

9:36, 39).

11. Showing mercy often involves a sacrifice of time and money.

Flowers cost money. Giving food costs money. Sending cards and visiting the sick takes time. The good Samaritan had to backtrack to Jericho (Luke 10:34) and pay the innkeeper to take care of the half dead victim (10:35). Remember, your sacrifice of time and money should be done cheerfully and not grudgingly (Rom. 12:8).

12. Love and compassion are the motives behind mercy (Luke 10:25–37, especially verses 27, 33, 36 and 37).

Suffering arouses compassion; love motivates action. Our love for one another motivates us to show mercy in times of suffering. This love is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). As Jesus taught in the Parable of the Good Samaritan, showing mercy is an example of loving your neighbor as yourself (compare Luke 10:27–29 with 10:36–37).

13. You can use your gift of mercy to cook meals for the sick, provide food and clothing for the poor, visit shut-ins, nursing homes, and hospitals, or clean someone's home after a long hospital stay—to name just a few.

14. Acts of showing mercy will be rewarded now and in the future. Happiness is one of the rewards you'll receive on earth for showing mercy (Matt. 5:7). People helped in times of suffering won't forget it—or you. They'll reciprocate. They'll help you when you're suffering. "Blessed are the merciful, for

they shall receive mercy" (Matt. 5:7). One of the great principles of the Bible is: You reap what you sow. If you sow love and mercy, you'll reap love and mercy thirty, sixty, or a hundredfold. Believers who faithfully use the gift of showing mercy are the most beloved people in the local church—and the happiest. They have many friends. They will also receive rewards in heaven at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Acts of mercy such as giving food and clothing to the poor will be rewarded because they're good works. The use of this spiritual gift results in rewards—on earth and in heaven.



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# Gift The of Showing Mercy



Grace is  
concerned for man,  
as guilty;  
mercy,  
as he is miserable.  
~Archbishop Trench~

## MERCY

Mercy is compassion in action—compassion plus doing something to relieve someone's suffering. It was one of the weightier provisions of the Mosaic Law (Matt. 23:23).

There are two kinds of mercy in the Bible. Let's call them consequent mercy and judicial mercy. Consequent mercy is having compassion for those who are suffering and then trying to relieve their suffering. It's shown after the suffering begins; that is to say, while a person is suffering. A good example of consequent mercy occurs in the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–37): a Jewish traveler is beaten, robbed, and left for dead along the Jericho road. A Samaritan, who was traveling along the road, saw him, felt compassion, treated and bandaged his wounds, mounted him on his donkey, took him to an inn, and paid the innkeeper to take care of him. That's showing mercy: compassion plus good works. But it's consequent mercy: the Jew was already suffering when mercy was shown to him. His suffering was accidental and undeserved—which is usually the case in consequent mercy.

Judicial mercy, on the other hand, is having compassion for those who are about to suffer and then doing everything you can to prevent them from suffering. It's shown before the suffering begins. The Parable of the Unmerciful Slave is a good example of judicial mercy (Matthew 18:23–35). A certain slave—a minister of finance—owed the king 10,000 talents, but was unable to pay. This is a huge sum exceeding ten times the annual revenue of Herod the Great's kingdom.

So sentence was pronounced: he would be sold into slavery along with his wife and children. But the king had compassion and showed mercy by releasing him and canceling the debt. This court official deserved to suffer—which is usually the case in judicial mercy—but he never did. Mercy was shown before he ever suffered. That's judicial mercy. Salvation is another example of judicial mercy. As sinners we deserve to suffer in the Lake of Fire... forever, but God has shown us mercy before we ever suffer by commuting the sentence (Eph. 2:4; Titus 3:5). We'll never suffer in Hades or in the Lake of Fire because judicial mercy has been shown to us.

Now, let's take a look at the spiritual gift of showing mercy.

### THE GIFT OF SHOWING MERCY

1. The gift of showing mercy is a serving gift (cf. 1 Peter 3:11).
2. The gift of showing mercy is mentioned only once in the Bible (Romans 12:8).
3. The gift of showing mercy is a God-given supernatural ability to care for people who are suffering.

Believers who have this gift have a supernatural compassion or concern far beyond normal human compassion. As we have seen, showing mercy consists of compassion and action—having compassion and doing something to relieve the suffering.

4. The gift of showing mercy is primarily for suffering saints, not unbelievers (1 Cor. 12:7; cf. Gal. 6:10).

5. Believers who have the gift of showing mercy enjoy helping the sick, handicapped, retarded, poor, widows, orphans, the aged, hospitalized, shut-ins, residents of nursing homes—the ill, lonely, deprived, disabled, and unlovely.

6. Showing mercy should be a part of every believer's life; some believers, however, have a supernatural ability in this area.

7. Mercy should be shown cheerfully, not grudgingly (Rom. 12:8).

People who have this gift are unusually loving, compassionate, sensitive, sympathetic, understanding, and patient.

8. More than anyone else, those who have the gift of showing mercy should participate in their church's visitation program.

Why? Because they enjoy visiting shut-ins, nursing homes, and hospitals. You can be a tremendous help to your pastor, deacons, and church's reputation in the community by visiting the sick and infirm.

9. Dorcas of Joppa is a good Biblical example of a person who had the gift of showing mercy (Acts 9:36–42).

Says Luke, "This woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity, which she continually did" (Acts 9:36). These "deeds of...charity" ("almsdeeds" in KJV) are literally "deeds of mercy" (*ergōn...ēleēmosunē*). She made clothes for the poor—especially for poor widows (9:39).

10. The gift of showing mercy often expresses itself in charitable deeds (Acts