



Life Principles Notes™

Living in the Power of the Holy Spirit

Part 10: The Gift of Mercy

Summary:

Understanding your spiritual gift is key to living with joy and fulfillment.

God created you in a unique way. Your gift defines the very purpose He gave you for living, not only in the church but in every area of your life. If you possess the gift of mercy, for example, you will be the most content and effective when

you are serving others through this gift.

Romans 12:6-8 describes these motivational gifts, and tells us that we must exercise our gifts in the context of His purpose for us. The gift of mercy is absolutely essential among the people of God and should be used with cheerfulness.

Key Passage: Romans 12:6-8.

Scriptural Principles:

1 The merciful feel the emotional atmosphere around an individual or group.

The most obvious characteristic of the believer with this gift is an ability to sense joy or distress in others. Merciful people do not live by their own emotions, but they are especially sensitive to the feelings of others.

2 The merciful are drawn to those who are in mental or emotional distress.

Spiritual gifts are always focused on service. Christians with the gift of mercy, therefore, are constantly attracted to people experiencing emotional distress, and often make friends with those in need.

3 The merciful seek to remove pain rather than find its benefits.

Even when someone suffers as a result of his own disobedience, the gift of mercy concerns itself with soothing the sinner's pain. Those with the gift of prophecy or exhortation would focus on God's discipline or His other greater purposes. For this reason, the gift of mercy could actually interfere with God's work in some situations. The merciful should always exercise spiritual discernment.

4 The merciful are more concerned with mental distress than physical distress.

Merciful believers are emotionally driven. They enjoy ministering to people in physical pain, but they respond especially to those who are in emotional or spiritual pain. These believers vicariously experience the feelings that others bear. This allows them to help others more effectively.

5 The merciful are sensitive to words and actions which could be hurtful.

Merciful believers react negatively to critical statements about others, even when they are true. They take offense to hurtful words about someone else and may offer positive statements to offset the negative ones.

6 The merciful tend to react harshly when intimate friends are rejected.

While merciful people are loving, kind, and gentle, they are also loyal and devoted. They rally to the

defense of their close friends who feel rejection. They realize that rejection is one of the most painful emotions we can feel, so they are quick to come to a friend's defense.

7 The merciful sense genuine love, and are more vulnerable to unloving spirits.

Believers with the gift of mercy can be easily hurt due to their deep sensitivity. Because the merciful are so sensitive, they may open themselves more readily to love despite the possibility of rejection.

8 The merciful need deep friendships with mutual commitment.

Genuine commitment is always important to believers with the gift of mercy. They are willing to give themselves fully to their spouses, friends, or family members in loving devotion. When others fail to return the same level of devotion, the merciful will be deeply hurt.

9 The merciful measure acceptance by closeness and quality time together.

Gifts, recognition, and other tokens might bring great satisfaction to other believers, but those with the gift of mercy value the sharing of time and togetherness. They yearn to be physically close to others, and they need plenty of quality time together. This is particularly true in marriage.

10 The merciful connect with those who are sensitive to others.

These believers love being with others who share their special gift. They experience a special oneness with those who are attuned to the issues of love, acceptance, and the emotions of life.

11 The merciful tend to avoid firmness until they see the benefits involved.

Parents with the gift of mercy may struggle to be firm with their children, because they hate for their children to be disappointed. In every area of life, however, there is a need to be firm at times.

12 The merciful often harden their spirits toward those who are insensitive.

Just as those with this gift find joy with like-minded believers, they are appalled by people who lack love, gentleness, and compassion. Insensitivity is very difficult for them to understand and accept.

13 What are some common misunderstandings of those with this gift?

A lack of firmness can seem weak and indecisive to others. Sensitivity to feelings can seem like an overdependence on emotion rather than reason. As the merciful gravitate toward emotional needs, they can be dangerously misunderstood by those of the opposite sex. When these believers react to hurtful words about others, they may appear to be taking the opposing side. Finally, a merciful believer who shuns insincere people seem unapproachable.

14 What are the results of walking in the flesh for those with this gift?

As they live in the Spirit, the merciful are the most attentive of believers. Otherwise, they develop a lack of concern. Likewise they are sensitive as they serve Christ, but callous when they live in a worldly way. Their Spirit-led sense of fairness becomes an unjust partiality, while the natural compassion of the merciful can turn to indifference that isn't merciful at all in the flesh. Gentleness becomes harshness; deference becomes rudeness; meekness becomes anger.

Conclusion:

I know you will agree that this world needs all the merciful, godly men and women it can get. Could it be that you have this gift? If so, these principles will help you understand why you think and act the way you do. If you have some other gift, these principles will help you love and support those with the wonderful gift of mercy.

Either way, the truth is that every single one of us needs the presence of mercy in our lives. We need to love, and we need to experience the warmth of love. Almighty God loves you and me more than we could ever imagine. The greatest gift of mercy came to us in His Son, Jesus Christ. 🙏

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