

Your Ministry

People who show mercy are motivated by a desire to

Lesson #9

Showing Mercy

Scripture: Romans 12:8

The seventh of the function gifts listed in Romans 12:6-8 as ministries given by God to different members of the church is the gift of *“he that showeth mercy.”* In the original Greek, the word used here for showing mercy is simply the verb form of the most common word for mercy. It is mercy in action. Merciful action was called for by Bartimeus in Mark 10:46-52 when he cried, *“Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.”* Merciful action is what Jesus expects from all of His followers according to the teaching of Matthew 5:7.

“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.”

Yet some are especially gifted and called to a ministry of showing mercy to others in the church. They answer the “911” calls of people in real trouble. God gives them a deep sympathy for folks with heartaches, burdens, and disappointments. Thank God for the mercy-showers in our congregation! Is this what God has called you to give much of your time and resources to doing?

1. Deserving?

A mercy-shower must be willing to show compassion toward folks who don’t “deserve” his help. What is mercy anyway? It has to do with being kind to people who “deserve” something worse. See the people who received merciful help from the Lord Jesus:

- A. A Gentile woman with a demon-possessed daughter (Matthew 15:21-28). See that she was undeserving of the compassion of Israel’s Messiah, but she received it because of His *mercy* (v. 22).
- B. A man without much faith whose son was also demon-possessed (Matthew 17:14-18).
- C. Some lepers, most of whom never thanked the Lord for curing them (Luke 17:12-18).

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please the Lord and help others, and they do not care if the recipients of their help are deserving or grateful. Their merciful action is performed without expectations.

2. Depressing?

The main pitfall in spending time in merciful action toward others is depression. The burdens and problems of others can discourage us. So the Bible says that *“he that sheweth mercy”* should do it *“with cheerfulness.”* Please understand that many people’s problems are caused or complicated by their own failures, weaknesses, and misdeeds. For this reason, many problems can only be fully solved by decisions made or actions taken by the hurting person himself. We may be able to buy food for them or give them a ride somewhere, but they must learn to take care of themselves for the long haul. If your compassion brings depression to your mind, then your state of mind can be controlled by the action or reaction of somebody else. This is a terrible position to assume! Your happiness must *never* depend on anyone other than yourself and God.

“Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.” (Joshua 1:9)

That’s what the Lord said to His servant Joshua, and it is also a command for all of us. We must not be *“dismayed,”* discouraged, or depressed. Have compassion on people, but do not assume total responsibility for them. Teach them to be responsible for the great issues of their lives.

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and

so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden.”
(Galatians 6:2-5)

Ultimately, “every man shall bear his own burden,” although often a mercy-shower is needed to rescue a poor soul from an especially difficult predicament. Show mercy, but stay cheerful. Rejoice in the Lord, and let Him help you see what burdens are right for you to carry (with His help) and what you should *not* take upon your own shoulders.

3. How About It?

Are you following the steps given in Romans 12:1-3 for finding your function in the Body of Christ? Remember what they are as you look at these verses again: Present (v. 1), dedicate your life to serve Christ however He wills; Prove (v. 2), begin working for the

Lord and let Him show you your “*gift*” by giving you fulfillment and fruitfulness in some area of church service; Believe (v. 3), let God give you faith to claim certain gifts and ministries as your own. Seven such “*gifts*” are listed. They are presented as the various functions of different parts (“*members*” of Christ’s Body:

- a. Prophecy (forth-telling of God’s Word)—v. 6.
- b. Ministry (serving to meet needs)—v. 7.
- c. Teaching (causing people to learn the truths of God’s Word)—v. 7.
- d. Exhortation (encouraging people with words that motivate or comfort)—v. 8
- e. Giving (using God-bestowed resources to further the work of the church)—v. 8.
- f. Ruling (standing before others to direct their work)—v. 8.
- g. Showing mercy (coming to the rescue of people with great troubles)—v. 8

Which of these gifts are yours? Are you functioning according to your gift in the Body of Christ?