

## **WORD OF WISDOM**

### **Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire - Charles Fuller Institute**

The gift of Wisdom is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to know the mind of the Holy Spirit in such a way as to receive insight into how given knowledge may best be applied to specific needs arising in the body of Christ.

### **Leslie B. Flynn - 19 GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT 1974**

Knowledge stored in the mind is useless unless it is applied. This principle pertains to divine knowledge too. It's not enough to be able to grasp and systemize the deep truths of God's Word. Also needed is the ability to relate those truths to the needs and problems of life. This is the area in which the gift of the word of wisdom operates. The ability to apply knowledge to vexing situations, to weigh their true nature, to exercise spiritual insight into the rightness or wrongness of a complex state of affairs calls for the gift of wisdom.

Here are four major areas in which wisdom uses knowledge to achieve proper ends.

1. *Defense before hostile courts.*

Jesus promised His disciples that when they came before councils, courts, and kings for His name they would not need to make advance preparation for their defense. What to say would be given to them by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 10:19,20). Such difficult situations would require wisdom at that needy moment. (Note that this promise does not pertain to preparation of Sunday School lessons or sermons.)

2. *Answer to unbelievers' arguments.*

All believers are commanded to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Pet. 3:15). However, some have a special ability to meet the attacks and to refute the arguments of unbelievers.

3. *Solution to problem situations.*

Though all who lack wisdom are told to ask for it (James 1:5), some have special ability to resolve dilemmas.

4. *Application to practical conduct.*

Both knowledge and wisdom do not necessarily reside in the same person. A person may be able to perceive the system of truth contained in the Word, yet lack the ability to apply these insights to life. Wisdom involves the gift of putting knowledge to work in daily experience.

**John MacArthur**

This gift was used in a revelatory sense in the early church when God would give someone special wisdom. Incidentally, the word *wisdom* is *sophia* in the Greek. It is used in so many ways in the New Testament that it is impossible to isolate it only to revelation.

What is this gift? It differs from knowledge in this way: The emphasis is on the skill of application rather than the knowledge of facts. Wisdom is the ability to take the facts that the gift of knowledge has brought out and make a skillful application of it. It could belong to a Christian counselor, who identifies a problem and then by his knowledge of the Word of God draws out the principles that can be practically applied to solve the problem. It is the gift of the expositor, who can take the Word of God, study the commentaries, read from all those who have the gift of knowledge, and out of that draw the applicable principles to living. It can also be a gift that a believer ministers to another believer, by assisting him in his practical life.

Since wisdom (Gk., *sophia*) is such a broad word, don't confine it only to revelation. In fact, in the New Testament, twelve of the twenty-seven books use the word *sophia*. It is used in five categories.

- a) An attribute of God (Rev. 7:12)
- b) Intellectual ability (Matt. 12:42)
- c) The person of Jesus Christ, who is called the wisdom of God (I Cor. 1:24)
- d) Proud human wisdom opposed to God (James 3:15-17)
- e) Spiritual understanding of God's will

This is the primary use of *sophia*. I believe this is exactly what the gift is — the ability to understand God's will and make an application to obedience. And this is the way it is used most often in the New Testament (Matt. 11:19; 13:54; Mark 6:2; Luke 7:35; 21:15; Acts 6:10; James 1:5; 3:13, 17; 2 Pet. 3:15). Those passages incorporate the main use of wisdom — that we know and behave in accord with God's will.

What is the gift of wisdom? The Spirit-given ability to show us the principles that we need to know and obey to fulfill God's will. It had a revelatory aspect, but that was not its exclusive use. Godet says, "Knowledge makes the teacher, wisdom the preacher and pastor." But I would go even further than that and say, "Knowledge is the collecting of facts; wisdom is the application."

## **WORD OF KNOWLEDGE**

**Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire - Charles Fuller Institute**

The gift of knowledge is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to discover, accumulate, analyze, and clarify information and ideas which are pertinent to the well-being of the body.

**John MacArthur**

The word *knowledge* is so broad that it defies a closed definition. It is very hard to be specific about what it means. The phrase is "the word of knowledge", and that indicates to me a speaking gift — the utterance of knowledge. The Greek word for "word" is *logos* and can mean "written on a page, spoken to a crowd, spoken privately to individuals". It is speaking knowledge. This is a special gift. It is the Spirit-given ability to observe biblical facts and make conclusions. In other words, it is the ability to understand the Bible.

For example, you may go to the bookstore and buy a book that has been written by someone with the gift of knowledge. He will take different biblical truths, put them together, and come up with a fantastic conclusion about some truth. This is the basic gift of biblical interpretation. These are the people who continue their training, perhaps obtaining Ph.D. degrees in cuneiform and Sanskrit, so they can read the ancient characters in caves. Out of this they begin to collect biblical facts and come to conclusions, which, later on, could be translated into practical insights and information. The ability to understand the Bible is a vital area.

There are different ways that this gift is manifest. It can belong to people who have never been to college or seminary, but they have an ability to study the Bible, draw out facts, and make conclusions by observation. It is energized in different ways. A hundred people might have it, yet it might work differently with each one. It might be in combination with wisdom.

At one time the word of knowledge was surely revelatory. In the cases where the word of knowledge would come to someone, God had given His will to that individual, who would say, "Here is a divine truth." He would utter it direct from God. I believe that Paul received that kind of knowledge (Eph. 3:3-5; Col. 1:25-27). God would directly give him a particular word of knowledge, and he would proclaim that word. So, it was revelatory on occasion.

Other times it was not revelatory, but simply taking what was already written and expanding on it. The Greek word for *knowledge* is used over three hundred times in the New Testament, with so much variation that there is no way it can be isolated only to revelation. Some people want to say that it is never used outside of revelation. That is not possible; it is used for many things. The Bible even says that the Christian is to be filled with knowledge (Col. 1:9-10).

The best definition of the gift of the word of knowledge is in I Corinthians 13:2: "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge". This is the gift of understanding the mysteries that have been revealed. The people with this gift are the writers, scholars, teachers, professors, and researchers. I know some people who do nothing but research; they are available to be hired by a writer, an author, or an institution to research a given area of biblical truth and to draw out of it all the basic conclusions as a basis for someone's book, course, or whatever the group wants accomplished.

**Leslie B. Flynn - 19 GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT 1974**

The gift of the word of knowledge is the charisma which enables the believer to search, systematize, and summarize the teachings of the Word of God. Through it, the Christian is enabled to acquire deep insight into divine truth. This supernatural ability brings illumination of God's thoughts not discoverable by human reason.

Since knowledge helps others only when communicated, Paul speaks of the *word* or *utterance* of knowledge. This ability is closely related to the gift of teaching. In fact, some scholars consider *teaching* and *utterance of knowledge* one and the same gift. However, in our lists the gifts are classified as separate. In the gift of teaching, emphasis is on communication or *utterance*; in the gift under discussion, emphasis is on *knowledge*.

In the anti-intellectual atmosphere of our day when many seek experience more than truth, we need to emphasize the importance of knowledge in the Christian faith. Of course, this is not knowledge at the expense of experience, but rather knowledge which directs zeal.

The two major theological works of the Reformation, *Melanchthon's Loci Communes Rerum Theologicarum*, which went through 30 editions before the author's death and was used for decades later as a textbook of didactic theology in Lutheran universities, and Calvin's *Institutes*, were produced by lay theologians. Neither Melanchthon nor Calvin was ordained by human hands. You don't have to be a professional clergyman to have the gift of knowledge.

## **FAITH**

### **Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire - Charles Fuller Institute**

The gift of faith is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to discern with extraordinary confidence the will and purposes of God for His work.

### **Charles Swindoll**

In I Corinthians 12, Paul lists faith as one of the spiritual gifts. While each Christian is to be a person of faith, some have a unique ability to trust God even in the midst of overwhelming circumstances. They live their lives on the cutting edge of faith with such daring trust that their lives would not make sense if God did not exist. They are "Hebrews 11" people — living monuments of faith — enigmas to the world but examples of encouragement to the church. A biblical example of a person with this gift is Stephen (Acts 6:5). Hudson Taylor, the missionary to China whose vision and faithfulness formed the fruitful China Inland Mission, is a more recent example.

### **Leslie B. Flynn - 19 GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT 1974**

The gift of faith is a Spirit-given ability to see something that God wants done and to sustain unwavering confidence that God will do it regardless of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Though all logic seems stacked against some course of action, this faith makes decisions which seem senseless, then sees them through despite overriding objections and massive roadblocks. This gift sees the will of God accomplished despite all natural resistance. Specializing in the impossible — "rivers that are uncrossable and mountains you can't tunnel through" — the gift of faith "laughs at impossibilities and cries, "It shall be done."

The possessor of this gift will limit his asking to only those things God wants. His desire will correspond with God's desire. Faith is firm conviction that God wishes to do something remarkable. Faith thinks big — but thinks the kind of big God wants.

The gift of faith prompts prayer like that of Jesus when He raised Lazarus. Jesus thanked the Father in advance, as though the answer were an accomplished fact.

The gift of faith is often related to the gift of government, which grants prophetic leadership for the planning of future programs. The gift of faith goes beyond envisioning something that God wants done. It believes that it will be realized despite its unlikeliness, then launches out to accomplish the project in God's name.

The gift of faith cannot be demanded, for like all gifts, it is Spirit-bestowed as the Spirit wills. Also, the gift must be used, not boastfully, but lovingly, for though one has mountain-moving faith but not love, he is nothing (I Cor. 13:2). Learning of others who have had the gift may cause a person to examine himself to see if he has it too. (*A case in point*): George Müller's example inspired many other faith works. In fact, one biographer suggests that practically every faith work since George Müller's time may be traced directly or indirectly to him.

### John MacArthur

The gift of faith is a supernatural capacity for believing God. Obstacles are only challenges to someone with this gift — they believe what is beyond the visible. In the early years of the church, in the first century, this gift was connected with very astonishing miracles. But in our day, the gift of faith is connected with prayer, and with God's response to prayer as we see Him work. By the gift of faith I don't mean saving faith — all believers have received that. I don't mean the general faith by which we live — all believers manifest that. This is a special gift, limited to certain Christians, that involves an intensive ability to trust God — an unusual capacity to believe God in the face of a storm, in the face of enormous obstacles.

This kind of faith supports and undergirds all of us, because all of the gifts edify others. This kind of faith is the power to lay hold of God's promises for the benefit of everybody. As you go through the list of the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 — Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua and David — you see their faith strengthening someone else. Throughout the history of the church, there have been thousands of saints who believed God in the face of terrible fear and death, yet who strengthened those around them. Today, there are people with this gift who don't see the obstacles; they just believe God.

Hudson Taylor believed that God could win the Chinese people of his day. Without any money, without any support, and refusing to ask for a penny, he founded the China Inland Mission and accomplished the greatest work in the history of that nation. George Müller had the same kind of faith. There have been missionaries who have gone into countries and claimed tribes, people, and nations for God. There have been evangelists who have claimed an entire city, an entire county, and an entire country for God, and it has happened in response to faith. And what is exciting is that we, who don't have that kind of faith, get caught up and swept along in all the glory of God's work.

If you have the gift of faith, use it. Spend time on your knees. Spend time believing God, and encourage others by allowing them to see what God does in response.

## PROPHECY

**Charles Swindoll**

Closely tied to the skeletal system is the neuromuscular system. The central nervous system originates in the brain and runs down the spinal column through a network of nerve endings which weave their way through the various muscles. The brain stimulates these muscles to act and react by sending specific messages through the nerves to every part of the body. The equivalent in the Body of Christ was the prophet. He was Christ's spokesman — an infallible messenger speaking on God's behalf. This gift was essential during the foundational stage of the Church in providing necessary instruction until the blueprint of His Word was completed.

**Charles C. Ryrie** *THE HOLY SPIRIT* - 1970

The gift of prophecy included receiving a message directly from God through special revelation, being guided in declaring it to the people, and having it authenticated in some way by God Himself....This too was a gift limited in its need and use, for it was needed during the writing of the New Testament and its usefulness ceased when the books were completed.

**Leslie B. Flynn** - *19 GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT* 1974

Usually people think of prediction when they hear the word *prophecy*. But foretelling the future is just a small part of the meaning of prophecy. The English word *prophet* comes from a Greek word composed of two parts which mean literally — *forth-tell*. A prophet is a forth-teller. Among the many messages he tells forth may be some pertaining to the future. Thus forth-telling may involve some foretelling, but only incidentally. The main meaning of prophesying is forth-telling.

In the **Old Testament** a prophet of God was God's spokesman. The prophet received a revelation from God by dream, vision, or verbal communication. He then declared that revelation as a messenger in the special service of God. What the Lord put in his mouth he spoke. Prophets instructed, warned, exhorted, promised, rebuked. They protested the mere formalism of perfunctorily offering sacrifices without obedience. They stressed moral duty, promoted righteousness, thundered coming terror on the wicked, and repeated God's gracious promises for the future. Though the future was often part of their prophetic utterance, their emphasis was historical, practical, and relevant to contemporary conditions.

What about the gift of prophecy in our day? Some hold that prophecy today involves special messages from God, beyond what is found in Scripture, giving guidance regarding job, family, health and social problems. A few begin their alleged prophetic utterances, "I announce...I, the Lord, declare...." Some assert that prophecy is poetry of the Spirit, raising thoughts in these predictions above the level of the ordinary and clothing them with beauty of language.

Dangers inhere in this view. Is it then possible for some today to get a prophecy regarding the fluctuations of the stock market, or the weather, or current events as Jeanne Dixon claims?

To protect against rampant and irresponsible forecasts those who hold the view that special predictive messages are possible today insist that prophecies must be confirmed by people of wisdom and spiritual maturity. Wouldn't a wiser and surer check be the inerrant, infallible Word of God, rather than errant, fallible people, spiritual though they may be?

God's revelation has been finished. The Bible is our all-sufficient guide today. Until the completion of the New Testament, during the apostolic age, prophets gave necessary special revelations and reliable guidance. Since the completion of the Bible, in which divine revelation is once-for-all written, the gift of prophecy is now identified with proclamation based on God's Word.

Inspiration at the level at which infallible Scripture was given ended with the completion of the canon. Any prophecy today must of necessity be the unfolding of the significance of that completed message. Prophecy has come to mean the proclamation of the written Word of God in the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit. And with clarity Prophecy is linked with "light that shines in a dark place." (2 Pet. 1:19)

The gift of prophecy make the Word of God relevant to a particular situation in a current context. As prophets of old poured forth their warnings of coming invasion because of national declension, so we need prophets today to inveigh against decadence in national life: racism, materialism, immorality, scientism, and a host of others, lest we suffer the decline and fall of our nations. Prophets are God's loudspeakers. How they are needed in national and local politics, education, journalism, family life, sports, and science! Prophecy applies the perennial Scripture to the present scene.

When we boil it down, prophecy ultimately has to do with Jesus Christ. Old Testament prophets foretold the coming of Christ. New Testament prophets centered their messages in the crucified risen, and coming-again Lord Jesus. John wrote in a late chapter of the Bible, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10). All Scripture points to Christ. He is the sum and substance of the Old and New Testaments. Prophecy is Spirit-empowered proclamation of the Living Word who is the center and circumference of the written Word.

The result of exercise of the prophetic gift will be encouragement, edification, and comfort (1Cor.14:3). Not only are the comfortable to be disturbed, but the disturbed are to be comforted. We might define the gift of prophecy as the Spirit-given ability to proclaim the written Word of God with clarity and to apply it to a particular situation with a view to correction or edification.

**John MacArthur - SPIRITUAL GIFTS - 1983**

Prophecy is proclaiming. It was revelatory at one period of time, but when the Bible is finished, Revelation 22:18 says, "If any man shall add unto these things [the words of this book], God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." The revelatory aspect is finished. It belonged to the infancy of the church and concluded at the closing of the canon of Scripture. It ceased at that that point. The nonrevelatory reiteration continues. And we can thank God that throughout the history of the church, there have been great proclaimers of Christ — and there still are today.

**A. H. Strong - SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY**

The church is, in a derivative sense, a prophetic institution, established to teach the world by its preaching ordinances. But Christians are prophets only as being proclaimers of Christ's teaching. All modern prophecy that is true is but the republication of Christ's message — the proclamation and expounding of truth already revealed in Scripture.

**John Calvin - from PULPIT COMMENTARY**

By prophesying I do not understand the gift of foretelling the future, but the science of interpreting Scriptures, so that a prophet is an interpreter of the will of God.

## **APOSTLESHIP**

**Charles Swindoll**

The skeletal system provides the body's basic support, making mobility and activity possible. Without it, the body would be only an amorphous mass of organs and muscles. The work of the apostles corresponds closely to the skeleton's function of providing a sturdy framework for the body. In a technical sense, only one who had accompanied Jesus during His earthly ministry and had personally witnessed the Resurrection was qualified to be an apostle. The choosing of Matthias as Judas' successor is a case in point (Acts 1:21-26). Paul's apostleship, like that of the original twelve disciples, was obtained by a direct commission from the Lord (compare Acts 1:1-8 with 9:1-22; see also 1Cor. 9:1). An apostle had virtually absolute authority in the early church, and his ministry of instruction was authenticated by signs and wonders. In a nontechnical sense, the word *apostle* means merely "one who is sent". The New Testament does seem to distinguish between the technical and nontechnical usage by translating the Greek work *apostolos* in one context as "*apostles* of Jesus Christ" and in another as "*messengers* of the church" (1Cor. 1:1 and 2 Cor. 8:23, respectively, emphasis added). The apostle's ministry was foundational to the establishment of the Church (Eph. 2:20) and appears to have been given only during those early groundbreaking days.

**Leslie B. Flynn - 19 GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT 1974**

For years Christian people spoke of the missionary call. Increasingly today, they talk of the missionary gift, which involves communicating the Gospel transculturally. Also, more than ever, many are identifying the missionary gift with the apostolic gift.

First on our list of spiritual abilities is the apostolic gift. The word *apostle* occurs approximately 75 times in the New Testament, in 19 of the 27 books. Because it refers to an office that died out when the apostles passed away, many exclude it from the list of gifts. Dr. John Stott, well-known Anglican cleric and Bible teacher, says it is one of the gifts that does not exist in the church today. On the other hand, many believe the gift did not die out.

Did the gift die out? Or is it a continuing gift today?



Perhaps the answer is "yes" to both questions, if *apostle* has a two-fold aspect. In its restricted usage, the office has finished; in its broader phase, the gift still functions. Officially, the apostolate ended with the apostles; unofficially, the apostolic gift persists to our day as the missionary gift.

### **The Restricted, Official Usage**

In several ways the apostles were unique.

1. *They had been with Jesus from the beginning.* When Peter listed qualifications for a replacement for Judas, he said, "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John..." (Acts 1:21,22)
2. *They had personal call from Christ.* The Lord chose twelve "that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach" (Mark 3:14). He commissioned them, "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you" (John 20:21).
3. *They were witnesses of the resurrection.* Peter, in listing an apostle's qualifications, said that he must "be a witness with us of His resurrection" (Acts 1:22).
4. *They laid the doctrinal foundation of the church.* Jesus had promised them, "The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you...When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself;...and He will show you things to come" (John 14:26;16:13). The major fulfillment of this promise was the New Testament revelation inspired by the Holy Spirit. Later-century Christians admitted to the sacred canon only those writings which they knew emanated from the apostolic circle, or from their close associates such as Mark, Luke, and James, the brother of Jesus. The test of New Testament canonicity was apostolicity.
5. *They laid the structural foundation of the church.* This involved the use of the keys (Matt. 16:18,19) in opening the door for the Gospel to Jews, (Acts 2:38-41), to half-Jewish Samaritans (Acts 8:14-17), and to Gentiles (Acts 10:44-48). The church was built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20).
6. *They had power to work miracles.* After Pentecost, "many wonders and signs were done by the apostles" (Acts 2:43). Three chapters later we read, "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people" (5:12). Another three chapters later we are told "that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given" (8:18). The purpose of this miraculous power was to authenticate the apostolic witness (2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:4). A major segment of the church holds that when the apostles died the sign gifts diminished dramatically or disappeared.
7. *They will one day sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel* (Luke 22:29,30). *Also their names will be inscribed on the 12 foundations of the New Jerusalem* (Rev. 21:14). The apostles were unique in these ways. The word *apostle* had an official usage limited to the Twelve (Acts 9:27; 1 Cor. 15:7). No one of later generation could meet their qualifications. Thus there could never be any such thing as apostolic successors. The office could not be repeated or transmitted. When the apostles died, the office of apostleship died with them. Those who made false claim to this office were called liars (Rev. 2:2). But persons beyond the circle of the Twelve were termed apostles, which leads us to consider the continuing aspect of the apostolic gift. C. Peter Wagner, church growth researcher, in *Frontiers in Missionary Strategy*, holds there is a missionary gift which might well be added to the New Testament list of gifts. We will position the missionary gift here as the continuing and unofficial phase of the apostolic gift.

## **Nature of the Missionary Gift Today**

The word *missionary* covers a broad meaning in our day, sometimes losing significance by including anyone in Christian service or with Christian concern. The Random House Dictionary defines a missionary as "a person sent by a church into an area, especially a newly-settled region or foreign country, to carry on evangelism or other activities." Three major concepts in this dictionary definition are found in this simpler statement: a missionary is one *sent* to minister *transculturally* with *church-planting* goals.

### *1. Sent*

The word *missionary* is rooted in the Latin "to send", while the word *apostle* comes from the Greek "to send". Linguistically, missionary and apostle are equals. Both are *sent* ones.

### *2. Transculturally*

Ability to serve in another culture is part of the missionary gift. Not every person who is called "missionary" fits this qualification. Numerous missionary casualties have resulted from lack of this ability. A missionary needs more than Spirit-produced Christlikeness. He also needs the Spirit-given gift of the working across cultural borders.

### *3. Church-planting goals.*

Connection with a missionary society plus travel beyond cultural boundaries doesn't make one a missionary. In addition, he must minister with evangelistic goals.

Full-orbed evangelism includes conversion, baptism, growth, and the organized fellowship; in other words, church-planting. The missionary gift calls for the starting of new churches by evangelization of new areas.

What a thrilling job for someone with the missionary gift, sent out to a different culture somewhere around the world, to be engaged in the planting of churches!

**Dr. Ray C. Stedman**

The apostolic gift is still being given today, though in a secondary sense. It is part of the apostolic gift to start churches. We call those who do this 'pioneer missionaries' today.

**The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia**

In the New Testament and in the other literature of the early church, the word 'apostle' is used in a narrower and in a wider sense. The wider use of the word has descended to the present day; 'apostles' or 'holy apostles' is still the name for missionaries in some parts of the Greek church.

## **EVANGELISM**

**Charles Swindoll**

Evangelism is the gift that corresponds to the body's digestive system, which takes dead food and transforms it into a living part of the body. The only place this gift is mentioned is in Ephesians. The term *evangelist* means "gospelizer" — one who declares good news. It refers to one who has a unique ability to share the gospel of salvation with ease, courage, and effectiveness. Philip is called "the evangelist" in Acts 21:8, and it is implied in 18:28 that Apollos was a gifted evangelist.

**Leslie B. Flynn - 19 GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT 1974**

Though all believers are to witness, the gift of evangelism is a special ability in communicating the Gospel message in relevant terms to unbelievers. Unlike the missionary gift, the evangelistic gift does not involve witness across cultural lines. Unlike the prophetic gift, it does not thunder judgment to the current scene but majors more in the grace of God.

Here's our definition — the gift of *proclaiming* the *Good News* of salvation *effectively* so that people respond to the claims of Christ in conversion and in *discipleship*.

Biblical evangelism will appeal to the intellect as well as to the emotions. The abbreviated accounts of sermons in Acts should not misguide us into supposing that the apostles made naïve and hasty appeals for decisions without challenging man's powers of thought. Paul could lecture, discuss, and dialogue for hours on end, day after day, even spending two or three years in some places. He testified strenuously, proclaimed forcefully, refuted thoroughly, reasoned closely.

Though the evangelistic gift should be distinguished from the teaching gift, true evangelism must embody some teaching. Without sufficient intellectual foundation, the Early Church would not have lasted long. As in every age, people made a commitment of faith based on evidence, not a leap in the dark. The hearer's emotions may or may not be moved, but his reason must not be bypassed.

The gift of evangelism, moreover, involves the proclamation of the Good News effectively so that people respond to the claims of Christ.

Real evangelistic ability doesn't stop at conversion, but desires to see the convert in continuous growth in the fellowship of the church. If no church exists in the area, an evangelist may organize a church to nurture new believers. Some Bible scholars include church-planting under the gift of evangelism when done within one's culture. To church-plant cross-culturally requires the missionary gift.

Where churches do exist, the evangelist will not need to initiate any new work but will feed the converts into these fellowships. Dedicated evangelists and evangelical organizations have aggressive and systematic follow-up procedures for new converts. Billy Graham has long shown such concern. Lest those making profession be left to sink or swim, his organization provides courses to encourage Christlikeness. Campus Crusade has perfected the *Way of Life* plan for a church to guide new converts in understanding the faith, growing in grace, and launching out in witness.

## **PASTOR-TEACHER**

**Charles Swindoll**

This gift parallels the circulatory system. In the human body, miles of veins and arteries are routed to and from the heart. With each pump of the heart, oxygen and food are distributed throughout the body while waste products are simultaneously removed. Essentially, this is the function of the pastor-teacher, as the heart of the local ministry. He nourishes and protects. Like a shepherd, he leads his sheep into green pastures beside quiet waters and watches over them with his rod and staff to protect them from harm. (Acts 20:28,29; 1 Peter 5:1-8).

**Leslie B. Flynn - 19 GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT 1974**

You don't have to be a pastor to have the gift of pastoring. The word *pastor* occurs numerous times in the Old Testament, especially in Jeremiah where it generally refers to civil leaders, kings, rulers, and magistrates, usually in terms of strong condemnation for negligence — for failure to feed the flock and for scattering the sheep without proper care. The shepherding gift includes *guidance* — a gentle leading of the flock to green pastures and still waters, *grazing* — a feeding “with knowledge and understanding” (Jer. 3:15) and *guarding* — a protecting from hostile influences. Some churches have a “shepherd plan” for new believers. Each new Christian is assigned a mature believer whose responsibility is to take the new convert under his wing, see that he attends services regularly, call him if absent, encourage him in daily reading of the Bible and prayer, guard him from false teaching, and guide him into some form of Christian service where his gifts can be used. The office of the pastor was given to help mature the saints with a view to their Christian service. Not surprisingly, a major aspect of the non-official gift of shepherding is helping others to discover their gifts and then guiding them into channels of ministry.

Perhaps more Christians than realize it possess the shepherding gift. If more Christians would guide, feed, and guard fellow-believers, not so much counseling would have to be done by the church staff. This would not only eliminate much wear and tear on the official pastor, but also it would meet many needs that otherwise might go unmet.

**Marvin R. Vincent - WORD STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Pastors or *shepherds*. The verb *to tend as a shepherd*, is often used in this sense. The omission of the article from *teachers* seems to indicate that pastors and teachers are included under one class. The two belong together. No man is fit to be a pastor who cannot also teach, and the teacher needs the knowledge which pastoral experience gives.

**Kenneth Wuest - THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT**

The words “pastors” and “teachers” are in a construction called Granvill Sharp's rule which indicates that they refer to one individual. The one who shepherds God's flock is also a teacher of the Word, having both the gifts of shepherding and teaching the flock. God's ideal pastor is one who engages in a didactic ministry, feeding the saints on expository preaching, giving them the rich food of the Word.

## **TEACHING**

**Charles Swindoll**

Cousin to the pastor-teacher gift is the gift of teaching. The former is a guardian of the *flock* while the latter is a guardian of the *truth*. What the professor is to the university, the teacher is to the church. Unlike the prophet, the teacher originates nothing new; he merely defines, describes, and declares existing revelation. Probably the most gifted teacher in our era was C. S. Lewis, who skilfully made eternal truths vividly clear and understandable. Although he had no local flock to shepherd, his lifetime of refining truth continues to nourish millions around the world.

**Leslie B. Flynn - 19 GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT 1974**

The gift of teaching is the supernatural ability to explain clearly and apply effectively the truth of the Word of God. The gift of teaching should lead students to the practice of biblical precepts.

In the face of the anti-intellectual trend of today, we need to remind ourselves of the truth content of Christianity. All new converts need to know that Christianity involves not only excitement but instruction. Enthusiasm apart from biblical teaching is contrary to the spirit of divine revelation. (Of course, truth without enthusiasm is also inconsistent with God's Word.) Zeal should be given direction by knowledge; and knowledge comes from the body of truth, the Bible. The 'now generation' activists often prefer emotion over truth. Dr. John R. W. Stott says, "Experience without truth is the menace of a mindless Christianity."

Because Christianity cannot survive apart from a body of truth, teaching has been a vital, central, and indispensable part in the ongoing of the church. Jesus' Great Commission made teaching an integral part of the program of His followers. When people are evangelized (teaching is involved in communicating the Good News), and become disciples, they are to be baptized (once for all), and then taught (a continuing process to the end of their days). The final verse in Matthew says, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (28:20).

No wonder that immediately after the conversion of the 3,000 on the Day of Pentecost, "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine [teaching]" (Acts 2:42).

Ours is a reasoning faith. Worship demands the intellectual faculty. Renewal of life comes through the renewal of mind (Rom. 12:2). Growth in knowledge requires study of the great doctrines of the faith concerning God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, man, salvation, church, angels, demons, Satan, Scriptures, and eschatology (future events). It involves serious inquiry into Scripture, both the Old Testament and the New. To assist saints to learn God's truth, we need believers with the gift of teaching.

**John MacArthur**

Romans 12:7 says, "Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on [the] teaching." The definite article is present in the Greek. In other words, whatever you teach, let it be consistent with the teaching of the Word.

What is the gift of teaching? First, we should distinguish between the gift and the office. You can be a teacher in the church, and that is an official position. If you were a teacher, you certainly would have the gift of teaching. But not all who have the gift of teaching are recognized as official teachers because the gift can be exercised in so many ways.

The gift of teaching is the ability, in the Holy Spirit, to pass on truth to someone else. Prophecy is proclaiming Christ to an audience; teaching is passing on truth to others so that they receive it and implement it. It is a communicative ability. People say, "Well, what is the gift that enables a person to share one on one with someone and build him up?" Maybe it is the gift of teaching, because they are passing on truth to others so they will receive it and implement it in their lives.

There are many forms of the basic word *teach* in the Greek — *didaskalos, didasko, didaktikos*. In all the various forms, the root meaning carries with it the idea of systematic teaching or systematic training. It is the word that is used to refer to a choir director who trains a choir over a long period of rehearsals until they are able to perform. The gift of prophecy could be a one-time proclamation of Christ, but the gift of teaching is a systematic training program to take a person from one point to another. What is the curriculum for the teacher? The Bible, the Word of God. The gift is to teach systematically the truth of God.

It can be used with men — one on one, one on two, one on three, one on five thousand. It can be used with women — one on one, one on two, one on three, one on five thousand. It can be used by a lady in a little group of children. It can be used by a mother to a son. It can be used by a husband to his wife. It can be used in any conceivable way that the Spirit of God desires. It is the ability to pass on truth in a systematic progression so that someone receives it, implements it, and a change of behavior takes place. In fact, it is a gift that belongs to a lot more of us than we realize.

**Ray C. Stedman - BODY LIFE**

It is quite possible for a Christian to have a talent for teaching, but not to have the spiritual gift of teaching. If that is the case and he were asked to teach a Sunday School class, as an example, he would be quite capable of imparting considerable information and knowledge of facts about the lessons to his class but his teaching would lack the power to bless, to advance his students spiritually. This fact helps to explain the many qualified secular teachers who do not do well at all as Sunday School teachers. On the other hand, many school teachers also possess, as Christians, the spiritual gift of teaching and are greatly used of God in bible classes and Sunday School teaching.”

## **EXHORTATION**

**Charles Swindoll**

The term means “to call alongside” with the intent of helping. The person with this gift encourages others and has the ability to drive home specific truths of Scripture in such a way as to motivate application. Proverbs 25:11 describes the skill of an exhorter:

“Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances.”

Even when the words are firm and forthright, an exhorter comes across as a friend. This person has the ability to tell you the truth about yourself, yet with a comforting arm around your shoulder. Proverbs 27:5-6 paints a warm picture of this type of person:

“Better is open rebuke than love that is concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.”

**Leslie B. Flynn - 19 GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT 1974**

The gift of exhortation involves the supernatural ability to come alongside to help, to strengthen the weak, reassure the wavering, buttress the buffeted, steady the faltering, console the troubled, encourage the halting. Just as the Holy Spirit is an instrument of help, so the Spirit uses this gift to make us instruments of encouragement to fellow saints.

The ability to exhort is a gracious ability. It uses not so much sharp admonition as healing word. It works with compassion, not throwing a confessed sin back in the confessor's face. Without condoning the wrongdoing, the possessor of the gift of exhortation will help the victim see how he can overcome.

The gift is not so much exercised through public discourse, though this may be involved, as through personal counseling when one is called alongside in moments of misery. It may take time to encourage new believers, comfort the ill, counsel the perplexed, and strengthen the backslider.

**John MacArthur**

Romans 12:8 says, "Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation." This is the revealed exhortation of God to man. What is exhortation? The Greek word is *parakaleo*. *Parakletos* is "comforter". The word means "to comfort, help, advise, or strengthen". It is the gift of strengthening. God has given some people to the Body whose job is not necessarily to proclaim, or to dig out the facts, or to figure out the principles and apply them in wisdom, or to systematically teach. It is simply to strengthen people. These people encourage, they help, they advise, they strengthen. It is the ability to provide comfort, courage, help, and strength to someone who needs it. It can come through the pulpit because prophecy is exhortation. It can come through teaching. It can come through counseling. It can come in many ways. It is the ability to get alongside someone who has a problem and build him, encourage him, strengthen him, and bear his load.

People say, "It's the gift of counseling". That's wrong. Counseling is not a gift; counseling is a process. I am quite confident that there are some counselors who exercise the gift of teaching, some who exercise the gift of strengthening, and some, who exercise the gift of proclaiming. Now, that doesn't always work in a counseling situation. But there is no gift of counseling. The gift can be used in counseling, in teaching, and in informal conversation. Luther said, "Teaching is directed to the ignorant, exhortation to those who know better".

## **LEADERSHIP**

**Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire - Charles Fuller Institute**

The gift of leadership is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to set goals in accordance with God's purpose for the future and to communicate these goals to others in such a way that they voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish those goals for the glory of God.

**Leslie B. Flynn - 19 GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT 1974**

The priesthood of believers can be pushed to such extremes that a church may try to operate without leadership. This hampers the work of the Holy Spirit, who gives the gift of ruling. Also, on practical considerations it's difficult to operate without leaders. In actuality when any church officially has not pastor, it will have an unofficial leader or two.

Church authority does not deal in terms of office, dignity, eminence, but comes from Christlike example and humble service.

The gift of government is the Spirit-given ability to preside, govern plan, organize and administer with wisdom, fairness, example, humility, service, confidence, ease and efficiency.

Though every official leader of any church should have the gift of ruling, and should not be elected for office involving leadership unless recognized as possessing this gift, yet not all who have this gift will necessarily be elected to an official overseeing position. The gift is exercisable and requisite for many areas of church life outside board officialdom. Thus, we should expect many in every church to possess it, not only to stock the boards with gifted people but to supply these other needed areas: presiding at meetings, handling discipline, boards, panels, administration and future projection. The gift of leadership involves setting goals for the future, motivating people, executing plans, and finally review. Always this must be for ministry to people, not their manipulation. The leader will always be the servant.

No church or church-related organization can exist without leadership.

**John MacArthur**

Leadership is the ability to see an objective, formalize it, mobilize a group of people, and then get them to reach that objective. It is not the ability to push paper around a desk. It is not the person with the most pencils who has the gift of leadership. And it is not necessarily sitting in an administrative seat of responsibility, because that person could also have the gift of serving or helps. But it is the ability to make decisions and determine direction — mobilizing people to reach an objective.

There are many ways in which the gift of leadership is used by the laity. The church is far too complex to function with everyone serving and no one leading at all the levels.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

**Charles Swindoll**

We tend to equate administration with paperwork, secretarial duties, and committee meetings. This gift however, is more comparable to the position of chief executive officer rather than secretary. Visionary...goal-oriented...decisive — these words describe the person with this gift. In this passage the Greek word is translated *lead* In I Corinthians 12:28 another Greek word is used translated *administrations* but the gift is probably the same. The word used in I Corinthians paints a colourful picture of the person with this gift. The word means "helmsman" or "one who steers a ship". This individual was responsible for guiding a boat through stormy weather, around rocks and reefs, and into a safe harbour. The term described one who was calm, clear-thinking and practical. From this information we can conclude that the person with the gift of administration has the ability to steer committees, entire churches or global ministries — to keep them on course, on schedule, and off the rocks.



**Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire - Charles Fuller Institute**

The gift of administration is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to understand clearly the immediate and long-range goals of a particular unit of the body of Christ and to devise and execute effective plans for the accomplishment of those goals.

**Dr. John W. Alexander - MANAGING OUR WORK - Inter-Varsity Press**

Management ability is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is also a science. There is a body of knowledge and principles (acquired through the experience of our predecessors) to be learned. Further, management is an art. There are specific aptitudes and skills to be developed through sustained practice.

**Leslie B. Flynn & John MacArthur**

(Please note: both of these authors see the gift of **leadership** and the gift of **administration** to be one and the same gift)

## **GIVING**

**Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire - Charles Fuller Institute**

The gift of giving is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to contribute their material resources to the work of the Lord with liberality and cheerfulness.

**Charles Swindoll**

This gift is the ability to be sensitive to and to provide for the needs of the saints with great joy and generosity. In his letter to the Romans Paul exhorted the one with the gift of giving to exercise that gift with "liberality". All those in Christ's body are encouraged and expected to give consistently (I Cor. 16:2), liberally (2. Cor. 9:6) sacrificially (8:3) and cheerfully (9:7). The person with the gift of giving, however, has a special God-given capacity to give, and inner drive, and a longing to provide for the needs of the saints. Dorcas was a woman who appeared to have this gift. In her life we see the consistent and predominant exercise of giving.

**Leslie B. Flynn**

The gift of giving is the God-given ability, perhaps to earn, certainly to give money for the progress of God's work with such care and cheer that the recipients are fortified. God has given some men large possessions because He can trust them to use their assets in divine service. These believers are special stewards.

## John MacArthur

All of us are called upon by the Spirit of God to give. All of us are to invest. The Bible tells us that we are to sow bountifully in order to reap bountifully (2 Cor. 9:6). All of us are to lay by in store the first day of the week as God has prospered each one of us (1Cor. 16:2). All of these things are commanded very clearly in terms of our giving. But there are some of us who are to be super givers — who are to go beyond the normal because we are gifted in that way.

This gift enables someone to give with only one motive — the need. Nothing else enters his mind. Singleness of mind and singleness of heart translate into an undivided motive, with no consideration of self.

The gift of giving is not a public gift. Giving with pretension and public display is not a gift; it's hypocrisy. I don't believe that the gift of giving even relates to how much someone has. Some people who don't have very much have the gift of giving away all they have. Other people who have a lot don't have the gift, whereas others who have a lot have the gift. All of us need to invest in the Lord, but the gift is the desire to give when a need arises.

## HELPS

### Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire - Charles Fuller Institute

The gift of helps is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to invest the talents they have in the life and ministry of other members of the body, thus enabling those others to increase the effectiveness of their own spiritual gifts.

**Leslie B. Flynn - 19 GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT 1974**

The gift of helps is generally considered the same as the gift of ministering (serving). The essence of the gift is that the temporal help given, whether waiting on tables or whatever, enables a Christian worker to devote more time to a spiritual ministry. The gift of helps is the Spirit-given ability to serve the church in any supporting role, usually temporal, though sometimes spiritual. This gift is not for helping the poor, sick, aged, orphans, and widows (which is really the gift of showing mercy), but for lending a hand wherever it will release other workers in their spiritual ministries, and to do it in such a way that it strengthens and heartens.

Potential outlets for exercise of the gift of helps seem almost unlimited. The ultimate end of helps is the edification of others. Christian workers, released from temporal tasks, can concentrate more on their spiritual priorities. Someone prepares the handwork and does the cutouts for a busy Vacation Bible School teacher. The helper, perhaps possessing no teaching gift, uses her serving gift to free the teacher, helping her use her speaking gift more effectively.

A Sunday School class member secures the textbooks, arranges the chairs, brings in the chalkboard or cassette player, handles the records, takes the offering, hands out take-home papers at the end. The teacher has been released from menial but necessary jobs to devote more time to teaching.

Office records, bookkeeping, serving as treasurer, dictation, typing, filing, preparing a mailing, delivery of church flowers after Sunday services to someone sick, ushering, taping of Christian broadcasts, maintenance and repair of church facilities, preparing the elements for the Lord’s Supper, driving the pastor to the airport, meeting some special speaker at the station, all these contribute definitely to the upbuilding of the saints by freeing the leaders for the spiritual ministries to which they have been called.

“Lord of all pots and pans and things;  
Since I’ve no time to be  
A saint by doing lovely things,  
Or watching late with Thee,  
Or dreaming in the dawnlight,  
Or storming heaven’s gates,  
Make me a saint by getting meals,  
And washing up the plates.

“Although I must have Martha’s hands,  
I have a Mary mind;  
And when I black the boots and shoes,  
Thy sandals, Lord, I find.  
I think of how they trod the earth,  
What time I scrub the floor;  
Accept this meditation, Lord,  
I haven’t time for more.

“Warm all the kitchen with Thy love,  
And light it with Thy peace;  
Forgive me all my worrying,  
And make all grumbling cease.  
Thou who didst love to give men food,  
In room, or by the sea,  
Accept this service that I do —  
I do it unto Thee.”

“A Martha”  
written by a 19 year old girl  
1928

## **SERVING**

**Charles Swindoll**

Serving is the ability to assist and support others in the family of God in practical ways with great faithfulness and delight.

\*\* (The gift of serving = the gift of helps.)

**Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire - Charles Fuller Institute**

The gift of service is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to identify the unmet needs involved in a task related to God’s work, and to make use of available resources to meet those needs and help accomplish the desired result.

**John MacArthur**

All gifts are service, according to I Corinthians 12:5, but out of all of these gifts there is one that is very specialized in terms of service. In I Corinthians 12:28 the little word “helps”.

The word *helps* literally means “to take a burden off of someone else and place it on yourself”. It is the gift that comes alongside leadership. For the people with this gift, their greatest joy and labor of love is to serve other people. There is not glory, no fanfare, and no acclaim, just serving.

The gift of helps is a beautiful and marvelous gift that is absolutely necessary for the progress of the body of Christ. It doesn't attract a lot of attention, and since it doesn't, nobody in Corinth was practicing it. There were no leaders and no helpers. They were all given over to ecstatic, wild, and frenzied behavior because it was glamorous. So, no one was helping.

The list of gifted men and gifts from I Corinthians 12:28 really puts the gift of helps in perspective: "First apostles, second prophets, third teachers; after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues". Right in the midst of all these grandiose gifts, Paul interjects helps. Why? He wants the Corinthians to know that this gift flows with the others. The gift of helps — no public recognition, just loving service. So, God has gifted us in the areas of leadership and helps.

I believe the most needed and therefore the most common gift the Spirit of God gives is the gift of helps. We have to have it. We can't accomplish anything if we don't have cooperation and help. Maybe you can't preach, can't teach, can't sing, but you can clean, you can take a meal to someone, you can fix something for someone, you can mow the neighbor's lawn because he isn't feeling well — you can do most anything.

## **MERCY**

### **Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire - Charles Fuller Institute**

The gift of mercy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to feel genuine empathy and compassion for individuals (both Christian and non-Christian) who suffer distressing physical, mental, or emotional problems, and to translate that compassion into cheerfully-done deeds which reflect Christ's love and alleviate the suffering.

### **Charles Swindoll**

The word *mercy* means "pity" or "compassion". It is the ability to empathize with the needs, pains, heartaches, disappointments, and sorrows of others and to be an agent of healing and restoration. People with this gift have the unique quality of emotionally identifying with the one in need.

### **Leslie B. Flynn**

The gift of showing mercy is the Spirit-guided ability to manifest practical, compassionate, cheerful love toward suffering members of the body of Christ. When disaster strikes, people invariably feel pity. But too often, this emotion soon dies to wait for the next report of tragedy.

But the pity involved in this gift is not just the stirring of the emotions, but deep-down compassion, supernatural in origin. It's not just kindness springing from man's heart, but is divine love, under the Spirit's guidance, acting in Christ's name, with the object of glorifying the Father.

Whoever has this gift does not steel himself in the face of another's miseries. Rather he is drawn to his suffering brother. He must do something about it. The gift involves more than a feeling of pity; it requires action.

Paul specifically states that this gift must be exercised with cheerfulness. Doing mercy with a growl nullifies the service. The gift of showing mercy, through the inner stimulus of the Holy Spirit, makes the doer of mercy a veritable sunbeam, penetrating the sick chamber to the very heart of the afflicted.

When Madame Guyon, French mystic, was jailed in the Bastille in 1699, her devout maidservant chose to share her mistress' imprisonment. She believed her mistress could never survive the dread incarceration alone and would need a constant attendant to minister to her. This she did cheerfully till her own death in 1700, just before Madame Guyon was released.

The extent to which this gift can bring comfort to the suffering members of the body of Christ is virtually unlimited because of the vast, diverse, heart-rending needs of God's people. Though believers must extend mercy to unbelievers, the purpose of gifts is the edification of God's people. We are to do good to all men, but especially to the household of faith (Gal. 6:10). Primarily, this gift is exercised toward suffering saints.

<b>John MacArthur</b>
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Mercy is one of the gifts that we can be very clear in understanding — there just isn't that much deviation between what the gift is and how it operates.

The word "mercy" is the Greek word *eleon*. It means "pity" or "mercy" or "compassion". It is a term that is characteristic of the character of God. Psalm 103 contains some marvelous statements about the mercy of God. For example "*The Lord is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger and plenteous in mercy.*" (:8); "*For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him.*" (:11); "*Just as a father has compassion on his children, So the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.*" (:13). God is pitying. God is compassionate. And God grants mercy (Matt. 5:7).

Generally, the concept of mercy is often confused with the concept of grace in Scripture. When we talk about God's grace and God's mercy, we sometimes don't distinguish between them.

Grace is extended to men in relation to guilt, which is a result of their sin. Mercy is extended to men in relation to misery, which is a result of their situation. Grace is related to guilt; mercy is related to misery. Grace is God taking care of our sin; mercy is God taking care of the mess we are in.

The gift of mercy is relative to the compassion of the heart, not the giving — that's a different gift. Often these two gifts are given in combination. But mercy emphasizes the compassion of the heart.

The gift of mercy is the enablement to sympathize with a suffering person — to come alongside the poor, the sick, the destitute, the orphan, the widowed, and those in prison, and minister. And maybe you don't give them anything, except your heart.

Romans 12:8 says to show mercy with cheerfulness. The Greek word for *cheerfulness* is *hilaros*, from which we get *hilarious*. "With cheerfulness" is to joyously offer sympathy to the sufferer.