**Romans 12 Gifts – Motivational Gifts**

I’m glad we started with these. These are a great introduction into spiritual gifts, because they help us lay the groundwork for the ones that will follow in the coming weeks. The reason I call these motivational gifts is because these show the motivation behind why we are the type of Christian we are. More than our theology, or the teachers from whom we’ve learned, more than the culture of our fellowship of believers even, these gifts show us a more accurate picture of who we are. This is the implantation from the Holy Spirit about how we function in our giftings.

Without stripping too much from the text, it basically works out like an RPG video game. You start out as whatever class you choose. The abilities you get from that class are going to color how you play the game. They are going to be the basis of what type of equipment you use, what type of spells or powers you have, and how you interact with the other players and NPCs in the game. As you level up, you get to choose a new, more specialized class that works with the abilities you already have to amp them up; that will come when we get to 1 Corinthians 12. After you work in that class for a while and level up some more, you finally get to the top tier of classes and choose the full manifestation of your character that you started way back at level one.

**Ministry**

* Ministry – what is it?
  + *Diakonia* – attendance or aid
    - The word itself has 2 basic applications. The somewhat tricky thing with this is that it is entirely up to the context of the text to give us the clues as to which of the 2 applications is meant. (and it’s not always easy to do, or universally agreed upon)
  + *Diakonos* – a deacon (one who gives aid)
* Acts 6: 1-7
  + Two different kinds of *diakonia*:
    - Ministering the word v 4.
      * This type is used to denote someone who preaches the word. This can be in number of ways, whether it is through preaching on a Sunday, street evangelism, teaching the word, or other similar means of proclaiming the word of God.
    - Ministering to the people v 1-3.
      * This is what is more traditionally thought of when this word comes to mind. It is the ministering to members of the church and the community for their needs. It includes the dispensation of funds from the church, caring for the “orphans and widows,” attending the physical needs of the sick and infirmed, etc.
* Romans 12: 7
  + It’s my assertion that Paul is talking about the 2nd type of ministering in this chapter. When you consider the other positions he names, he has very well covered the gifts that would be related to ministering the word but has not talked about ministering to people at great length. It seems more reasonable from the context that he would intend this usage of *diakonia* to mean ministering to people, not ministering of the word.

Here is a great resource that talks about the gift of service:

<https://iblp.org/questions/what-spiritual-gift-serving>

**Acts of Mercy**

* Acts of mercy – what are they?
  + *Eleeo* – to have compassion on.
    - This is tending to the emotional needs of the people in your congregation and community. While those who minister are dealing with physical needs like hunger, lack of lodging, poverty, etc.; people who are gifted to acts of mercy are concerned more with the emotional and spiritual wellbeing of their charges.
* Interestingly enough, this word is used more often in context of God’s mercy than anything else in the new testament. Of the 31 occurrences in the text, 29 of them are about someone receiving or not receiving God’s mercy, or about someone petitioning Jesus for mercy. The only two mentions of *eleeo* that are not this way are where it is mentioned in Romans, and in Jude where Paul is talking about methods by which the gospel should be shared.
* Romans 12: 8
  + With cheerfulness is an understatedly important piece of performing acts of mercy. It is too easy to spot a faker. If you are not being compassionate earnestly, you will be found out quickly, and there are very few things worse than fake compassion. The sick and elderly have enough things to worry about; the last thing they need is impatience and harshness of professed friends.
* It is important to note that Paul mentioned both types of service and neither to the exclusion of the other. They are equally important, and it is vital to the health of a congregation that both offices are filled with people who are called to them. Emotional health and physical health go hand in hand, but it takes a different type of person to minister to both. Very rarely do you find someone who is capable of meeting both types of needs for people because of how different the ministering is.

Here is a great resource about the gift of mercy:

<https://iblp.org/questions/what-spiritual-gift-mercy>

**Which are you?**

* This may seem a little more daunting than it is, but now is the time to ask yourself if you feel called in either of these areas. Do you see either of these being the predominate motivator in your life? This isn’t going to be something that is subdued to the background either. Remember, this is a major motivating factor in your life, not simply something that may sometimes direct the way you think.

You also don’t have to be one of these. There are 5 others that you can choose form, so don’t feel like you missed out if this doesn’t resonate with you right away.