

SERIES: God's Dream Team
Message: DON'T LOSE HOPE!
God's Cheerleaders!

The Functional Gift of Exhortation

October 18, 2009

Text: Romans 12: 4, 6, 8 & 12

"⁴For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function ... ⁶Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: ... ⁸If it is exhorting/encouraging, let him exhort/encourage ... ¹²Be joyful in hope, patient in tribulation, faithful in prayer!"

"A Christian exhorter is one who strongly urges others to live by faith, and earnestly advises them how to do it! Exhortation, in a Christian sense, is the practical application of Christian truth to daily living." -- Dr. L.D. Thomas

I. NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLE OF THE FUNCTIONAL GIFT

OF EXHORTATION: PAUL

II. 12 DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF PEOPLE WITH THE FUNCTIONAL GIFT OF TEACHING

1. Above all, an exhorter is PRACTICAL.
2. The exhorter's constant theme is "What's IMPOSSIBLE with humans is POSSIBLE with God!"
3. Faith, for exhorters, is the acceptance of God's GRACE (Holy Spirit Power) for every situation in life.
4. Exhorters are prone to view suffering and trouble as our opportunity to GROW in grace, and they do not understand why others can't see this also.
5. Exhorters are able to VISUALIZE and verbalize what people and congregations can be when God transforms them with His sanctifying love!

6. Exhorters are very much aware of their listeners and CRAVE their approval and acceptance of their message.

7. An exhorter's practice is to give a specific

PRECSCRIPTION or specific PROJECT to others for overcoming their specific problems and weaknesses.

8. Exhorters may take scripture out of CONTEXT to support their prescription.

9. Exhorters are very persevering as long as others LISTEN to them.

10. Exhorters are never satisfied with just stating a theoretical truth, but must go on to APPLY that truth to daily living.

11. FAILURE is hard for exhorters to take. It crushes them!

12. Exhorters emphasize that which is SUCCESSFUL, and tend to overlook and neglect projects that fail.

III. THE COMMON DANGER TO ALL WHO HAVE THE GIFT OF EXHORTATION:

EXHORTERS TEND TO BE MORE SUCCESS ORIENTED

THAN NEED ORIENTED. They tend to substitute their formulas or prescriptions for problems rather than relationships with people.

IV. GOD'S ANSWER FOR THIS DANGER: Romans 12:12

"¹²Be joyful in hope, patient in tribulation, faithful in prayer!"

Point: It's kind of odd, the very people whom God made to be encouragers are the most prone to discouragement! But God's answer through the Apostle Paul is "Don't lose hope! Be patient—even in failure, even when you can't see the tangible results of your hard work. And put your trust in God by constant prayer rather than in your own abilities, your own formulas, projects and prescriptions."

CLOSE: