

ability even by those who do not have the specific item. Teaching is a good example...there is a particular gift of teaching but all believers are expected to be able to teach in particular degrees. (See Titus 2) Evangelism is a particular gift but all believers are expected to witness. Whether you possess the designated ability will be more often determined as you involve yourself in the work. So there is a particular gift of encouragement (exhort) in verse 8 but we soon discover that all believers are expected to be able to encourage one another.

3. The term translated "exhort" and given by me as "encourage" is the word indicating to come beside someone and supply what is needed for a given situation. The noun "paraclete" is taken from this word and it is the very thing the Holy Spirit does for us in the role He bears with us in this age. So when we speak of encouragement we are speaking of standing with another in a supportive role.

4. Our definition may be made a bit more particular by noting that this sort of help is often more a matter of emotional than physical fulfillment. The latter may also prove encouraging but where the great help is needed is often in the morale and in the inner man. This is a "lesser gift" although more is being said about it today than in past years. (I may add that Dr. Lawrence Crabb has a video cassette series on this subject that is very appropriate.)

B. Discussion

The following materials are vital to us in the business of learning to encourage one another:

1. Encouragement: what is it?

In broad definition, encouragement or exhortation is the supplying to others the emotional help needed for strength in daily life. There may be physical and material overtones as well but this much is basic in this regard. It is not so much the matter of "exhortation" in a "telling you what do do" sense