form the foundation of this gift are:

Alertness: Just as the mercy is very alert to feelings, the server is very alert to physical needs. He quickly recognizes when another person needs his help because he is continually searching for those physical properties in life. Because he is such a physical person, he enjoys manual projects, or working with his hands. He enjoys completing tasks in a single day. He has a sense of fulfillment and self-satisfaction when he can complete a task in a very short period of time. This is the server at his very best.

The alertness to needs results in a preference for short-term projects. This alertness causes him to be very aware of his physical environment and he tends to get very distressed when surrounded by a lot of clutter. Typically he has a drive inside to change his environment when it is cluttered. He tends to keep everything around him in meticulous order.

Servers have an excellent memory for small details. They always remember birthdays, anniversaries, and people's interests. They continually surprise others by meeting small, simple needs in others lives.

On the negative side, this trait of alertness turns to distraction if turned inward. When this occurs the server becomes nervous, anxious, physically agitated, and starts to treat others in an abrupt, impulsive manner. The needs of others become an occasion for anger instead of joy.

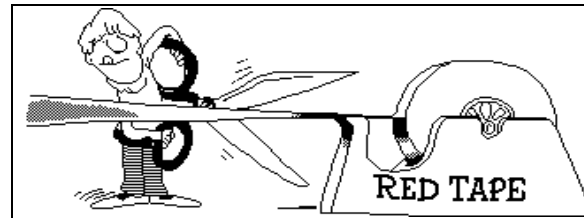
Hospitality: Servers derive a tremendous amount of pleasure from sharing food and shelter with those in need. Frequently, they meet the needs of others before their own and may place others' needs before the needs of their own family. This is very irritating to family members. We see this in the case of Jesus' friend Martha. In her desire to meet the physical needs of Jesus, she became overwhelmed; then she became distracted and agitated.

When the server becomes self-centered, hospitality is turned off and the focus turns to his own desires. This may result in social climbing or cliquishness. This leads to a deep sense of loneliness in the server.

Generosity: Love to the server is a physical expression with deeds as opposed to an expression with words. Therefore, he will freely use up his own personal assets of time, money, and energy to meet the needs of others. Servers are generous with possessions. To facilitate this generosity and hospitality, however, the server has to receive praise from the people whom he serves. Without expressions of appreciation, he becomes lost because he does not know if what he has done is acceptable or not. Others may misunderstand and think that all the server wants is praise

when just the opposite is true. Praise is not motivation, but confirmation that the deed is important.

In expressing generosity and helpfulness, the server will go out of his way to bypass committees, red-tape, or whatever stands in the way of meeting the needs he has perceived. The server lives by the motto that the physical comes first and the paperwork last.



The server wants to get the task done. Often this means cutting through the red tape to get the task accomplished.

The negative side of this quality is stinginess, or an attempt to control his physical surroundings. When the motivation changes from others to self, then the server tends to show favoritism towards those whom he serves to the exclusion of others.

Exuberance: The server has a real sense of unreserved joy when he is aware that he has met the needs of another. It makes his day complete and his life seems worthwhile. He feels in fellowship with those around him. Typically the server will go far beyond what is asked because of the desire for fulfillment which comes from meeting another's needs.

In contrast to this exuberance is a person who places themselves first. No longer interested in the needs of others and their energy now self directed, lassitude sets in with feelings of hopelessness. Life seems pointless.

Pliancy: The server allows himself to bend or yield to the forces around him in order to accomplish the task at hand. This willingness to yield and sacrifice self to see that the task is completed usually insures the success of his endeavor.

To succeed, the server needs clear directions from the authority figure and then freedom to accomplish the task in the way that he deems best. If the authority figure attempts to over-control or impose his will, then much of the initiative or pliancy of the server can be lost. Because he is not seeking to be the leader, or to be in control or in charge, he enjoys a great deal of flexibility in looking at the options that allow him to finish the task.

When the server is self-centered, he may create resistance, both internal and external. He resists listening to others or accepting their advice or suggestions. He tends to become very independent or passive-independent; and rather than desiring to complete a task himself, he allows someone else to do it. He can be very stubborn and passive-resistant when he desires.

Availability: Servers think in terms of molding their own schedule to those of the people whom they serve. This is one of the reasons that short-term goals are preferred; it is much easier for the server to surrender himself to the needs of another for a short-term project than for a long one. Servers prefer to do the job themselves rather than delegate it. They can clearly see what needs to be done and can find the easiest and quickest way of doing it when left to themselves. However, servers find it very difficult to communicate to others what they so easily sense.

A server's sense of availability allows him to accomplish much more than the non-server. The server's whole physical being is set on accomplishing the task. By directing all his mental, physical, and emotional energies on the work, he can complete the task more quickly than others.

When the server becomes self-centered, his availability becomes aimlessness. Whenever he endeavors to do a task, he finds himself blinded to what needs to be done. Under these circumstances, he may become very intrusive in the lives of others.

Stamina: The server possesses a great deal of inward strength and this gives him the ability to experience a lot of stress and still accomplish the task. Along with the stamina, God has granted him a tremendously high level of energy. He gives the server the ability to suppress the emotional part of his nature. Once suppressed the physical energy is channeled into the work at hand. The normal person may work eight to ten hours and be tired, but the server seems to have a boundless energy. He can work fourteen hours a day or more without fatigue. Servers desire to stay with a project until it is completed. This of course necessitates short term goals.

When the server misuses his gift, stamina gives way to weakness. He may give up, or become insensitive to the needs of others. He becomes very unyielding with his time and energy. When this happens, he has nothing else to give to others because he is empty himself.



This is the type of situation servers enjoy. They love to help, organize, and clean. When the task is completed they need to know they have pleased others.

SUMMARY FOR THE SERVER

Positive Characteristics

Recognizes practical needs and is quick to meet them
Enjoys manual projects, jobs, and functions
Keeps everything in meticulous order
A detail person with a good memory
Enjoys showing hospitality
Stays with a project until its completion
Has a hard time saying no to requests for help
Meets the needs of others before own needs
Prefers short-term goals to long-term projects
Show love by deeds rather than words
Needs appreciation to confirm direction
Feels joy in being helpful
Tends to do more than asked
Not a leader
Has a high energy level
Cannot stand to be around clutter
Tends to be a perfectionist
Prefers doing a job to delegating it
Supports those who are in charge
Needs clear direction about tasks to be done
Delights in knowing that his help enhances peace of mind of the other person, allowing greater productivity
Freely uses up personal assets of time, money, and strength
Avoids committees and red tape to accomplish tasks

Negative Characteristics

Overly critical of those neglectful of others' needs
Reacts to those who refuse to follow through with his suggestions
May neglect own family's needs in serving others
Task may become more important than the person
Has difficulty being served by others
Easily hurt when unappreciated
Will experience more physical problems due to anxiety
Tends to fail when put into area of responsibility for others
Tends to feel misused when expected to serve
Needs directions and approval or feels lost
Frequently develops own schedule and expects others to adjust
Dislikes rigid schedules of others

THE GIVER

Secretive is the best word to describe the giver. Even when testing for this quality, one is often fooled because the giver masks himself as having a different gift, most often that of server with which he shares some common qualities. God has bestowed upon the giver the ability to use resources in a very effective manner. The giver tends to be a very materialistic person, but in a manner which may be quite spiritual. Givers are very good at acquiring material things, but very rarely do they use them for their own purposes. Rather they will acquire for the purpose of giving them away. The seven qualities that form the foundation for this gift are:

Resourcefulness: The giver is very resourceful. A collector of material things, he often attempts to anticipate future needs. The Lord seems to grant givers a natural wisdom and insight into the usefulness of items. This wisdom is used in building, acquiring and disbursing material things.

They have natural business abilities. Normally followers except in matters of business, they are supportive of the authority of others. If they begin their own business, it tends to be successful because of their skillful use of resources.

Givers give to others. They want to know about the needs of the people around them. One of the great joys of their lives is to determine a need and then to meet it, particularly in a secretive way so that source of the gift remains anonymous. The gospel writer Matthew was probably a giver. One of the things that may be noted about Matthew is the emphasis on not letting the left hand know what the right hand is doing. This is a chief trait of the giver.

If givers become self-focused, their materialism becomes destructive. They will tend to acquire, hoard and save with no apparent purpose. The Bible warns of those who gather for themselves, building large storehouses which eventually lead to their destruction. There is a song about the Dead Sea--how it continually receives from the Jordan river but never gives, having no place to drain, and therefore dies. So it is with givers; when turned inward and self-centered, they become wasteful, manipulative, and collectors of clutter.

Thriftiness: Givers hang on to money, stretching it to its outer limits with wisdom and frugality. Givers are not naive when it comes to how money should be used. They are able to discern wise investments. At the same time, givers react very negatively to any kind of pressure appeals for money. If a need is seen it will be met but they do not like people approaching them for charity.



The giver's greatest strength becomes debilitating weakness when his talents are turned inward. Thriftiness gives way to over-extravagance or stinginess. How often we read news accounts of

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY



Givers tend to be secretive about their lives. They believe not letting one hand know what the other is doing.

elderly people starving to death in a house bulging with money and other valuables, too stingy to even purchase the necessities of life.

Contentment: One may note how most people respond in the presence of affluence. Often most are overcome by agitation in the presence of great wealth. This experience is created by the need to hang on or to protect wealth from loss. With the giver, there is a real sense of contentment that occurs when handling wealth according to God's standards of stewardship. The giver needs continual reassurance that his decisions are God's will. Frequently, the giver looks to spouse or others for verification about God's prompting on the use of material things. This quality of contentment is not based upon how much one possesses, but rather how he feels about those possessions. The giver may be very poor, but if he is using his resources as a good steward, then there is a deep sense of contentment. This contentment is not connected with the amount, rather with its proper use.

The negative side of this is that when the giver turns inward and forsakes the needs of others, he becomes covetous. With the covetousness comes a fear of losing what is possessed. With the fear comes indecisiveness about the use of materials and resources. This can frequently lead to slothfulness and eventual loss of everything.

Promptness: Because of his awareness of the importance of resources, the giver has a built-in need to be prompt and on time, for time is considered a resource. Rarely does the giver need prompting about being on time or reproached about being late. The giver is careful with time.

When he is selfish, the giver becomes inconsiderate. When self becomes more important than others, impatience sets in. Intolerance of others' needs surfaces and the giver becomes apathetic, unwilling to take the time even to listen.

Forbearance: Forbearance may be defined as a willingness to set aside one's own prejudices and desires on behalf of another person. The giver has a primary interest in the salvation of souls. Though not nearly as forward as the prophet, he will take the initiative in addressing the issue of salvation with another person. He, like the prophet and mercy, enjoys interceding in prayer on behalf of others.

On the negative side, this trait turns to prejudice when self is put above others. At other times, the giver becomes overly permissive, spoiling those who are important to him, undiscerning of the long-term consequences of meeting the every whim of another. Instead of giving to meet needs, the purpose of giving becomes acquiring favor.

Prudence: The giver evaluates his needs based on a high standard both for himself and for others. He is aware of his reputation in the community and strives for a good one. The giver is very aware of the destructiveness of material things. That is why he is able to acquire without being destroyed. Knowing the destructive nature of money, he is very careful about how, when, where, and to whom he gives.

When he is selfish, prudence becomes impulsiveness. The giver jumps from task to task, looking for needs and never finding them since he cannot see outside himself.

Gratefulness: Gratitude is very important to the giver. He believes that God is the source of his supply. As long as he sees himself as God's warehouse, a temporary storage place for resources, then he experiences a deep sense of gratitude which makes him very effective in all that he does.

He feels delight when he realizes that the gift he gives to another is the answer to a specific prayer on that person's part. It confirms for him God's presence in his life and His pleasure with how he is using his resources. Resources become a means of encouraging others because the giver instinctively knows that material things motivate others. He tends to use resources to replace verbal praise.

When he is self-centered, he displays ingratitude in his outlook and attitude toward his possessions and people. He becomes unappreciative of the things that others do and the importance of their work. He tends to be very insincere in his giving, turning to flattery as opposed to encouragement.

SUMMARY FOR THE GIVER

Positive Characteristics

Gives freely of money, possessions, time and energy
Often confirms amount of gift by seeing if spouse had same amount in mind
Believes God is the source of his supply
Loves to give without others knowing about it
Wants to feel a part of the ministries to which he gives
Focuses on sharing the gospel
Intercedes for the salvation of souls
Feels delight when his gift is an answer to specific prayer
Wants gifts to be of high and lasting quality
Needs continuous reassurance that decisions are God's will
Gives to support and bless others
Views hospitality as an opportunity to give
Possesses both natural and God-given wisdom
Handles finances with wisdom and frugality
Able to discern wise investments
Quickly volunteers to help where a need is seen
Reacts negatively to pressure appeals for money
Gives regularly and freely
Very industrious and tends to be successful
Has natural and effective business ability
Likes to get the best value for the money
Is not gullible
Tends to be fair and objective
Knows the destructiveness of money and thus is careful how he gives
Likes to encourage others to give
Tends to be secretive

Negative Characteristics

Tries to control how contributions are used
Tends to pressure others to give
May upset others who does not understand unpredictable giving patterns
Tends to spoil his children
May use money to escape responsibility
May focus on projects instead of people
Spoils the receiver with high quality gifts
May become materialistic
May miss severe hidden needs if focusing on projects
May bring attention to himself with his giving
Sometimes fails to obey God's prompting immediately

About the Author

Dr. Jerry Stettheimer, Director of Christian Family Services Ministries, is a Clinical Member of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists and is certified by the Texas Board of Marriage and Family Therapists. He earned a Doctorate in Ministry in the field of Counseling from Harding Graduate School. He has been in private practice for sixteen years. Dr. Stettheimer has authored numerous articles and conducted seminars and workshops in the areas of addiction, incest, family violence, biblical character training, the motivational gifts and Christian women's issues. Prior to establishing CHRISTIAN FAMILY SERVICES MINISTRIES, he served thirteen years as the Coordinator of Aftercare Services for the Substance Abuse Unit at Terrell State Hospital. He has been married to Mary Stettheimer for over thirty-six years and is the father of two and grandfather of four.

Dr. Stettheimer believes that God's Word provides the answers to life's problems and that difficult family problems provide an opportunity to acquire discipline and develop character. Regular participation in church and home devotionals is strongly encouraged in order to provide a firm foundation upon which character is built. It is through this process that enduring solutions are discovered and strong marriages created.