

THE GIFT OF EXHORTATION - A SPEAKING GIFT

Text Romans 12:8

I. WHAT WAS INVOLVED IN THIS GIFT

- A. This gift was the God given ability to be an encouragement to those who for one reason or another needed to be encouraged in the Lord's work (Rom. 12:8).
- B. What was involved in it is implied in the word itself. This word exhort is the same word which is used of the Holy Spirit as COMFORTER (Jn. 4:16) and it means "one called along side to help". It is also used in reference to the Lord Jesus as our Advocate who takes our side before the Father when we sin (I Jn. 2:1).
- C. This gift then involved coming to the side of one who was weak in the faith and needed to be strengthened. It involved also consoling those who were troubled, reassuring those who had had spiritual set backs and offering support for those who were wavering or faltering in their spiritual lives.
- D. This gift did not involve public discourse or instructions or condemnation for one's failures, rather it involved a personal and private matter of helping those who needed it.
- E. Something else involved in this gift was compassion. It did not condone or try to justify the wrongs that someone had done, but it did help the individual who may have otherwise fallen by the wayside to overcome his failure and continue on.

II. HOW THIS GIFT WAS EXERCISED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- A. This gift was exercised first of all in helping new converts to gain stability and strength to continue on.
 - 1. In this context we see that the apostle Paul possessed this gift and exercised it among the new believers at Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch (Acts 14:21,22). He also used it at Ephesus (20:1; 17-35).
 - 2. We see that Judas and Silas also possessed this gift and used it in this manner at Antioch to settle the matter of circumcision (Acts 15:31,32).
- B. This gift was exercised in another way to support those who were pastors in the things which God had called them to do. This is the gift Peter was exercising in I Pet. 5:1,2.
- C. This gift was exercised by the writer of Hebrews (13:22) to support those believers who were wavering and going back into Judaism to go on with Christ to spiritual maturity.
- D. We see that this gift was also exercised in reference to those who were suffering persecutions and afflictions for Christ (II Cor. 1:3-7). Here we see that God comforts us in our trials so that we will be able to identify with and comfort others who have to go through similar situations.
- E. This gift was exercised in another way in reference to faithful church attendance (Heb. 10:25). As individual believers met and were faithful in the midst of various circumstances it served as an encouragement to others.
- F. We see also that the gift of exhortation was exercised in reference to aiding those believers who had physical needs.
 - 1. Barnabas no doubt possessed this gift and exercised it by helping to meet the physical needs of others through his financial gifts (Acts 4:34-37). Those believers who were discouraged because of particular needs were encouraged by what men like Barnabas did.
 - 2. Ananias and Sapphira on the other hand sought to do what

Barnabas had done but they lacked the proper motive no doubt in their giving, lied and ended up dead (Acts 5:1-10).

G. Finally we see that the gift of exhortation was exercised in reference to one who had had a spiritual set back and was no doubt discouraged.

1. In this connection we see when Mark had deserted the apostle Paul on the first missionary journey, Barnabas encouraged him and gave him another chance to prove himself (Acts 15:36-39).
2. Apart from this connection we find that Barnabas had taken Paul in after his conversion when others were afraid to do so (Acts 9:26,27). Later Barnabas encouraged Paul to come to the work at Antioch (Acts 11:25,26).

III. HOW THIS GIFT OPERATES AND APPLIES TO INDIVIDUALS IN OUR DAY

- A. This God-given ability to encourage others is still given to many of the Lord's people today and its exercise is in great demand. All about us we have those circumstances and situations that discourage us in our Christian lives. Folks criticize us, things don't go right, problems arise, and we find ourselves in need of someone to encourage us in some way to carry on.
- B. A person who has this gift will be able to encourage others. He will have that unique ability to make a hopeless situation to us seem hopeful. He will be able to support us when we don't seem to be able to go any further. Or he'll bring us in when we have wandered away.

IV. HOW THOSE WITH THIS GIFT CAN RUN INTO DANGER

- A. Sometimes those with the gift of exhortation can spend too much of their time trying to help those who really don't want to be helped and there are some people you can't help.
- B. Sometimes a person with this gift can become discouraged when he fails to see any results of the time he has spent.
- C. Sometimes a person with this gift can develop pride when he is used in some way to help someone and his boasting becomes sinful. On occasion a person with this gift may be indiscrete in sharing things about those whom they have helped in some way.