

Motivational Gifts



As we explore what we have begun to refer to as “Motivational Gifts”, we could also be discussing personality types. From a Biblical basis, not a secular or psychological model, we will draw from scripture to gain a better understanding of ourselves and others by discovering how God has created us. Each one of us has a unique personality made up of seven basic building blocks, the combinations of which make for an infinitely diverse human face. Yet we are structurally recognizable because of our basic core of elements.

We find our scriptural source in Romans 12, verses one through eight, which reads:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world (age), but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. For I say through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being

many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy with cheerfulness.”

There are seven things listed as grace gifts, each bringing personality characteristics with it. These types are: 1) **prophecy**, 2) **teaching**, 3) **ministry**, 4) **leading** or government, 5) **exhortation**, 6) **giving**, and 7) **mercy**. Before exploring what the Word of God has to say about us, let's examine what we may have picked up from the world.

The Winning Formula

The Winning Formula is that “strong suit” that we may hide behind. It is really part of a stronghold that we have skillfully learned to manage. It is a way of masking feelings of inadequacy to find safety and security. The marks of a Winning Formula are:

- **A Façade** to cover anxiety, fear, hurts, etc...
- **A Persona**, even an alter ego, for dealing with issues of control.
- **A Sales Pitch** used to win favor and impress.

The habitual things which we do only continue in our lives because somewhere there is a payoff . The Winning Formula is no different. It offers a false sense of security and self-esteem. There might be a momentary sense of power, control or authority. And it reinforces a value system based on other's appraisals of your performance.

The Winning Formula tops the list of carnal behavior. Though each Winning Formula may have a very distinctive nature from the next, the core issues are still the same. It is not unlike Adam and Eve's attempt to hide their own nakedness. The leaves did the job, but it was not God's intent or best for them. Such is the Winning Formula. It is all about what we can do or be in and with ourselves. It has nothing to do with God's Word or how He fearfully and wonderfully made us.

The Greek Model

Most of us have heard the terms sanguine, choleric, melancholy and phlegmatic and thought there was some medical or at least scientific evidence behind the use of these terms. What these are can at best be described as observations labeled with Greek words. At their worst they are nothing more than curses.

Sanguine: This term has been used to describe cheerful or even happy-go-lucky. The actual Greek word means bloody and was used to describe the feelings of joy or euphoric victory after a “bloody” battle.

Choleric: This word has been used to describe the spontaneous and sometimes explosive type of personality. It is however the word for poisonous gall or bile and in ancient use, in regard to personality, it referred to anger or rage. We get the medical disease cholera from the same word, because of the very high fever.

Melancholy: Here we have the base of choleric again but preceded by melan which means black. So this means “black bile” or poison and has been used to refer to a sad or depressive type of personality. The cancer typified by black spots, melanoma, shares part of this word.

Phlegmatic: This is perhaps the most disgusting as it means phlegm; that thick mucus that it coughed up and spat out. It has been used to refer to thick or dull individuals.

These very traditional and secular terms for personality identification are not suitable for Christian use. Romans 12 presents a better set of descriptive words that are not limited to mere observation, but also speak to destiny and a purpose. They do not contain curses or judgments that are binding. Rather the seven characteristics of Romans 12 are freeing and enhancing in nature.

These four Greek words even speak to conformity to the present age and way of thinking. We are not to be conformed, but transformed. With these four options, to what should we be transformed? The transformation takes place as our natures are redeemed. What God made through redemption can become what God intended, not limited by the curse, sin or the presence of death. Redemption liberates us to become the fullest that we were created to be, each one of us.

Filling Your Metron With Faith

In Romans 12:3, Paul says, “*God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.*” The word for measure that Paul used is *metron* or capacity. And this does not mean that we have been measured or parceled out just a portion of faith. It means that we have been given a capacity uniquely designed for us to fill up with faith. These seven character traits are capacities for using our faith to do and be what these traits suggest.

For example, the Romans 12 gift of prophecy in verse six is not the same kind of gift or the same kind of prophecy mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12. That kind of prophecy comes by an impartation of the Holy Spirit. This kind of prophecy is activated by the indwelling Spirit of God and our relationship to Him, rather than an increase in faith to prophesy.

Conversely, the Romans 12 type of prophecy is a capacity or a grace to have a prophetic nature. By faith we fill that nature, and maybe even expand that capacity. The person whose nature is to be intuitive and discerning, must fill that nature with faith in Christ and His ability to cleanse and guide. Without the injection of Christ into that trait, it is merely a trait of world conformity with judgment and insight, but lacking love, purpose and life.

In similar fashion, each of the seven Romans 12 gifts has a nature that, when filled with faith in Christ Jesus, is positive, redemptive and living. If it remains under the individual’s control and is not filled with faith, it becomes an expression of conformity to the present age of sin and death.

We are given these differing gifts so that as we come together as the Church, we can provide a unique function in the Body of Christ. Likewise, our differing personalities add to the marriage and make the marriage stronger than the individual parts which make it up. Differing members doing different functions—that is the body of Christ, and it is also the marriage.

Knowing Your Strengths and Weaknesses

One of the most interesting things about our personality traits is that our strongest points are almost always our weakest points as well. Let’s look at each of these seven gifts or traits to discover their strengths and weaknesses. We also suggest some ways to focus on the redemptive nature of the cross and submission to the Lordship of Christ in each area.

PROPHECY
Motivated to insight to speak

- ☺ Gifted in verbal expression.
- ☺ Comfortable with groups.
- ☺ Can discern others' motives and character.
- ☺ Sharply confronts injustice and wrongs (real or imagined).
- ☺ Direct and frank.
- ☺ Intuitive and insightful.
- ☺ Inward awareness.

- Dominating and opinionated.
- Lacks attention for and interest in individuals.
- Can appear to be or is judgmental.
- Can appear harsh or uncaring.
- May appear to neglects facts in favor of intuition.
- May appear to neglect other's feelings and opinions.

- † Remember that it is people that God loves.
- † Avoid judgmentalism and criticism.
- † Focus on the supremacy of love.
- † Focus on having right relationship rather than just "The Right".
- † Remember that mercy triumphs over judgment.

MINISTRY/SERVICE

Motivated by needs and desires to assist

- ☺ Detects and meets practical needs, especially manual projects.
 - ☺ Feels urgency to meet needs.
 - ☺ Aware of individuals special likes or dislikes.
 - ☺ Disregards weariness when serving others.
 - ☺ Will do more than required or expected with gladness.
 - ☺ Prefers short term projects with quicker “payoffs”.
 - ☺ Enjoys being in the background, Rarely likes being visible.
 - ☺ Likes being #2.
- Can feel unappreciated or overlooked for reward.
 - Can be pushy and expect too much of others.
 - Does not like “red tape”. Can exclude others, even authority.
 - May neglect those closest, i.e. family.
 - Often judged as a “brown noser”.
 - May not be able to be served themselves.
 - A desire for genuine appreciation may result in being hurt.
 - May rush to meet perceived need without consulting God for true needs.
 - May not appear to be “spiritual” or appear too practical.
 - Tends to avoid long term projects, vision, goals, etc...
 - Needs help to be a team player - *“If you want something done right, do it yourself.”*
- † Know where and to what God has called, equipped and ordained.
 - † Do everything as “unto the Lord”
 - † Have a personal and family vision, then keep priorities straight.
 - † Guard against pride and judgments.
 - † Your worth is not in your accomplishments.
 - † Don’t assume too much or take too much upon yourself.
 - † You are neither insignificant or indispensable.
 - † Guard against a lack of concern for spiritual growth.
 - † Remember God’s ways are not our ways.

TEACHING

Motivated by and through understanding and learning.

- ☉ Strong emphasis on accuracy and method.
 - ☉ Enjoys research and reading.
 - ☉ Presents information in a systematic method.
 - ☉ Tends to be detail oriented.
 - ☉ Context, logic, proof, and statistics tend to be very important.
 - ☉ Mind is always working to put things into form.
 - ☉ Delights to see “light bulbs” go off in others.
 - ☉ The coordination and preparation may be more enjoyable than the presentation of the material.
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- May become so detail-oriented that they miss the big picture.
 - Interpretation may become more important than application.
 - May neglect the importance of the Holy Spirit and the supernatural.
 - May appear to be proud and resistant to new influences.
 - Can present a know-it-all attitude.
 - Testimony or sharing can be boring or lack impact.
 - Can be intolerant of mistakes or ignorance.
 - Tends to observe rather than flow or participate.
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- † Tunes in to people rather than facts.
 - † Teaching is people oriented.
 - † Work on the application of truth, facts or scripture.
 - † Remember the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind through the heart.
 - † Press toward mentoring or training beyond mere teaching.
 - † Remember that there is a “big picture”.
 - † There is a time to consider feelings as well as facts.
 - † Truth is more than facts; it is the embodiment of Christ.

EXHORTATION

Motivated to motivate others

- ☺ Usually has an end in mind and works toward it; is always a motive.
- ☺ Application is the only reason for truth or facts.
- ☺ Uses large sweeping statements and examples when sharing.
- ☺ Demonstrative and entertaining when sharing.
- ☺ Never happy on the sidelines.
- ☺ Counsel and advice come easily.
- ☺ Alert and cautious, sees potential dangers.

- Can be or appear to be too optimistic or pessimistic.
- Tends to always have a better plan or solution.
- Tends to over simplify problems and solutions.
- Can be talkative, demonstrative and dramatic.
- Motivation toward anything is better than stagnation.
- May tend to provoke and goad.
- Tends to think better out loud and needs a sounding board.

- † Drawing attention to yourself is natural, so emphasize Christ and others.
- † Don't just offer warnings or solutions. Offer yourself and Christ.
- † Don't be eager to counsel when the Holy Spirit is not counseling.
- † Be careful not to exaggerate, generalize or make grand statements.
- † Focus on the eternal and the Eternal One, not just the moment.
- † Learn that not everything has an answer; not everything is fixable.
- † Be aware that drama can be used negatively by the enemy.

LEADING/GOVERNMENT

Motivated to lead others

- ☺ Tends to be confident and assertive.
 - ☺ Rises to the top when there appears to be a lack of leadership.
 - ☺ Able to plug others into appropriate slots.
 - ☺ While able to work with details, likes working with the big picture.
 - ☺ Goals and results are very important.
 - ☺ Doesn't mind taking the hits for being out front.
 - ☺ Tends to be visionary and future-oriented.
 - ☺ Sets high standards and appreciates integrity.
 - ☺ Motivated to accomplish long term goals and tasks.
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- Tends to take over, even without being asked.
 - Sometime too busy with personal agenda to help others.
 - Viewed as bossy and even lazy while organizing others.
 - Easily frustrated when feeling bogged down.
 - Sometimes overwhelmed with discouragement.
 - Tends to have reoccurring feelings of abandonment by others.
 - Sometimes standards may appear too high.
 - May fixate on the organizational chart and forget the people.
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- † Remember leadership in the Kingdom is service.
 - † True leadership is found in character more than giving orders.
 - † Be diligent. Don't give up on people, God or His Word.
 - † Jesus is the true head of the church. Don't be overwhelmed by rejection.
 - † While maintaining standards, give grace and work with others.
 - † A true leader leads people to growth and change, not just goals.

GIVING

Motivated financially to offer solutions

- ☺ Alert to the financial needs of others and the church.
 - ☺ Interested in finances, investments and worth.
 - ☺ See finances as the key to success in all realms.
 - ☺ Aware of practical needs and enjoys meeting them.
 - ☺ Tends to show care in spending.
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- Financial concerns may become too large.
 - May use finances and giving as a means of control.
 - May tend or appear to throw money at problems.
 - May give beyond the means of family priorities.
 - Sacrificial giving may become sacrificial martyrdom.
 - May exert pressure on others to be more financially motivated or giving.
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- † Remember that God is your source.
 - † Avoid a materialistic view of things.
 - † Remember that others may not be motivated in this area.
 - † Money will follow behind love; love rarely, if ever, follows money.
 - † Seek wisdom and the Holy Spirit when giving.

MERCY**Motivated to bear others problems**

- ☺ Senses and is affected by the emotions of others.
 - ☺ Strong desire to understand others and situations.
 - ☺ Tolerant and understanding.
 - ☺ Fluid and bendable, rarely rigid or harsh.
 - ☺ Attracted to the emotionally needy, even when not obvious.
 - ☺ Forgiveness of others very important.
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- Avoids giving correction; seems too harsh.
 - Avoids confrontation; doesn't like making waves.
 - May tend to be an enabler; leans toward co-dependant relationships.
 - May appear indecisive.
 - May pick up the offenses of others.
 - May pick up other's turmoil without discernment.
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- † Love is strong and mercy is a spiritual weapon is initiated by the Spirit.
 - † Carry others to Jesus, don't count on your own ability.
 - † Peace and Joy are ALWAYS part of Kingdom life.
 - † Remember that rest is a command.
 - † Your care and compassion is not the source of other's healing.
 - † The perceived need is not always the real need. Look to Jesus.