

Mercy & Love

Have you ever had someone just unload on you for no reason? Maybe you made a mistake or failed to live up to an expectation, but you received a tidal wave of aggression or condemnation for your actions to the point that the punishment far overshadowed the crime? Maybe you're on the other end. Parents, have you ever come down too hard on your children for something? Couples have you ever made your partner feel like less of a person by your reaction to their actions? These are just some small examples, but just in these few moments, we are all reminded why we need mercy. Mercy is the last of the spiritual gifts we will be focusing on in this series, but please know it's one of the most vital. Of all the things this world needs and that God commissions, Mercy is a big one. So welcome to week 5 of Know Your Role. If you've missed the previous weeks of this study of spiritual gifts, check them out on the app or youtube, and don't forget to get a comprehensive list of spiritual gifts from the Next area, and before you leave today we are gonna give you a link to a recommended spiritual gifts test.

Romans 12:6-8 (NIV) 6 “We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; **7** if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; **8** if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.”

The apostle Paul told us that some of us have the gift of showing mercy, and if we do, then we need to do it cheerfully. So why is this an important gift? This entire world from the time that scripture was written, until the moment we sit here reading it has been filled with people that are frustrated, angry, bitter, disappointed, lonely, and vengeful. When people are upset or offended, they have a tendency to take it out on others, and oftentimes it happens that people are on the receiving end of these things they don't deserve at all. **Those whose spiritual gift is mercy, they are the buffer from the ugly this world offers.** They are those that administer and demonstrate the grace of God. They are like a breath of fresh air in a world of pungent hate. And it's most needed cheerfully, because when Mercy is hardest to give, that's when it's needed most. For those who have Mercy as a spiritual gift, it may come easier, but we can all do the work of God by showing mercy.

Mercy is the Source Of Salvation

In the heat of the moment it's easy to forget to show others the mercy God has shown us through Christ. When we take offense to somebody's Facebook post or someone wrongs us we're quick to take the role of judge, jury, and executioner but God did no such thing when we slapped Him in the face with our sin. Of all people we are eternally worthy of God's wrath and judgment but the mercy He shows us is made clear in **Ephesians 2**

Ephesians 2:1-5 (NIV) 1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, **2** in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. **3** All of

us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. **4** But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, **5** made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

God having mercy on us is the only reason we have access to God and any hope of salvation. Keeping the law, absolutely failed. Our own sacrifices and self righteousness, never did a thing. It's only because God has mercy on sinners that we can have hope. When we realize this it puts every action in this life in an eternal perspective. We not only are receiving grace to be close to God, but the mercy to avoid the condemnation we deserved. That mercy not only brought God to the place of forgiveness, but sent Jesus to come and find us in the depths of our lostness.

Matthew 9:10-13 (NIV) While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. **11** When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" **12** On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. **13** But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Go and learn what this means. That's one of the best statements Jesus makes. HE was talking to the educated religious leaders. The men who should have had the best understanding of who God is on the planet, yet completely missed the message. For all the rules and regulations these men knew, they missed that God wanted mercy. There's a lot of us in the church today that want others held to a standard we don't want to be held to ourselves. We want God to punish people who sin differently than us to get what they deserve. And if that's our attitude, Jesus has something for us to go and learn. Jesus was also, as He often did, quoting the Old Testament. Despite the perception so often, Mercy is not solely a New Testament attribute of God. He's been about Mercy since the beginning

Hosea 6:6 (NIV) For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.

God has desired mercy for us since before we drew breath. He'd rather us have mercy than any amount of self righteousness or regulation. That is the source of salvation and that's why it's such a beautiful thing to be purveyors of this gift.

God Calls Us To Mirror His Mercy

Not only does God show us his mercy, but as those who have mercy as a gift, and those who follow Jesus, showing mercy is a large part of what truly makes Christian's Christ like. **A Christian who can't show mercy, isn't showing Christ.**

Luke 6:31-36 (NIV) 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.**32** "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. **33** And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. **34** And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. **35** But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. **36** Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Most healthy adults don't have people they consider enemies, but we all have people that we may not like, or struggle to get along with. Those people are the people who need mercy the most. This is also the best way for us to actually show mercy like God. To those who have offended or wounded us, not just the people we like or love. But that last Statement Jesus makes, **Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.** That is the standard family. In every circumstance, we are called to show the mercy God shows.

James 2:12-13 (NIV) Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, 13 because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

We are under a law of grace. A law of mercy. When we act and treat others as if we were under the law that keeps us from God, we make God seem all the more distant and ignore the love and mercy He has already shown. Mercy triumphs over Judgment and any time we try to bring Judgment up against Mercy, it's the same outcome. And one more reminder in this is that God's mercies don't get stale. They don't get bitter. They don't run dry.

Lamentations 3:22-23 (ESV) The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; 23 they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

God's mercy is fresh each day. One of the reasons why we seem like such poor representations of the Mercy of God is because our mercy is out of date. Like some open jar of salsa that's been at the back of your fridge since 2017. We are gonna seem like poor givers of mercy if we aren't giving out mercy as fresh as the mercy God has for us daily.

Mercy Moves The Gospel

If we know that we have salvation because of the mercy of God, and we know that God is calling us to mirror His mercy, we also have to understand that how we show mercy helps people know that salvation. That mercy isn't just a gift we receive because we are special, it's a gift we receive to help others see that it's offered to them as well. The way we show mercy is an invitation to others to invite them to know the mercy giver as we do.

Proverbs 28:13 (NIV) Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

One of the ways we make mercy known, is by being honest about our sins. When we are honest about our failures and shortcomings, we open the conversation to further share the gospel. When we lay down our desire to be perceived a certain way and let those skeletons out of the closet, we're able to use them as a testament of the mercy God has shown you and the new life you have in Christ! When we let other people know that they don't have to hide, then they can see how good God's mercy truly is.

2 Corinthians 3:17-4:6 (NIV) 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. **18** And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 4:1-6 (NIV) 1 Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. **2** Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. **3** And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. **4** The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. **5** For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. **6** For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

Paul tells us that clearly sharing the Gospel is a ministry we have THROUGH MERCY. When we hide God's work in our lives, our sins, failures, fears, doubts, or forgiveness, we are hiding the gift and ministry God provided us with. **We are ambassadors for God's mercy and we need to display it clearly.**

Romans 2:3-4 (NIV) **3** So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? **4** Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

God doesn't need to use fear or punishment to push us to a relationship with Him, his mercy and love are the best genuine endorsement for it possible, and we as His children are the advocates and spokespeople for it.

No Matter The Gift, All Gifts Should Be Used In Love

We have spent the past 5 weeks going over just a short perception of the vast spiritual gifts that God embodies His people with. Some of you may have been able to easily identify your gifts. Some of you may still be searching. But there is one clear thing we want you to understand about how you use your gifts, because you do have them, and you need to use them. But for them to be used well, they must be used and wrapped in love.

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (NIV)

1 If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. **2** If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. **3** If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

In this above passage Paul addresses Tongues, Prophecy, Faith, Giving, and touches on a lot of other areas that spiritual gifts intersect and connect. He makes it clear that in regard to these gifts, and I believe all gifts, that if we aren't using them in love, we aren't using them correctly at all.

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. **5** It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. **6** Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. **7** It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Using them in love also means using them how God defines love, not how the world defines love. Because love that seems natural isn't a reflection of God, the love that seems supernatural, because it is, that's what points to God.

8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. **9** For we know

in part and we prophesy in part, **10** but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. **11** When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. **12** For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Your gifts may not always have a time and place for them to be used. They may not always be needed in every time and situation, but your love always will be needed.

Invitation and spiritual gift instruction

What realm/area of your life do you sense God calling you into deeper submission to Him?

- Let's separate these gifts from the realm of serving in the body of Christ and think of it purely in the context of your personal relationship with Christ. What is He inviting you into?

A spiritual gifts text will be posted to our social media by the end of the day, and there's a qr code for the test at Next and if there's anyone not comfortable doing themselves someone can help with that after service

<https://giftstest.com/test>