

# Redemptive gifts

'A redemptive gift is the grace of God woven into who we are; so that when we are made right with God we become able to honour Him with how He has made us to be'. In other words our redemptive gift is the way God has wired us to function. It has to do with the essence of who we really are. We not only *have* a redemptive gift, we *are* a redemptive gift to the world.



Because of our own experience and that of our generations, the world may have masked, damaged or perverted our identity, our gift and our destiny. If we don't know who we really are we will forever be asking 'where do I fit?' and 'where do I belong?'

God desires to transform us to outwork who we really are, in His service. In that way we will be able to fulfil our part in restoring the whole of creation.

Redemptive gifts are different

- from the spiritual gifts of 1 Corinthians 12 (healing, words of knowledge, wisdom, distinguishing of spirits, tongues etc.),
- from the offices appointed for the church in 1 Corinthians 14 (apostle, prophet, teacher, miracle worker etc.),
- from the ministry gifts of Ephesians 4 (apostle, prophet, teacher, evangelist, shepherd).

Redemptive gifts are found in Romans 12:6-8:

*Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who rules, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*

There are seven different gifts, and these are given to 'each of us', which leaves nobody out. We are to line up with what God has given, rather than what the world has attempted to impose on us. Each of us is to exercise the gift(s) He has given us; and as we do we are to *be* that gift to the rest of the body.

The seven gifts are: prophet, servant, teacher, exhorter, giver, ruler and mercy.

*For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be redeemed from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God (Rom 8:19-21).*

Everything God created in the spiritual and in the physical realm is waiting for God's sons to be revealed, to bring back to creation what is missing. And so 'creation itself will also be redeemed', and we are called to be part of God's plan to do that. That

plan includes the way He has made us with our redemptive gifts. When we discover who we are then we can discover how we fit in to God's overall purpose. The way we are wired and designed enables each of us to fulfil our destiny and engage in the process of restoring creation.

Each person is and has a primary gift, but will have others as well, and the mix and degree of the various gifts in each of us is a unique combination.

*"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations"* (Jeremiah 1:5).

Redemptive gifts are received at conception, rather than salvation. We are born with them and they will influence the course of our lives, regardless of whether we become Christians or not. We are designed on (and with) purpose.

So my redemptive gift is how I am intrinsically made to function, ideally with spirit and soul in harmony. But because of perceived separation from God, my soul or heart personality traits developed independently of my spirit. I need to discover the gift, then purify and refine the heart, so that it begins to shine.

There are some common behavioural characteristics which can help us identify our redemptive gifts (primary and secondary). Compassion, for example, may come more easily to servants and mercies than prophets and rulers. However, we must not use our gift as an excuse for not growing in love! We are all called to walk out the fruit of the Spirit, whether it comes naturally or not.

God is your Father and designer, and He desires to call forth your identity as His child. He desires to reveal your redemptive identity. He wants you to know who you are and how you are designed. You are called to be a world-changer.

As you exercise your own gifting you are free of the need to compare yourself (favourably or unfavourably) with anyone else. You can be comfortable in your own skin, not having to try to be like other people.

People with different gifts to us will think and operate in ways we just don't understand. We need to learn not to be frustrated, but to appreciate! This is part of a culture of honour. We will more readily live in harmony if we recognise that God has hard-wired each one of us to respond to Him in a unique fashion. Let's learn to honour the different gifts in one another and receive the blessing and benefits which those gifts confer.

There are both positive and negative potential characteristics that go with each gift. Like me, perhaps you have been wondering why the negatives are there. So I asked God about it. I mean, from our point of view it would be much nicer if everything was just positive, wouldn't it?

But He reminded me that it is through overcoming things that we mature and grow. That process teaches us to develop and maintain our dependence on Him, as we learn to trust Him and engage with Him. He is with us on that journey which brings us into the image of Christ.

We need each other's gifts, so that we learn not to act independently. Other people outworking their gift contribute to helping us outwork our gift, and in a culture of honour we allow one another to speak into our lives, to encourage and to challenge us. That helps us maintain our humility, and stops us being arrogant, or full of ourselves. When we are aware of our weaknesses it becomes very clear that it is not all about who we are, but rather about who God is in us.

Do not focus on the negative but take any issues to God and allow Him to transform you into the image of Jesus. We must learn to let our spirit rule over our soul. For years, before we became Christians, our soul ruled (it was the only thing that *could* rule). Often it still tries to do so, and gets into a mess by trying to use things of the world to meet the needs that God placed in us. We need to grow and mature through a deep intimate relationship with God and go through a process in which our soul gets transformed and changed.

Let us have a look at some of the behavioural characteristics in each of the redemptive gifts. However, just because you have a particular gift that does not necessarily mean you will have *all* of the strengths and weaknesses associated with it. So as you consider these things, I suggest you just ask God 'does this apply to me?'

**The prophet** sees things in terms of black and white, right and wrong: a simplistic worldview in which it is imperative to make sense of everything. As a result, the prophet is able to assess situations quickly and discern whether they are good or bad. Prophets will seize the initiative quickly, and like new things, especially those that threaten the status quo. They are quick to form an opinion, and have no qualms about expressing it without reservation.

But prophets are likely to be moody and to experience emotional highs and lows. They may tend to be impatient or find difficulty with timing in other ways. They are quite hard on themselves, so may struggle to forgive themselves. If an organisation is running well, don't ask a prophet to maintain it – he or she will try to change it, 'improve' it, or quit. Because they don't do 'maintaining' or the 'status quo', they can find it hard to maintain excellence, and need vision to see the next 'new thing'. They can also be poor at maintaining relationships with others.

**Servants** are very practical, adept at seeing needs and meeting them. They are committed to the present moment, to meet present needs. They are disposed towards saving things that they or others might need in the future, but not always in an organised way. They have very few enemies, and are considered 'safe' people. They extend honour readily to others, because they always see the best (or the potential) in them. They rarely get angry, but when they do it usually revolves around questions of loyalty, and then watch out! They have a purity of motive like no other gift, never counting up what is owed to them or holding a grudge. The servant is a team player, relatively free from the desire to build his own kingdom.

But in thinking the best of others, servants may make excuses for them (especially their own children) and conversely struggle with their own self-worth, apologising for themselves while serving others. They struggle to see their innate value and don't readily believe God's truth about themselves or their calling. They may be unable to

affirm themselves or accept affirmation from other people, especially around excellence in work.

Their desire to help may draw them into enabling others' neediness by doing things for them instead of teaching them and empowering them to act for themselves. They will often become anxious by taking on other people's problems and worries, and be disproportionately affected by disappointment. Because they have a strong desire to please, they can find it hard to say 'no'

**The teacher** typically has a need to validate truth. Teachers usually do not normally receive or reject new ideas – or people – right away. They tend not to overreact or jump the gun but make new decisions slowly and carefully. They like to save things.

Teachers are highly relational, with a great sense of humour, and may have a reputation as emotionally safe individuals because they can listen to someone's brokenness and sin without rejecting them. Very patient and slow-tempered, they will usually be the last to speak in a group.

They are unwilling to begin a process until they can see how it's going to turn out, and can be indecisive, impractical and theoretical. They are self or ministry focused and often unwilling to confront or challenge others. They find it hard to return phone calls and are typically late, not good with handling money and poor at returning borrowed items. They usually resist using human illustrations.

**The exhorter** is highly relational; he has the ability to understand and relate well to others, often forming an instant rapport with strangers. He is able to avoid alienation and maintain relationship even though solidly disagreeing (and even arguing loudly) with the other party. Family is very important, and the exhorter will always seek to nurture and facilitate family members.

A high energy person, natural leader, dramatic (often melodramatic), an obsessive-compulsive verbal expressive master communicator who governs (and is governed) by persuasion rather than principle. May have a tendency to seek the approval of others, and their flexibility allows them to abandon a plan easily.

The exhorter is finely attuned to feelings, which may lead them into prioritising people over God. In fact, exhorters can struggle to spend time with God, partly because of their time management issues. They do not always prioritise their best abilities and may spend (waste) their time doing things which would be better left to others.

They can seek to rule by relationship, leading them to be manipulative and controlling (though with the best possible intentions). Non-confrontational by nature, they will wait for an opportunity to get the best out of any situation rather than knocking down hurdles and making things happen. Exhorters often have an immense heart for evangelism but stop short of actually sharing the gospel overtly.

**The giver** is designed not to be needy, so is very independent, not looking to others for help. Insightful and intuitive, the giver can look at a problem and see a solution

without anyone else's input. A good listener, for the other person's sake not their own.

The giver is not a big risk-taker, cannot be hustled and accepts the need to accrue money before giving. Givers tend to be cautious and concerned about safety and can look at themselves objectively, without shame.

But their independence can include independence from God. Faith, being a risk issue, is hard for a giver who needs a sure thing and whose security is likely in money or family. Caution can lead to overprotective behaviour and to giving mental assent rather than heart agreement.

**The ruler** is skilled at time management, thrives under pressure, and expects the same of others! Rulers readily own their problems, but will be their own solution and do not have a welfare mentality. They are not interested in apportioning blame, only in how to fix a problem and move on. Empire builders, they are designed to look at things and want to make them bigger, so are really not into details. But they are implementers, who will take a vision, break it down into pieces, and make it happen. If necessary, rulers are able to stand alone on an issue of principle or integrity.

It is difficult for a ruler to partner with others unless loyalty is built. They are big on loyalty, which they see as far more important than competence in their colleagues and co-workers, and will draw the best out of imperfect people. They are expert in dealing with people in projects, but will not choose to place themselves on a team unless they know they are really wanted and have the loyalty of others.

Rulers have an innate ability to measure character. They tend to be task oriented and neglect to nurture team members. Empire building can quickly turn into self-aggrandisement. They may overlook the faults of others, lack moral authority and exhibit casual ethics: 'the end justifies the means'. They can be overly independent and unwilling to volunteer.

**The mercy gift** finds common ground with just about everyone, so has few enemies (or none at all). Conversely, the mercy may have only 1 or 2 close intimate friends but many acquaintances with whom they are on friendly terms. They are easily confided in, non-judgmental, the mercy provides a safe place for wounded people and is able to pick out those who are troubled and to see through facades.

Mercies connect readily with the heart of God, very intuitive when it comes to following God's leading, but may have difficulty explaining why they feel God is directing in a certain way. Their fierce anger usually only surfaces around issues of loyalty, and they have been known to take up offence on behalf of others.

They find it easy to blame themselves but difficult to express their own feelings. Stubborn in the nicest sort of way, they can be slow in making life transitions because it takes a while to disengage emotionally and move on. The mercy hates confrontation, avoids issues, is indecisive on matters of right and wrong and unwilling to step on other people's toes, so may allow injustice to continue and tolerate abuse and exploitation.

Being non-confrontational can lead into compromise, accepting a mixture of holy and unholy without calling people to do what is right. The mercy can be enabling rather than empowering, wanting to nurture and protect others from pain, but needs to learn that expressing love alone will not suffice.

The mercy gift craves intimacy and needs physical touch – the danger is that this can lead to sexual impurity.

Please remember, all of this is not about looking at anyone else and pointing the finger. Our aim is to look at *ourselves* and see what God wants to do in us.

God intends us to be part of bringing all creation back into His original intention and purpose, that of redeeming not only this planet but the whole cosmos. True, we are imperfect people, but if we are willing to surrender to Him then He can do that through us.

Let's come into agreement with Him, let's realign ourselves back into who we really are, so that we can come into wholeness, into peace, into a place of rest. Not striving or struggling but enjoying the relationship with God that He designed us to have so we can bring heaven to earth and see His kingdom come, manifested here on earth as it is in heaven.

So let's identify, honour, value and appreciate our own primary and secondary gifts as well as the gifting of others so that we can operate together more effectively as God intends:

*He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love (Eph 4:16 NLT).*

#### **Further resources on redemptive gifts:**

- Redemptive Gifts (full series of 7 blog posts), part of the [Destiny Trilogy](#)
- [Destiny: Redemptive Gifts mp3 audio teaching series](#) by Mike Parsons

#### **Three different Redemptive Gifts Surveys**

- [Redemptive Gifts Survey \(PDF\)](#)
- [Redemptive Gifts Survey \(Excel spreadsheet #1\)](#)
- [Redemptive Gifts Survey \(Excel spreadsheet #2\)](#)

#### **Resources from Arthur Burk** (Sapphire Leadership Group)

- [Redemptive Gifts of Individuals](#) – 21-part YouTube video series

(This article is an excerpt from the blogs 217 – 223 on our website.)