

# Your Ministry

## Lesson #6

## Exhortation

**Scripture: Romans 12:8, Acts 11:23**

**Juniata Baptist Sunday School**

If you want to see what “*exhorting*” or “*exhortation*” is, look for it in Acts 11, 14, and 15. Also find it several times in Titus 2. As you will see if you read these scriptures, exhorting has to do with encouraging people to do things. It is translated from the Greek verb *parakaleo*, from which the noun *parakletos* (paraclete) comes. This verb is also translated “*beseech*” in our Bibles (Romans 12:1, Ephesians 4:1, and many other places), and also sometimes “*comfort*” (II Corinthians 1:4, Colossians 4:8, and a few other places). The idea of exhortation is helping or urging someone with words. This gift in the church is often given to public speakers, but it is also given to Christians whose calling is to encourage people one-on-one.

### 1. Acting Like the Holy Spirit

Sometimes we will have somebody warn us against trying to be the Holy Spirit in somebody else’s life. We are told to let God deal with an individual, and to keep our nose out! However this kind of warning is contradicted by the Biblical concept of exhortation. Many realize that the Holy Spirit is called our “*Comforter*” in John 14, 15, and 16, and that the term “*Comforter*” is translated from the Greek word *parakletos* (paraclete). However few Christians realize that this Greek word comes from the verb that our Bibles translate, “*exhort.*” Whenever scripture tells us to exhort someone, it is telling us to do for him what the Holy Spirit does. Look at what Hebrews 3:13 tells us to do.

*“Exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”*

See what Hebrews 10:24-25 tells us all to do in church.

*“Let us consider one another to*

*provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”*

Every Christian should *exhort* his fellow Christians regularly! This is also what the Holy Spirit does. The verb *parakaleo* has an interesting etymology and meaning. It has the idea of calling or being called for help. As our Comforter, the Spirit is our Helper. Anything Christ commanded us to do, the Holy Spirit will help us do (See John 14:15-17). If we will rely on Him, the Spirit of God will “*paraclaete*” us every day! Now when we help somebody along by verbally urging or encouraging him to do right, we are “*paraclete*” him, *exhorting* him. This is not wrong to do; it is right to do. We should let God’s Spirit use us to encourage and help and comfort other Christians. That’s what exhortation is. In the old-time Methodist churches, some were recognized as gifted “*exhorters.*” During the altar call, they would go among the congregation urging people to repent. Although all of us are commanded to exhort one another, some among us are gifted to specialize in the encouraging, comforting, or convicting phrase, sentence, or word. They are called to exhort, not only during a public invitation but many times all week long.

### 2. Before the Act

Usually exhorting means encouraging or urging somebody to do something.

*“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” (Acts 2:40)*

*“...when he was disposed to pass into*

*Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him [Apollus]. . . ” (Acts 18:27)*

*“ . . . we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.” (I Thessalonians 4:1)*

*“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men. . . ” (I Timothy 2:1)*

An exhorter motivates and urges a person to act. His ministry of exhortation in this sense comes before the desired action takes place, and leads to it. Some kinds of preaching involves a lot of exhortation. It is encouraging preaching, but in the sense of encouraging or motivating us to do something God wants us to do. But we can see that this is often done away from the pulpit. Some are gifted to encourage obedience to Christ through words spoken less formally, directly to an individual.

### **3. After The Event**

To exhort in the sense of comfort is to encourage a believer to keep on believing and keep on obeying after a trial of his faith, or some other difficulty.

*“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. . . ” (Hebrews 12:5)*

*“I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.” (I Peter 5:12)*

*“ . . . ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.” (II Corinthians 2:7, parakaleo translated “comfort”)*

When something painful happens, exhorters are needed. They will say things that will encourage the hurting Christian to keep on trusting and following the Lord. How often have we all benefitted from exhortation during or after a hard experience. Some are called to speak the words of encouragement that we all need at such times.

### **4. “Let Us Wait. . . On Exhortation”**

That’s the way the sentence reads if you follow it from Romans 12:6 down through 8. Those with a certain gift should exercise it regularly. Has God given you the gift of exhorting? If He has, please use it. We need you very much to say the right thing when we are discouraged, to give us a shove in the right direction, to urge us to make the right decision, to remind us of God’s goodness and His promises in times of trial. Exhort your fellow believers, and if you find yourself effective and fulfilled in doing this, claim it by faith as your gift, your function in the Body of Christ!