

## **Giving**

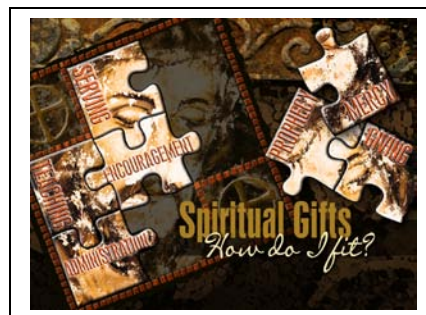
### **How Do I Fit? Part 5**

### **The Motivational Gifts**

**Rev. Nate Atwood**

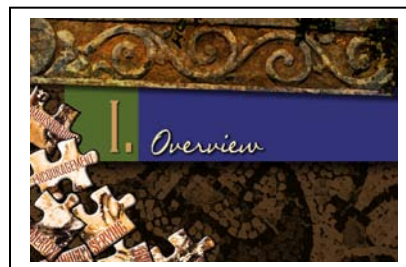
Kempsville Presbyterian Church

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## **I. Overview**

I have here a bowl filled with fruit. Three kinds, actually, there are bananas in here. And oranges. And apples. Three different kinds of fruit but here's the deal . . . they are all fruit.



Last week, in the overview section of my message, we talked about three different kinds of spiritual gifts . . . motivational gifts as they are described in Romans 12 . . . <sup>4</sup> **Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,**<sup>1</sup> (We've talked about the meaning of that word "function" and connected it with the word "motivation".) We talked about "manifestation" gifts as they are described in 1 Corinthians 12 . . . <sup>7</sup> **Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.**<sup>2</sup> And, we talked about "ministry" gifts as they are laid out in Ephesians 4 . . . <sup>11</sup> **It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,**<sup>3</sup>

Three distinctly different kinds of gifts . . . motive gifts, manifestation gifts, and ministry gifts. Three distinctly different kinds of fruit . . . bananas, oranges, and apples. You see, if motive gifts are the bananas, and I have seven bananas in this bowl, you will have one of those gifts. If manifestation gifts are oranges, then you can have as many as nine of them which will "manifest" themselves at differing moments in your life as you learn to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. And ministry gifts, well, God wants you in ministry. To make a commitment. And that will be a gift to you as well as a gift to the church.

<sup>1</sup>*The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (Ro 12:4). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

<sup>2</sup>*The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (1 Co 12:7). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

<sup>3</sup>*The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (Eph 4:11). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

So . . . different kinds of fruit. But they're all fruit. And God means to give you out of each of these types of gifts so that you will be fruitful in your service to him.

Let's pray.

## II. Giving



### Abraham and Others

This week, as we focus on the motivational gift of giving, we're going to zero in especially on the life of Abraham. As we've done in other weeks we're going to take a look at one or more characters from the Bible and connect patterns in their lives with the motivational gift of giving. The idea is to see it in action with the thought that as we see it in the lives of others we can begin to get a handle on whether or not it's our own gift.

And, as I've said before, what I'm teaching is drawn from material put together by Bill Gothard, Don and Katie Fortune, and my own study and expansion on this subject. I first became aware of the significance of the motivational gifts through Bill Gothard back in the 1980's and I'm excited to see how many of you are realizing what a key Biblical truth this is.

I'd like to ask you to open up your Bibles to Genesis 13. We're going to read sections of Genesis 13 and then Genesis 14. I want to draw some life truths from Abraham, connect them to the motivational gift of giving, and then briefly point to some other passages in the Bible.

And by the way, I am going to start part of the way in on the notes in KPC Express. Let's begin by reading Genesis 13:1-9 and 14:11-24.

READ GENESIS 13;19, 14:11-24

### 5. Wealth builder

<sup>2</sup> *Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.*

<sup>4</sup> *(Genesis 13:2)*

Here's the first observation about those with the gift of giving . . . they are wealth builders. That does not mean that they are rich, it does mean that

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<sup>4</sup>*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (Ge 13:2). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

they increase whatever holdings they have in a very deliberate and focused fashion over time. There are people who are wealthy whose motivational gift is serving or mercy. And there are people who are not wealthy whose gift is giving.

## 6. Uncontrolling

Don and Katie Fortune, as they became convinced of the importance of motivational gifts, began testing people with regard to their gifts. One of the things they noted as a common denominator in those with the gift of giving was that, when they were mature in that gift, they were uncontrolling. That's a pretty big deal because if you are wealthy it's easy to use your checkbook as a means of controlling people.

Check out Abraham in Genesis 13:9 . . .

***<sup>8</sup> So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers. <sup>9</sup> Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left."***<sup>5</sup>

This is a pretty stunning moment. Abraham – or Abram – was Lot's elder and was Lot's superior in wealth and influence. But check this out . . . he doesn't use his position in order to control the moment. Both of them had so much livestock that they had to go their separate ways and protocol . . . at least humanly speaking . . . would have been that Abraham would have the first choice as to which direction to go.

And the choice was obvious – in one direction lay the fertile valley of the Jordan River and in the other direction were the mountain tops of Israel. The choice was easy . . . the Jordan Valley. But Abraham takes the root of the godly giver . . . rather than controlling the moment he gives Lot the first choice and then takes whatever is leftover.

Mature givers are like this.

## 7. Self-sacrificing

Let's move forward to Genesis 14. Lot had chosen the Jordan Valley but that had led him both to Sodom and to trouble. War had broken out among the kings of that region and Lot along with his family and wealth had been taken captive. Listen to Abraham's response when he learns of his nephew's plight:

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<sup>5</sup>*The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (Ge 13:8-9). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

***14 When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan.<sup>6</sup>***

Okay . . . here's another classic trait of the giver. They are closely identified with the gift (we'll see this again) in very personal terms and are, by nature, self-sacrificing people.

Let me just add that the myth of our culture is that rich people are greedy. Some of them are . . . but there are those who are wealthy because God has blessed them and they have steadily taken those blessings and in self-sacrificing fashion blessed others.

## **8. Sees the connection between recovering resources and recovering people**

Here's a fascinating verse which continues the story of Abraham rescuing Lot . . .

***16 He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people.<sup>7</sup>***

Notice that Abraham does more than recover Lot and his family . . . he recovers his possessions as well. Classic. The story tells you that Abraham wasn't content to merely get Lot and his family out of harm's way but that he was thinking ahead to Lot's future well-being. You could imagine that there was extra effort – perhaps extra risk – involved in getting Lot's wealth out of captivity. But in classic giver fashion Abraham saw the connection between recovering the resources and what that meant for Lot's life to be fully restored.

## **9. Stewardship focused**

People with the gift of giving are especially stewardship focused. You see it in Genesis 13:1-2 wherein we're told of Abraham's ability to build wealth and then we're reminded of it in Genesis 14:14-16 wherein Abraham goes out of his way to recover Lot's lost wealth.

It's a question of what motivates you. For example, those with the motive gift of prophecy and or teaching are highly connected to truth. It's not as if they are unaware of stewardship and don't value it . . . but their underlying

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<sup>6</sup>*The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (Ge 14:14). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

<sup>7</sup>*The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (Ge 14:16). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

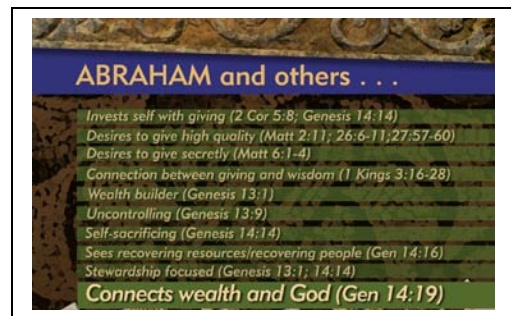
motivation will be truth driven. The giver takes the commitment to stewardship to completely different level. It was what defines their lives and motivates them in all their actions.

## 10. Connects wealth and God

Check out these verses . . . the immediate aftermath of Abraham's rescue of Lot:

**<sup>18</sup> Then Melchizedek king of Salem<sup>d</sup> brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, <sup>19</sup> and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator<sup>e</sup> of heaven and earth. <sup>20</sup> And blessed be<sup>f</sup> God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything. <sup>8</sup>**

Melchizedek connects Abraham's success to God and then Abraham immediately affirms that to be the case by turning around and giving the tithe. Yes, every Christ-follower is to connect whatever success or wealth they have to God. And, yes, we are called to give. Even tithe. But this immediate, instinctual, gut reaction and action by Abraham is classic giver. Givers grasp the connection of wealth and God on a very deep level. It resonates within them like facilitating spiritual growth in other people resonates within an encourager.



Why is it so deep in the giver? It's their gift. Their motivation. How they are wired. The important piece of the puzzle that they bring to the body of Christ which both blesses the rest of us and, in turn, models giving for the rest of us.

## 11. Sees themselves as blessed to bless

Another key truth connection from Genesis 14:18-20, the verses we just looked at, is that givers see themselves as blessed to bless others. Abraham had the wherewithal – the 318 armed men – his own small army – to be able to rescue Lot. Givers see God pouring resources – material resources – into their lives and their calling in life is to turn

<sup>d</sup> That is, Jerusalem

<sup>e</sup> Or *Possessor*; also in verse 22

<sup>f</sup> Or *And praise be to*

<sup>8</sup> *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (Ge 14:18-20). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

around and use those resources in the lives of others and to expand God's work on the face of the earth.

## 12. Hospitality (Genesis 18:1-8)

Givers are hospitality people. They love to have people over. Take people to dinner. Treat people to special events. Provide accommodations for others. The list goes on and on. Check out this story of Abraham's life.

***The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day.<sup>2</sup>***

***Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground.***

***<sup>3</sup> He said, "If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord,<sup>a</sup> do not pass your servant by. <sup>4</sup> Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. <sup>5</sup> Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant." "Very well," they answered, "do as you say."***

***<sup>6</sup> So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. "Quick," he said, "get three seahs<sup>b</sup> of fine flour and knead it and bake some bread."***

***<sup>7</sup> Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. <sup>8</sup> He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree. <sup>9</sup>***

## 13. Spiritually focused

Mature givers are not, at the end of the day, materially focused. They are spiritually focused . . .

***<sup>22</sup> But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD,"<sup>10</sup>***

## 14. Hopes gifts are answer to prayer

I don't have a Scripture reference (at least, handy) on this but this is straight from Gothard and I assume it's just an observation he made with regard to givers. Candidly, I have seen the same thing as well.

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<sup>a</sup> Or *O Lord*

<sup>b</sup> That is, probably about 20 quarts (about 22 liters)

<sup>9</sup> *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (Ge 18:1-8). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

<sup>10</sup> *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (Ge 14:22). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

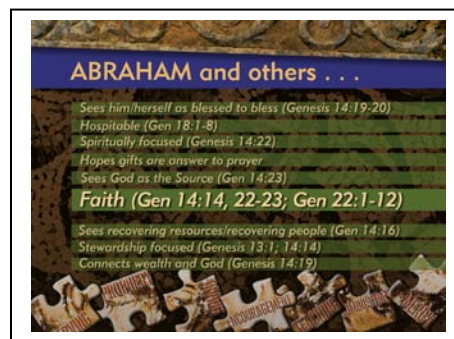
## 15. Sees God as the Source

<sup>22</sup> *But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath <sup>23</sup> that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the thong of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, ‘I made Abram rich.’ <sup>24</sup> I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me—to Aner, Eshcol and Mamre. Let them have their share.”*<sup>11</sup>

Abraham will accept nothing of the spoils of battle because he wants his ongoing wealth to be credited only to God. This is a deep value in the life of the giver.

## 16. Faith

All of this leads naturally to the subject of faith. Mature givers, because they see God as their Source and have seen Him at work time and again, are people of deep faith. Furthermore, as they mature still more so, that faith finds expression in an increasing number of areas in their lives:



***Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. <sup>2</sup> Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.”***

***<sup>3</sup> Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. <sup>4</sup> On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. <sup>5</sup> He said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.” <sup>6</sup> Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, <sup>7</sup> Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, “Father?” “Yes, my son?” Abraham replied. “The fire and wood are here,” Isaac said, “but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” <sup>8</sup> Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together.***

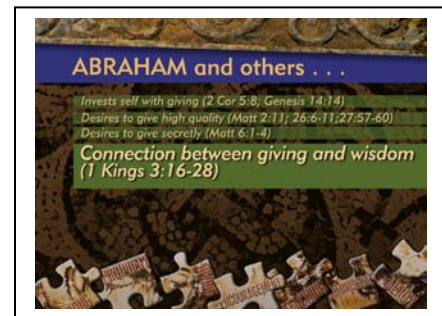
<sup>11</sup>*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (Ge 14:22-24). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

<sup>9</sup> **When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. <sup>10</sup> Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. <sup>11</sup> But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. <sup>12</sup> “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.” <sup>13</sup> Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram<sup>a</sup> caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. <sup>14</sup> So Abraham called that place *The LORD Will Provide*. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.” <sup>12</sup>**

This is what Givers have to offer to the Body of Christ and a watching world more than anything else. They are profoundly in touch with God’s supernatural ability and commitment to provide. They know him as “Jehovah Jireh”. What an incredible gift of faith to give to others ... and this even more important, infinitely more important, than the material gifts themselves.

### **Additional Characteristics . . .**

1. Invests self with giving (2 Cor 5:8; Genesis 14:14)
2. Desire to give high quality (Matt 2:11; 26:6-11; 27:57-60)
3. Desire to give secretly (Matt 6:1-4)
4. Connection between giving and wisdom (1 Kings 3:16-28)



Just in passing let me note the references out of the Gospel of Matthew above. Bill Gothard believes that Matthew – the miserly, corrupt, former tax collector turned follower of Jesus – was motivated by the spiritual gift of giving. I don’t know that there is enough Scripture to make that case – though there is some. I do think it’s an intriguing idea . . . a kind of Ebenezer Scrooge idea . . . the miserly man becomes the giver. It is amazing what God will do with our lives.

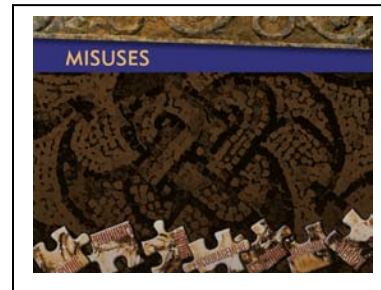
<sup>a</sup> Many manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint and Syriac; most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text *a ram behind him*

<sup>12</sup> *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (Ge 22:1-14). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

## Misuses

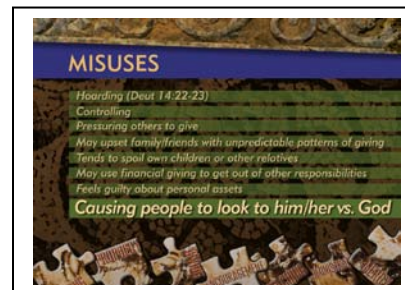
Everything listed below is, in many ways, self explanatory and I want to give credit where credit is due. Below is a list drawn up from both Gothard's notes and the Fortune's test results:

- Hoarding (Deu 14:22-23)



(Deuteronomy 14:22-23 speaks to tithing and this is the great antidote against hoarding. Because tithing is a principle of God, when we engage in it something changes inside of our heart. Selfishness and greed are broken.)

- Controlling
- Pressuring others to give
- May upset family and friends with unpredictable patterns of giving
- Tends to spoil own children or other relatives
- May use financial giving to get out of other responsibilities
- Feels guilty about personal assets
- Causing people to look to him vs. God



The key, of course, is grow in the gift so that increasingly, if you have the gift of giving, you become a mature giver like Abraham. He's the life model. Look to him.

## III. God

God's instruction to the giver, drawn from Romans 12, is found in verse 13 . . .

***<sup>13</sup> Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.<sup>13</sup>***



Perfect. And, especially notice the connection between "sharing" and "hospitality". It's easy to give impersonally . . . just write the check. Hospitality

<sup>13</sup>*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (Ro 12:13). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

connects you personally with others. It makes you more than a money person. It makes you a people person . . . just the way God wants it.

This week I was talking with a friend of mine. The subject of motive gifts was new to him and he was pretty excited about what he was learning. As we talked he made a statement which I thought was huge and he gave me permission to share it with you . . .

*You know Nate, I spent much of my life being motivated by drugs and alcohol. The thought that God is now motivating me by spiritual gifts such the ones found in Romans 12 is amazing to me.*

Man . . . is that the Gospel or what?

Motivation is a huge topic in life. Aren't we motivated by all kinds of things? The need to be accepted. The need to prove our worth. Ambition. Greed. Fear. Anxiety. Pleasure. Self. The need to be in control. And yes . . . drugs. Alcohol. And all the other stuff on that list . . .

But the implicit message in Romans 12 is that God will give us a new set of motivations. Maybe that's where you are. You know that something is missing. That what is driving you in life is destructive. You wonder if there is hope for you. Can you really change . . . from the inside out.

Yes you can. When you accept Christ into your life something profound happens. The Bible puts it this way . . . <sup>13</sup> *For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,* <sup>14</sup> *in whom we have redemption,<sup>c</sup> the forgiveness of sins.*<sup>14</sup> When you put your faith in Christ, you are changed . . . and continue to change for the rest of your life. Those all destructive motivations are given a death sentence . . . a new set of desires floods into your soul . . . whether it's prophecy, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, organizing, or mercy . . . it's all the same Holy Spirit.

Yes, it's wonderful to know about the motivational gifts and how they work . . . how we work . . . how we fit . . . how we belong. But here's the best thing of all . . . it's that God would give us new motivations to begin with.

Maybe that's your greatest need . . . to gain those new motivations . . . to become a new kind of human being. To put your faith in Jesus Christ. Will you pray with me?

*God in heaven, it's true. So many of motives have been so wrong. I am in error in the very core of my being. Give me Jesus Christ. Make me new. Change me, from the inside out. I don't care nearly so much which motivational gift you give to me . . . they are all good. What I care about is that you give me new motivations. I must change. I accept your Son, Jesus Christ, as my Savior. Amen. And, amen.*

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<sup>c</sup> A few late manuscripts *redemption through his blood*

<sup>14</sup> *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (Col 1:13-14). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.