

QUESTIONS WE WANT ANSWERED

28 What Is the Gift of Exhortation?

There are times when we all need a lift. It can come through a word of encouragement, comfort or consolation. For this reason God has provided a rich lift to help us in this time of human frailty. The Bible calls this endowment the gift of exhortation, and it is mentioned in the grouping of gifts listed in Romans 12:6-8. *“Or he that exhorteth on exhortation,”* is the way the Word of God puts it. (Greek: ho parakalon en te paraklese) The verb “paraklese” means to call alongside and the noun form “parakiesis” means consolation and encouragement. We are familiar with the description of the Holy Spirit in John 14:16, 26 where the word “paraclete” is used meaning one called alongside to help. The word is also used to describe the Lord Jesus Christ in 1 John 2:1 Here the word is advocate. The gift of exhortation is the supernatural ability to draw near to someone in need with the kind of presence and word that is going to help them pull out of their difficulty. The gift of exhortation shows itself in many different ways. It steadies the faltering, reassures the wavering, consoles the troubled, encourages the downcast. It is an healing word. It is an informing word, it is a welcome word, without condoning the wrong. I understand it to be more of a person to person kind of ministry rather than public discourse. We can well praise the Lord for the encouragers He has sent to in time of need.

I. ASSOCIATED WITH BEING TOGETHER:

Somehow the gift of exhortation has to do with the assembling of ourselves. *“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another.”* (Hebrews 10:25) Singing together, talking together, applauding the works of the Lord in testimony, praying together, and by our very presence, we exhort one another. We are speaking here of Christ centered interaction. This is spiritual engagement which is different than the social, or spectator gathering.

II. ASSOCIATED WITH A COMMAND:

As with other gifts, we are commanded to encourage others even though we may not possess the particular gift of the Holy Spirit. In five verses (II Corinthians 1:3-7) the word exhortation or comfort is used ten times. God comforts us, not simply to make us comfortable, but in order that we might comfort others.

III. ASSOCIATED WITH EVERYDAY NEEDS:

A certain man by the name of Joses was renamed by the apostles because he helped people in their time of need. According to Acts 4:36 the apostles called him "*Barnabas,*" which means "*son of consolation.*"

1. He Supplied a Temporal Need:

He sold property on his native island of Cyprus to surrender the sale price at the apostles feet.

2. He Stood Behind an Unwelcome Convert:

Acts 9:27 Barnabas relieved Paul's predicament after his conversion. Believers were leery of this ruthless persecutor of the saints.

3. He Received Alien Believers:

He was a man who rejoiced in God's grace as seen in the lives of others. He investigated the church in Antioch now swelled with Gentile believers and welcomed them years ahead of the verdict of the first church counsel.

4. He Brought Back a Deserter:

II Timothy 4:11 On the first missionary journey Mark defected and left Paul and Barnabas. When the time for the second journey came, a disagreement arose between them over taking Mark along. Paul was concerned about the work, Barnabas about the man. He thus salvaged the writer of what is possibly the first New Testament book.

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