

Discovering Your
Motivational Spiritual Gift

Randall J. Hekman

Introduction:

- We would argue that Romans 12:6-8 lists all the motivational spiritual gifts that Christians can be given. Every follower of Christ will have one, and only one of these motivational spiritual gifts. But, at the same time, every Christian is to exercise *all* of the spiritual gifts on a regular basis. Scripture is full of injunctions for all of us to speak God’s word, serve others, teach, encourage, give, lead and show mercy. So we can never say: “I’m sorry, I can’t serve those in need (or give or show mercy etc.) because my spiritual gift is something else.”
- Having said that, we should never try to pretend we have another gift than the one the Spirit has given us. We shouldn’t try to copy another person’s gift.
- So how do we do this in real life? The solution is we need to look at all ministry opportunities through the eyes of my motivational spiritual gift. For example, if my spiritual gift is serving and I am asked to teach a class, rather than pretend I have the motivation of a teacher, I see this call as an opportunity to serve the real needs of the people in the class by giving them information. That resonates with my spiritual gift and becomes motivating!
- How do I discern what is my motivational spiritual gift. Read through the definitions on the following sheets. Find the one or two that you best resonate with, pray for guidance, and ultimately see which single gift gives you the most joy. The Greek term *charismata*, means spiritual gift; *charis* means grace; and the first part of that is *char*, which means joy. As I am trying to discern what my spiritual gift is, I need to look to what gives me the most *joy*.
- Caution: since spiritual gifts are gifts of the Holy Spirit, they only are fully operable to build up the body of Christ when I am walking in the Spirit. When I am living for myself, I will often show exactly the opposite qualities of my spiritual gift. For example, the giver will be selfish, the server will be lazy, the leader will be disorganized etc.
- For those who would push back on our belief that Romans 12:6-8 contains the exhaustive list of motivational spiritual gifts, let me suggest the following:
 - Romans is a fairly complete book of basic Christian doctrine
 - The number of gifts listed is seven—often viewed in Scripture as the number of completion
 - The context makes it clear the reader knows his/her gift and gives “operating instructions” for many of them. By implication no other gifts are countenanced. There is no “or whatever else your gift may be” type of statement.

HOW MOTIVATIONAL SPIRITUAL GIFTS OPERATE THROUGH MINISTRIES TO PRODUCE SPIRITUAL RESULTS IN OTHERS

“There are different kinds of gifts (*charisma*, spiritual gift), but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service (*diakonia*, ministries), but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working (*energema*, effects), but the same God works all of them in all men.” I Corinthians 12:4-6

The thought is we use our single motivational gift in the ministry role that we are being called to perform at that moment which then will result in an impact in the people we are ministering to.

Motivational Gifts (Romans 12:6-8)	Ministry Roles (Eph. 4:11; I Cor. 12:28)	Manifestational Impact (I Cor. 12:7-11)
1. Prophecy	1. Apostles	1. Message of wisdom
2. Serving	2. Prophets	2. Message of knowledge
3. Teaching	3. Evangelists	3. Faith
4. Exhortation	4. Pastors	4. Healing
5. Giving	5. Teachers	5. Miraculous powers
6. Leadership	6. Miracle workers	6. Prophecy
7. Mercy	7. Gifts of healing	7. Distinguishing between spirits
	8. Helper	8. Speaking in tongues
	9. Administrator	9. Interpretation of tongues
	10. Speaker in tongues	

The Gift of Prophecy

Prophecy: *propheteia*: *pro* = forth; *phemi* = to speak. “to speak forth the mind and counsel of God.”

Motivation: to reveal unrighteous motives or actions by presenting God’s truth.

Instructions on use: “If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.” Rom. 12:6. “If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God.” I Peter 4:11

Characteristics:

1. A need to express his message verbally.
2. The ability to discern the character and motives of people.
3. The capacity to identify, define and hate evil.
4. The willingness to experience brokenness to prompt brokenness.
5. The dependence on Scriptural truth to validate his authority.
6. A desire for outward evidences to demonstrate inward conviction.
7. A directness, frankness and persuasiveness in speaking.
8. A concern for the reputation and program of God.
9. An inward weeping and personal identification with the sins of those he talks with.
10. An eagerness to have others point out their blindspot.

Misunderstandings:

1. Frankness may be viewed as harshness.
2. Tendency to correct people who are not their responsibility to correct.
3. Judging and exposing an offender rather than attempting to restore the offender.
4. Focus on right and wrong may be judged as intolerance of partial good.
5. Emphasis on decisions may appear as neglecting incremental spiritual growth.
6. Public boldness and strict standards may hinder intimate personal relationships.
7. The strong desire to convey truth may be interpreted as little interest in listening to another person’s point of view.
8. Being too hard on themselves when they fail.

The Gift of Serving

Serving: *diakonia*: religious and spiritual ministrations of believers. (English word “deacon” comes from this.) A servant or attendant who does tangible work or duties.

Motivation: to demonstrate love by meeting practical needs

Instructions on use: “If it is serving, let him serve.” Rom. 12:7. “If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.” I Peter 4:11

Characteristics:

1. The ability to recall specific likes and dislikes of people.
2. The alertness to detect and meet practical needs. Especially enjoys *manual* projects.
3. The motivation to meet needs as quickly as possible.
4. Physical stamina to fulfill needs with disregard for weariness.
5. The willingness to use personal funds to avoid delays.
6. The desire to sense sincere appreciation and the ability to detect insincerity.
7. The desire to complete a job with evidence of unexpected extra service.
8. An involvement in a variety of activities with an inability to say “no.”
9. A greater enjoyment of short-range goals with frustration over long-range goals.
10. A frustration when limitations of time are attached to jobs.

Misunderstandings:

1. Quickness in meeting needs may appear to be pushy.
2. Avoidance of red tape may result in excluding others from jobs.
3. Their disregard for personal needs may extend to their own family’s needs.
4. Eagerness in serving may prompt suspicion of self-advancement.
5. May react to others who do not detect and meet obvious needs.
6. Insistence on serving may appear to be rejection of being served.
7. Desire to sense sincere appreciation may result in being easily hurt.
8. Quickness in meeting needs may interfere with spiritual lessons God is teaching those with needs.
9. Meeting practical needs may be judged as lack of interest in spiritual matters.
10. Their stamina may be interpreted as insensitivity or impatience with others helping.
11. Enjoyment of short-range goals may result in leadership positions and frustration or disorganization with long-range objectives.
12. Inability to avoid others’ needs may result in sidetracking employer’s directions.
13. May have a hard time discerning what is really on their heart to do for themselves.
14. Difficulty saying “no” to needs may result in exhaustion and burnout.

The Gift of Teaching

Teaching: *didasko*: to give instruction. (didactic)

Motivation: Clarifying truth; to search out and validate truth which has been presented.

Instructions on use: “If it is teaching, let him teach.” Rom. 12:7.

Characteristics:

1. The belief that their gift is foundational to other gifts.
2. An emphasis on the accuracy of words.
3. A testing of the knowledge of those who teach them.
4. A delight in research in order to validate truth.
5. The validating of new information by established systems of truth.
6. The presentation of truth in a systematic sequence.
7. An avoidance of illustrations from non-Biblical sources.
8. A resistance to Scriptural illustrations out of context.
9. A greater joy in researching truth than presenting it.

Misunderstandings:

1. The emphasis on the accuracy of Scriptural interpretation may appear to be excessively theoretical and lack practical application to life.
2. May tend to depend more on the research of others than the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.
3. The use of knowledge in testing others may appear to be pride of learning.
4. The concern to impart details of research may appear to be unnecessary to those listening (i.e. it becomes boring.)
5. The need to be objective in research may appear to lack warmth and feeling when speaking.

The Gift of Exhortation

Exhortation: *paraklesis*: *para* = the side; *kaleo* = to call. “to call to the side; to entreat; to urge one to pursue some course of conduct, always looking to the future rather than the past.”

Motivation: to stimulate the faith of others and guide them toward spiritual maturity.

Instructions on use: “If it is encouraging, let him encourage.” Rom. 12:8.

Characteristics:

1. A desire to visualize specific achievement and prescribe precise steps of action.
2. A tendency to avoid systems of information which lack practical application.
3. The ability to see how tribulation can produce new levels of maturity.
4. A dependence on visible acceptance when speaking to individuals or groups.
5. The discovery of insights from human experience which can be validated and amplified in Scripture.
6. An enjoyment with those eager to follow steps of action.
7. A grief when teaching is not accompanied by practical steps of action.
8. A delight in personal conferences that result in new insights.

Misunderstandings:

1. The emphasis on steps of action may appear to oversimplify the problem.
2. The urgency in giving steps of action may appear as having overconfidence in them.
3. The desire to win non-Christians through living examples may appear as a lack of interest in personal evangelism.
4. The use of Scripture for practical application may appear to take it out of context.
5. The understanding that painful trials promote spiritual growth may cause exhorters to lack compassion when people are suffering.
6. There can be an excessive disregard for basic Biblical doctrines because of the focus on lives changed. (Both are needed: see I Timothy 4:16: “Watch you life AND doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”)

The Gift of Giving

Giving: *metadidomi*: *meta* = with; *didomi* = give. “to give a share of, (not the whole amount) impart.”

Motivation: to entrust personal assets to others for furtherance of their ministry.

Instructions on use: “If it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously.” Rom. 12:8. “Generously” or “with simplicity,” *haplotes*: sincerity, singleness of heart (not with mixed motive), graciously and liberally.

Characteristics:

1. An ability to make wise purchases and investments.
2. A desire to give quietly to effective projects or ministries.
3. An attempt to use his giving to motivate others to give.
4. An alertness to valid needs which he fears others might overlook.
5. An enjoyment in meeting needs without the pressure of appeals.
6. A joy when his gift is an answer to specific prayer.
7. A dependency on partner’s counsel to confirm the amount of a gift.
8. A desire to feel a part of the work or person to whom he gives.
9. A joy in giving a significant percentage of the project, but not the entire amount, regardless of whether the project is large or small.

Misunderstandings:

1. The need to deal with large sums of money may appear to imply a love of money.
2. The desire to increase the effectiveness of a ministry by his gift may appear as an attempt to control the work or person.
3. The attempt to encourage others to give may appear as a lack of generosity and unnecessary pressure.
4. The lack of response to pressure of appeals may also appear as a lack of generosity.
5. The personal frugality by which he lives may appear to family and friends as selfishness in not meeting their wants.

The Gift of Leadership

Leadership: *proistemi*: “to stand before,” to lead, attend to (indicating care and diligence.)

Motivation: to coordinate the activities of others for the achievement of common goals.

Instructions on use: “If it is leadership, let him govern diligently.” Rom. 12:8.
“Diligently”: *spoude*: earnestness, care, zeal and haste.

Characteristics:

1. An ability to see the overall picture and to clarify long-range goals.
2. A motivation to organize that for which he is responsible.
3. A desire to complete tasks as quickly as possible.
4. An awareness of the resources available to complete a task.
5. An ability to know what can or cannot be delegated.
6. A tendency to stand on the sidelines until those in charge turn over responsibility to him.
7. A tendency to assume responsibility if no structured leadership exists.
8. A willingness to endure reaction from workers in order to accomplish the ultimate task.
9. A fulfillment in seeing all the pieces coming together and others enjoying the finished products.
10. A desire to move onto a new challenge when a previous task is fully completed.

Misunderstandings:

1. The ability to delegate responsibility may appear as laziness in avoiding work.
2. The willingness to endure reaction may appear as callousness.
3. The neglect in explaining why tasks must be done may prompt workers to feel they are being misused.
4. The viewing of people as resources may appear that projects are more important than people.
5. The desire to complete tasks swiftly may appear to be insensitivity to the schedule, weariness or priorities of workers.
6. Overlooking serious character faults in valuable workers.

The Gift of Mercy

Mercy: *eleeo*: to feel sympathy with the misery of another.

Motivation: to identify with and comfort those in distress.

Instructions on use: “If it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.” Rom. 12:8.
“cheerfully”: *hilarotes*: “that joyousness that is ready to do anything to help the hurt,” hilarity.

Characteristics:

1. The ability to feel an atmosphere of joy or distress in an individual or group.
2. An attraction to and an understanding of people who are in distress.
3. A desire to remove hurts and bring healing to others.
4. A greater concern for *mental* distress than physical distress.
5. An avoidance of firmness unless he sees how it will bring benefit.
6. A sensitivity to words and actions which will hurt other people.
7. An ability to discern sincere motives in other people.
8. An enjoyment and unity with those who are sensitive to the needs and feelings of others.
9. A closing of his spirit to those who are insincere or insensitive.

Misunderstandings:

1. The avoidance of firmness may appear to be weakness and indecisiveness.
2. The sensitivity to the spirit and feelings of others may cause some to feel he is guided by emotions rather than logic.
3. The attraction and understanding of those in distress may be misinterpreted by those of the opposite sex.
4. The sensitivity to words and actions which cause hurts may appear to be taking up another’s offense.
5. Interfering with God’s discipline of His children.