

Teaching notes:

Introducing motivational gifts

Romans 12: 4-8

Each one of us has a body, and that body has many parts. These parts all have different uses. In the same way, we are many, but in Christ we are all one body. Each one is a part of that body. And each part belongs to all the other parts. We all have different gifts. Each gift came because of the grace that God gave us.

If one has the gift of prophecy, he should use that gift with the faith he has.

If one has the gift of serving, he should serve.

If one has the gift of teaching, he should teach.

If one has the gift of encouraging others, he should encourage.

If one has the gift of giving to others, he should give freely.

If one has the gift of being a leader, he should try hard when he leads.

If one has the gift of showing kindness to others, that person should do so with joy.

from the International Children's Bible

Some call the seven gifts outlined here, 'motivational gifts'. It is common for Christians to have a natural strength in one or more of these areas. However, to be more effective in serving God in whatever situation we find ourselves, we should try to grow in all the gifts, not just the ones we are naturally good at.

In the following stories, two children learn about the gifts by observing African animals:

Prophecy (Insight)

For this gift we need to be able to *see* the meaning of what God is saying. In order to use the gift of prophecy we have to stay alert like the giraffe, who has excellent eye sight. We have to have special eyes to see and ears to hear what God is saying.

Serving

This gift is shown to us by the little tick bird who serves the rhinoceros, riding on its back and picking the ticks from its skin.

Teaching

The monkeys are excellent teachers of their young, and the young are attentive learners.

Encouraging

In order to encourage others, we need to be strong in the Lord, putting our own problems aside and with God's strength, lift up others. The eagle exemplifies this attribute, having great strength for take-off, and the ability to soar to great heights.

Giving

The lionesses are the givers of the pride. They work hard to provide food for their family.

Leadership

The meerkats show us an example of an organized community, with good leaders. A leader in God's family must be humble, prepared to serve, and treat everyone fairly. Jesus gave us the greatest example of leadership. He showed humility and served mankind.

Kindness (showing mercy)

The elephants are an example of kindness in the way they rear their young. The whole elephant community cares for the young cooperatively, so that orphaned babies are taken care of.

Using all the gifts

The chameleon reminds us about the importance of growing in all the gifts, not just our strengths. God wants us to use the right gift for the right situation, just as the chameleon has the ability to change its colour according to its situation. It turns a dark colour to absorb heat when the weather is cool, and a light colour to reflect the heat when the weather is hot.

Characteristics of Motivational Gifts

The prophetic one

- “tells is like it is”
- can be blunt
- quickly identifies good and evil
- is often an intercessor
- has strict personal standards

The server

- remembers the things that people like or dislike
- enjoys serving and does not think of work as a drudge
- is generous by nature and will do more than asked
- has a high energy level
- prefers doing than delegating
- sees serving as highest importance
- has a hard time saying ‘no’

The teacher

- needs to validate truth
- loves detail and precise definitions
- can successfully enable someone to learn
- believes that all scripture must be viewed in context
- believes that TRUTH has power to change and that the gift of teaching is fundamental
- likes to check out sources, check accuracy and finer details
- leans towards scripture rather than experience

The encourager

- may be inclined to use scripture out of context
- may centre on experience
- has a positive outlook
- like to apply truth rather than just study it
- likes immediate response
- likes to do personal counseling

The giver

- supports in all sorts of areas
- is not limited to finances

- has a good sense of value / recognizes a bargain
- will intercede for needs
- is industrious
- tends towards success

The leader

- is highly motivated to organize the people they are responsible for
- sees the long-term picture
- enjoys delegating
- writes notes to self
- may respond to criticism with outer indifference

The one who shows mercy

- drawn to people who hurt
- identifies with the hurt
- feels compassion
- is sensitive
- can be prone to depression

Understanding the motivation of each spiritual gift

Let's pretend that all of the seven motivational gifts are represented in the one family. Each member is strong in one of the seven gifts. Someone is carrying the whole dessert dish to the table, and drops it on the floor. What would each person say, and why would they say it?

The prophetic one

"That's what happens when you're not careful!"

(Motivation: to correct the problem)

The server

"Oh, let me help you clean it up."

(Motivation: to fulfill a need)

The teacher

"The reason that it fell is that it was too heavy on one side."

(Motivation: to discover why it happened)

The encourager

“Next time, let’s serve the dessert in bowls before carrying it to the table.”

Motivation: to correct the situation so that it doesn’t happen again in the future.

The giver

“I’ll be happy to go down to the shops and buy a new dessert.”

(Motivation: to give to a tangible need)

The leader

“Tom, would you get the mop. Meg, please help scrape it up; and Kim, help me prepare another dessert.”

Motivation: to achieve the immediate goal of the group.

The one who shows mercy

“Don’t feel badly. It could have happened to anyone.”

Motivation: to relieve embarrassment)