

## **The Gift of Exhorter**

### **Romans 12:8**

#### **I. What is the gift of exhorter?**

- A. The word “exhort” means “to call near; invite; implore.”
- B. So the person with the gift of exhortation desires to serve God by motivating others to action by urging them to pursue a course of conduct.
- C. Synonyms for “exhort” include such words as “admonish, persuade, instigate, urge, and appeal.” The exhorter is an encourager and cheerleader of the team.
- D. Motivation must come from within by the Holy Spirit, but the exhorter can trigger that inner motivation through encouragement, excitement, and enthusiasm.
- E. The exhorter usually will use the positive, rather than the negative, to encourage people. He uses ideas and methods which will make the right way seem better and more exciting than the wrong way.

#### **II. Why is there a need for the gift of exhortation?**

- A. The exhorter will preach or instruct on how to live or how to solve problems or how to carry out the work of God, and then encourages the listener to “get with it” and put the plan to work. We, as the body of Christ, need this.
- B. We need to be encouraged to live, practice, and put to work God’s principles in our lives. If not, all we will have is a head full of knowledge, with absolutely no outward fruit.
- C. This is not God’s desire (John 15:8). God desires for us to live out our Christianity, and the exhorter tells us how to do this and then encourages us to do it. It does no good to understand God’s Word if we don’t do God’s Word. The exhorter encourages us to be “doers” of the Word!

### III. What are the characteristics of the exhorter?

- A. A form of the word “exhort” is used 34 times in the New Testament (exhort, exhorting, exhorted, etc.). Of those 34 times, the apostle Paul is the one exhorting 24 times. So we will use the apostle Paul as our example of the exhorter. Let’s look at Paul in some real-life situations in Acts 13 and 14 and draw out some characteristics of the exhorter.
- B. First, the exhorter has little patience with quitters. Acts 13:13
1. John Mark (who was supposed to be their assistant) quits the team and goes back to Jerusalem. Later, Barnabas wants to give John Mark a second chance, but Paul says, “No way.” Acts 15:36-39
  2. Obviously, John Mark had hurt Paul. Exhorters take it personally when people around them quit. Because the exhorter’s burden is to motivate people, they feel like they have failed when people around them quit or fail.
- C. Second, the exhorter is very expressive in a group setting. Acts 13:14-16
1. Who stands up first in verse 16? Poor Barnabas doesn’t have a chance to say much while traveling with Paul. Before Barnabas could even think of what to say, Paul had probably been preaching for 10 minutes.
  2. Exhorters are very expressive (notice how Paul uses his hands in verse 16), and when they talk, people generally listen. Acts 15:12
  3. Because of the exhorter’s bubbling enthusiasm, many times he will be too talkative, interrupting other people, and dominating conversations.
- D. Third, the exhorter takes Scripture and applies it in a practical way.
1. After preaching this message in Acts 13 and referring to Bible stories, Paul then makes practical application, and tells them what they needed to **do**. Acts 13:38-41
    - Exhorters can make practical application out of everything in the Bible.
  2. The exhorter is very practical and can get negative or upset with impractical teaching. The exhorter is burdened to show how

Scripture relates to everyday life, and wants to help others find solutions to problems in Scripture.

- Some people can recite all of the dimensions of the ark, but when it comes to making life decisions, they don't know how to apply their scriptural knowledge. But not the exhorter!

3. Exhorters are "how to" people. They have simple steps for everything.

E. Fourth, exhorters draw people to themselves. Acts 13:42-44

1. Because of their enthusiasm, people are drawn to the exhorter, and he has the ability to persuade people. vs. 43
2. Possible danger – unless led by the Spirit, the exhorter has the ability to persuade people to do the wrong thing!

F. Fifth, the exhorter is very confident and not easily discouraged.

1. Paul meets with some discouraging situations three times, but notice Paul's response in each situation.
  - 13:45 (they oppose Paul's message); cf. 13:46 (he waxes bold and changed his strategy)
  - 13:50 (they kick him out of their city); cf. 13:51-52 (he moves on to a new city and is filled with joy)
  - 14:19 (stoned and left for dead); cf. 14:21-21 (he goes back into the city and preaches again)
2. It takes a lot to get an exhorter to quit. They are positive thinkers and strong believers that things will be better tomorrow. Their motto is, "Everything will work out." Notice Paul's words while in prison. Philippians 1:12-14

G. Sixth, the exhorter desires to see growth in people's lives. Acts 14:21-22

1. The exhorter wants to see everyone reach his or her full potential and become mature Christians.
2. They can't stand it when people are idle and complacent and not growing.

H. Seventh, the exhorter is result-oriented. Acts 14:27 (Paul goes back to his home church and gives them all the results.)

1. The exhorter has definite goals and wants to see definite results. Typically, the exhorter will have a thousand ideas to see that he gets those results.
2. Exhorters don't like to be bogged down with details, so he motivates someone else to work through the details and see that the idea or plan is carried out.

#### **IV. How does Satan attack people with the gift of exhortation?**

- A. Causes pride because of their motivational abilities.
- B. Causes discouragement when results are not evident.
  - In the Christian life, outward results are not always evident.
- C. Causes them to discourage others by pushing them too hard and expecting too much out of people.
- D. Causes them to persuade people to do wrong things.
- E. Causes them to ignore problems that should be dealt with.
  - Exhorters don't like dealing with negative situations and will avoid them.

#### **V. Scriptures that the exhorter should memorize**

- A. 1 Corinthians 3:6-7
- B. John 15:5
- C. Proverbs 16:8
- D. Psalm 127:1
- E. Proverbs 17:27-28
- F. 2 Corinthians 3:5