



“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (I Peter 4:10).

Gifts of Personal Care

Central Truth: God especially enables some believers to serve Him by caring for others.

L390. Date: May 1990. **Text:** Galatians 6:1-2, 10; I Peter 4:8-11.

Topic: Holy Spirit; Gifts of; Hospitality; Mercy.

Some spiritual gifts are exercised in public in the presence of crowds of people. Others are done in private when only one or two people know of the ministry. But each is essential to the function of the body and to the will of God.

Every Christian should serve others. We serve God by serving people in the name of God. Some Christians are gifted to serve as the major thrust of their service to God. They are not teachers, administrators, or other of the out-front people in the church. They are quiet people who are content with seeing a need and filling it whether anyone knows of it and praises them for it or not.

There are two great serving gifts which have not been discussed to this point in these studies. They are the gifts of showing mercy and helping. These are particularly adapted to ministering personal care for an individual in need.

Any Christian man or woman may have been assigned either of those gifts. We usually associate mercy with the tender care of a woman, but that is not necessarily so. Men can have the gift of mercy the same as women. Thank God that He has given special ability to some believers to serve Him by caring for the needs of others. If you have these gifts, rejoice and praise God as you use them to His glory.

I. THE GIFT OF MERCY

A. What is the gift of mercy? Mercy involves feeling sympathy and expressing it by a helpful act. It is more than emotion. It is more than words. It is an outward manifestation of feelings of pity by acts of helpfulness.

James warns against feeling sympathy and saying words without doing deeds to remedy a need. “*What does that profit?*” he asks (James 2:15, 16). We reply, “It profits nothing.” John warned that if a brother or sister had need and someone pronounced words of blessings upon him, but did nothing to relieve his need, the love of God did not dwell in such a person (1 John 3:17). Mercy is more than feelings of sympathy and words of good will. It involves acts of help.

There is a distinction between grace and mercy. Grace is God's loving-kindness toward us in view of our sin. Mercy is His loving-kindness toward us in view of our need. So when a Christian shows mercy, he is responding to need. Need can be met only by actions. We can feel pity, but we must do mercy. Mercy is the practical expression of compassion.

B. How is mercy expressed? Holy Scripture speaks of our salvation as an act of God's mercy. “*According to his mercy he saved us*” (Titus 3:5). What did He do in mercy? He sent His only begotten Son. The Son came and died for us. He arose from death and returned to the Father in heaven. He represents us there by His intercessory ministry every day. His mercy was not His feeling of good will or His promise of release. It included His deeds in making an objective atonement and applying it to the heart of the penitent believer.

C. How is mercy defined? Your dictionary will suggest that mercy is kind or compassionate treatment. (Notice that it is the way you are treated with kindness and compassion.) It may be forbearance in punishing for the sake of helping, or it may be supplying needs in order to provide relief. But always and everywhere, it is love in action.

D. How did Jesus show mercy? All the miracles of Jesus were acts of mercy. Consider His healing two blind men who cried out to Him, “*Have mercy on us, O Lord*” (Matthew 20:31). He showed His mercy by responding to their pleas, touching their eyes, and giving them sight. Mercy was shown by acts of loving helpfulness.

God delights in mercy. He concluded that all were in sin for the purpose of showing mercy to them all (Romans 11:32). You are following the example of God when you show mercy.

E. How do we show mercy? We manifest mercy by what we do on behalf of others. It is mercy when we visit the sick, relieve poverty, cook hot meals, show sympathy, or comfort the sorrowing. Feelings of love and pity

arouse the desire to remove the cause of one's suffering, and that leads to acts of mercy. If you have the gift of showing mercy, do it cheerfully (Romans 12:8).

II. THE GIFT OF HELPS

What is the gift of helps? The verb form of the word translated “helps” means to aid; to take hold of over/against. It pictures a person carrying a large, heavy box. A friend sees his struggle and goes to him. He takes the other side of the box and supports some of the weight until it is placed where it belongs. To take hold of the load on the other side and help carry it is the practical expression of the spiritual gift of helps.

The apostles in Jerusalem had a job too large for them. The congregation had so many widows in it that they could not care for them all. The apostles encouraged the church to select seven men to assume that benevolent work. The men who did it were helping, taking hold of the task and carrying part of it (Acts 6).

Usually the gift of helps has to do with secular things. It may be seen in a man who works about the church buildings, keeping them in good repair. It may be a woman who cleans house for an elderly person or does laundry for a sick person. Though motivated by love, pity, or compassion, the service takes a very practical turn. Many people need to receive that ministry today.

You can be a helper even if you do not have the spiritual gift of helping. But thank God for those whose delight and fulfillment come in being helpers to those about them.

III. THE PRACTICE OF HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is not a spiritual gift, but it is a way to express the ministry of several of the spiritual gifts (giving, serving, mercy, and others). The Bible reads, “*Use hospitality one to another without grudging*” (I Peter 4:9).

A. Hospitality is an expression of love. Peter urges us to “*have fervent charity among*” ourselves (I Peter 4:8). In the next statement he instructs us to show hospitality with glad hearts and without grudge or regret. The pastor is to love to show and receive hospitality (Titus 1: 8). Since hospitality is marked by liberality in giving and generosity in spirit plus friendliness to the persons receiving, it is a beautiful expression of love.

B. Hospitality is to be extended freely. Jesus said, “*It is more blessed to give than to receive*” (Acts 20:35), and the hospitable person enjoys that blessing as He said. Get involved in the fellowship meetings of your church,

inviting people into your home. Show freely a hospitable spirit.

C. Hospitality is related to spiritual gifts. *“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another”* (I Peter 4:10). Ministering your gift provides you an opportunity to practice hospitality. A gracious spirit in ministering to another in the area of your gifting will show your generous and liberal spirit of hospitality.

D. Hospitality is blessed of God. If you speak, speak as the spokesman of God. If you serve, do it with the ability God gives (I Peter 4:11). Know that God is working through your gift to bless people and accomplish His purpose. Your efforts are never enough without the blessings of God upon them. Be God's agent as you manifest hospitality without hesitation or grudging.

E. Hospitality will glorify God. Each spiritual gift is exercised so *“that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ”* (I Peter 4:11). The purpose of our salvation is *“that we should be to the praise of his glory”* (Ephesians 1:12). God has called us out of darkness into His light, making us His own dear and gifted people, that we could show forth His praises (I Peter 2:9). In hospitality as in all other Christian ministry, *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”* (Matthew 5:16).

The key to every spiritual gift is a willingness to serve. The gifts of personal care (mercy and helps) are designed to meet human need as they testify to the love of God. A primary mark of the Christian is his personal concern manifested in his love for others. True love is expressed in attitude and in action. It is beautifully demonstrated in the gifts of mercy and helps. Renew your commitment to serve God by serving people in the name of God.

Questions

1. What spiritual gifts are done primarily in public?
2. What spiritual gifts are done primarily in private?
3. What is the gift of mercy?
4. How can you know if you have the gift of mercy?
5. How is the gift of mercy used in today's world?
6. What is the gift of helps?
7. How would that gift manifest itself in your church?
8. How is hospitality an opportunity for showing one's spiritual gift?
9. Why is hospitality a particular Christian grace?
10. What practical service can you do to meet human needs this week?

