

# The Gifted: Prophecy

3 hours ago by Steve Kromer 0 Comments

This week, we are continuing our message series entitled 'The Gifted'. We've learned how all followers of Christ are like superheros. We all have experienced a supernatural encounter with God that transformed our lives. We're all on a mission to seek and save the lost using the spiritual gifts that God has given each of us with His agape love. Although very different from each other, we all work together in unity for the common good.

We're going to begin this morning learning about the specific spiritual gifts which we find in scripture.

Although each follower of Christ has dominant spiritual gifts that they commonly receive and use, the spiritual gifts are all available to all believers. If we remember that the primary purposes of the spiritual gifts are to build up the body of Christ and to manifest God's love to others, it is logical that we would be given whatever spiritual gift is necessary to do that given our specific circumstances.

Paul urges us in both 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 to eagerly desire the spiritual gifts. Now to quickly bust a couple of myths regarding spiritual gifts... If we only ever received one spiritual gift that defined what part of the body of Christ that we are, then Paul would never have urged us to eagerly desire the other gifts.

Also, when Paul questions if all are apostles, or if all are prophets, or if all speak in tongues, etc. and by that he meant that some believers will receive those gifts and others will never receive those gifts, then he would also never have urged us to eagerly desire the spiritual gifts. That should simplify and bust those two common myths and further explain that all gifts are available to all believers.

Although spiritual gifts cannot be earned, the Biblical principle still applies to the spiritual gifts in that when we are faithful with little, we will be given greater. This is true with our finances, with God's revelation, with responsibilities, and also true with how we use the spiritual gifts. Paul urges us to eagerly desire the greater spiritual gifts, especially prophecy.

Since prophecy is specifically called out as a greater spiritual gift, I felt that it would be appropriate to start there this morning so that we can find out why this is the case.

Prophecy is making known the future potential and purposes currently hidden by God. As Bill Johnson frequently states, these things are not hidden by God from us, but they are hidden by God for us.

Prophecy is a gift which enables someone to receive revelation from the Holy Spirit directly and share that revelation with a person or group of people to whom that revelation was hidden from previously.

Prophecy is exciting because we are able to reveal to people what is on God's heart and mind for that person, or that group of people specifically. It manifests God's love to them because they know for certain that God has a plan and purpose for their life and that He loves them enough to share it with them. It begins to shed light on Jeremiah 29:11 revealing specifically that God has plans to prosper and not harm them and to give them a hope and a future. It's one thing to quote that verse to them to encourage them,

but it's a vastly different thing to specifically reveal those plans, hope, and future to them!

How many here have received a prophetic word from someone and experienced what I'm describing first hand?

The reason that I believe that Paul wrote to the church in Corinth and told them that prophecy is one of the greater gifts is this. When a prophetic word goes out, especially to a church, it defines the plans and purposes that the church has the potential to reach. Why is that a greater gift than any of the others? I believe it is because it is when this prophetic revelation comes that all of the other spiritual gifts in the church can go into full swing working together to reach God's potential for them that was revealed. I believe that prophecy is an empowering gift that motivates and gives direction to all of the other gifts of the spirit. Now, let's take a look at some Biblical guidelines for the spiritual gift of prophecy. Remember, what we learned about how to use the gifts of the spirit applies to this and all of the other gifts as well, so we won't review those again this week.

1. Prophecy is God's will and not man's – it will not manipulate!

### **2 Peter 1:21**

For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Prophecy is the revelation of God's will that is given by the Holy Spirit for man. It is not man's revelation of His will for man – that is called opinion. When we give a prophetic word, we need to be very cautious and careful not to speak our will or to mix our opinion in with what we received from God. We need to be faithful to God to share only what was revealed to us and not to try and fill in what seems to be blanks with our thoughts or opinions. After all, God told even the prophet Isaiah in chapter 55 that our thoughts are not God's thoughts and our ways are not God's ways. Sometimes when we give a prophetic word, it may not make sense to us, but we have to trust that God knows what He is doing and saying.

Now this seems straight forward to tell what is coming from the Holy Spirit and what is coming from a person. However, when someone states, 'I believe that the Lord is calling you to...' and speaks something that is completely in alignment with scripture and God's character, this becomes less straight forward than you would think.

Take for example, if Brady prophesies to one of his guy friends and says, 'I believe that God is calling you to be a bachelor to the rapture.', it may be accurate because we know that God gives some people the ability to be single all their lives. However, it may also be Brady manipulating his friend to keep him away from the girl that he is interested in.

All of this being said leads us to our next guideline.

2. All prophesy should be tested.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:19-22**

19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not treat prophecies with contempt 21 but test them all; hold on to what is good, 22 reject every kind of evil.

Some people have been so badly burned and hurt by people using prophecy to manipulate that they have begun to treat prophecy with contempt. That is probably exactly what was happening and why this was written to the Thessalonians.

All prophesy should be tested. Note that even when testing prophesy, we are to hold on to what is good and reject every kind of evil. The fact is that the same Holy Spirit that spoke that prophetic word through that individual dwells in me and knows exactly what He was saying to that person. This gives us the ability to discern and judge what is good and what is not. Just because not all of a prophetic word is judged to be from God doesn't mean that we throw out the baby with the bath water. We divide it and throw out what was added and keep what was from God. If none of it was from God, well then, yes, we throw out the whole thing.

How do we test prophecy?

- a. Is it in alignment with God's written word and His character? God won't contradict Himself!
- b. Pray about it and ask God about the word, don't be afraid to ask for confirmation.
- c. What is the end result of the prophetic word?
  1. Would God ultimately be the one glorified or exalted?
  2. Would it grow or mature me as a believer in my faith?
  3. Would it bring me into further unity with other believers?
  4. Would it further God's kingdom?
  5. Would it build others up?
  6. Would it grow into the fruits of the Spirit?
- d. Ask your church's spiritual leadership about it.

This is obviously not a comprehensive test, but enough to steer us in the right direction.

3. Prophecy strengthens, encourages, and comforts

### **1 Corinthians 14:3**

But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort.

Regardless of what God reveals to you for a person, it needs to be shared in a way that does these three things for them.

4. When we're faithful with little, we'll be given more.

This principle couldn't be any truer than when it comes to the hidden things that God reveals to us.

Whenever we are faithful to share God's revelation in a loving and appropriate manner, God will give us even greater revelation.

### **Luke 8:16-18**

16 "No one lights a lamp and hides it in a clay jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, they put it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light. 17 For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. 18 Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they think they have will be taken from them."

This awesome gift of receiving hidden revelation from God directly is available for all believers. All believers can prophesy. Now, that we've covered some basic guidelines for prophesy, you'd probably like to learn how to practically receive and accurately use this spiritual gift, right? Well, join us next week and we'll cover

this and more!