



Spiritual Gifts, Exhortation

The spiritual gift of exhortation is the permanent gift of counseling, comforting, warning, and advising. This spiritual gift is one of the most difficult to describe and define. The broad spectrum of function of the gift of exhortation is revealed in the participle of the Greek verb παρακαλέω (parakaleō) and means to exhort, to encourage, to comfort. So, which is it? This verb is found in Romans 12:8.

"or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness." (Romans 12:8, NASB)

Does a believer with this gift exhort? Does he encourage? Does he comfort? Yes. All of these. However, all believers are expected to function in each of these areas as they encounter other believers in their spiritual life. In contrast, believers with gift of exhortation, manifest the Holy Spirit through an extraordinary grace enablement as they come alongside a fellow believer as only the Paraklete, the Holy Spirit could. John 14:16; John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:7.

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;" (John 14:16, NASB)

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you." (John 14:26, NASB)

"When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me," (John 15:26, NASB)

"But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." (John 16:7, NASB)

This gift may also be exercised through prayer ministries, music ministries, visitation ministries, etc. As a speaking gift, such believers compliment other speaking gifts in wonderful ways, and are valuable in the administrative function of the local church.

The spiritual gift of exhortation can aid pastor-teachers in the local church by freeing them of troubleshooting details. This is the "wise man" of 1 Corinthians 6:4-6.

"So if you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church? I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren, but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?" (1 Corinthians 6:4-6, NASB)

The gift of exhortation enables a believer to encourage another believer or to warn another believer. The gift is exercised in the local church and in one on one situations. Phil. 4:2-3.

"I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life." (Philippians 4:2-3, NASB)

In Romans 12:8, the Greek word for "exhortation" is παράκλησις (paraklēsis) and means exhortation, admonition, encouragement, consolation, comfort, solace, that which affords comfort or refreshment. Although mutual exhortation or encouragement has always been the responsibility of all believers, this spiritual gift provides a far greater ability to advise and exhort others from Bible doctrine in their souls.



Rom. 1:12; 1 Thess. 5:14.

"that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine." (Romans 1:12, NASB)

"We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone." (1 Thessalonians 5:14, NASB)

The gift of exhortation is able to convey the proper encouragement and the proper exhortation to solve and avoid problems before they occur and while they are still building. The gift of exhortation has the following characteristics. It is not afraid or intimidated by the countenance or status of the person or group to which it ministers. It is a much needed gift in a local church to balance instruction with encouragement. Acts 9:26-27; Acts 11:21-22.

"When he came to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus." (Acts 9:26-27, NASB)

"And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord. The news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch." (Acts 11:21-22, NASB)

It has vital sensitivity to the timing factor. There was a right time for Paul to return to Antioch. Barnabas knew this and brought him back. It works well with other communication leadership gifts. Acts 11:25; Acts 13:1-4.

"And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul;" (Acts 11:25, NASB)

"Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus." (Acts 13:1-4, NASB)

It works well with individuals as well as with groups. It has blind spots to certain influences of others. Barnabas was influenced by the legalism antic of Peter and fell into it. Acts 11:25; Gal. 2:1.

"Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also." (Galatians 2:1, NASB)

It has a particular characteristic of patient optimism. It not only goes the second mile in help, but the third and the fourth as well. An example is Barnabas and John Mark in Acts 15:36-39. Its function of exhorting and encouraging is directly related to stability in the local church.

"After some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are." Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also. But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus." (Acts 15:36-39, NASB)



The gift of exhortation is a protective gift, a unifying gift, a gift of optimism. The gift does not carry the authority of the evangelist or pastor-teacher, but is absolutely necessary for the growth and function of the Body of Christ.