

Part One - Overview of Spiritual Gifts and the Gift of Prophecy

I. SPIRITUAL GIFTS: OVERVIEW

- A. God does not want us ignorant how spiritual gifts work. This would be a huge travesty and result in an unclear perspective of God, spiritual boredom, spiritual immaturity (personal and corporate), and lengthened time until Jesus returns (2 Pet. 3:12).

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant. (1 Cor 12:1)

- B. Jesus has given the Church spiritual gifts to bring her into maturity (Eph. 4:8-15). He will have for himself a glorious, mature Bride at the end of the age (Eph. 5:32; Rev. 22:17). When we grow in spiritual gifts, we become a “joint of supply”, “doing our share”, allowing Jesus to prepare His Bride.

8... And He Himself [Jesus] gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints ... for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come ... to a perfect [mature] man... the fullness of Christ...from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies... by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.... (Eph. 4:8-15)

...that He [Jesus] might present her to Himself a glorious church, (Eph. 5:27)

- C. Growing in spiritual gifts help bring fullness in the Gentile Church and the salvation of Israel. “The glorious, mature Bride” (Eph. 4:13; 5:27, 32) Paul speaks of is also the “fullness of the Gentile Church” (Rom. 11:25-27) that will provoke Israel to jealousy, causing her to want to know God for herself. Fullness of the Gentile Church refers to *great exploits* (Dan. 11:32), *greater works* (John 14:12), possession of *mature character* (Song of Solomon 7:1-9; Mt. 21:43) as the Church *partners with Jesus* to rid wickedness from the earth (Luke 18:6-7; Rev. 8:1-3), *provides refuge* (Rev. 12:6, 14; Jer. 16:16) and *stands with God’s purposes* for Israel (Isa 62:6-7) in her “time of trouble” (Dan. 12:1).

... have they [Israel] stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. (Rom. 11:11)

25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery . . . that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so all Israel will be saved... (Rom. 11:25-26)

- D. Spiritual gifts are *gifts* but also *skills* that we can develop. The “gift” is God’s part; the “use” is our part. The best way to grow our gifts is to use them. It is *our* responsibility to grow the gifts God has given us (2 Tim. 1:6; Rom 12:6).

Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. (2 Tim. 1:6)

- E. In order to use a spiritual gift you have to activate it with faith (Rom. 12:6). Faith is a “blind step” and a risk. Often when you combine faith to something you feel nothing. We must not confuse our “feelings” with the truth of God’s promises.

Having then [spiritual] gifts ... let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith... (Rom. 12:6)

- F. There are three lists of spiritual gifts in the Bible with 1 Corinthians 12 as the primary list containing nine gifts (1 Cor. 12:7-10, Eph. 4:7-16 and Rom. 12:3-8).

⁷The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: ⁸for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. (1 Cor 12:7-10)

- G. There are three recognized categories of the nine gifts. The gifts often operate together. Many times they overlap into one another. Jesus operated in all the gifts and we can as well (John 14:12; Luke 4:14; 1 Cor. 12:11; Phil. 2:6-7)! But some of the gifts God has given to us as strengths over others. It is our responsibility to cultivate our gifts.

Gifts of revelation reveal something: word of wisdom, word of knowledge, discerning of spirits.

Gifts of power do something: the gift of faith, working of miracles, and gifts of healings.

Gifts of inspiration say something: prophecy, tongues, and interpretation of tongues.

II. THE PROPHETIC GIFT: OVERVIEW

- A. Prophecy is revelation from God about a certain situation, person or thing. It is not necessarily about the future, but can be about past or present things that God highlights. *All Revelation* comes from God the Father (Mt 11:25,16:17; Gal 1:16; Phil 3:15), God the Son (Mt 11:27; Gal 1:12) or God the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:10; Eph 3:5).

- B. All spiritual gifts are to be desired, *especially* prophecy. Everyone is invited to move in simple prophecy, personally and corporately. It is not greedy to want spiritual gifts. God commands us to!

1 Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy... ³⁹ desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. (1 Cor. 14:1, 39)

- C. We can all prophesy but have different levels of gifting. There are roughly three types of prophetic ministry: simple (1 Cor. 14:1-3, 39), established prophetic ministry (Rom 12:6), the office of a prophet (Eph. 4:8). The Holy Spirit dispenses spiritual gifts as He desires. Don’t focus on the measure of your gifting but on using it! (1 Cor. 14:1, 1 Cor 12:11; Eph. 4:11; Rom 12:6).

But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. (1 Cor 12:11)

- D. The prophetic is the doorway into the other gifts. That is why it is crucial to learn to walk in prophecy.
- E. Prophecy shows us God is a good Father (James 1:17). He enjoys revealing things to His children who ask Him (Luke 11:9-13; 1 Cor. 2:8-10; EG, Dan. 10:12-14; Zech 1:9; Acts 9; Rev. 7:13-16).
- F. It comes “spontaneously” and is not prepared like teaching or preaching. It is also “controllable”. “Spontaneous” means many times before prophetic ministry, you may feel nothing. “Controllable” means you can steward the prophetic to bring the greatest amount of good to the most people depending on the situation.

29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. 30 But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. (1 Cor, 14:29-32)

- G. Prophecy is imperfect. We can only see parts of things and usually see them dimly.

...we know in part and we prophecy in part... (1 Corinthians 13:9)

III. THE FUNCTION OF THE PROPHETIC GIFT

3 But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. 4 He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. (1 Cor. 14:3-4)

1. Strengthening, exhorting or comforting in a specific area (1 Cor. 14:3-4; 1 Tim. 1:18)
2. Practical application of Scripture
3. Highlight, release or bring discernment to a gifting (1 Tim 4:14)
4. Release physical or emotional healing
5. Confirmation of mission or ministry (Acts 13:1)
6. Exposure of Satan's tactics or secret sin (Acts 5:3; 1 Cor. 14:24-25)
7. Inspiration towards worship (1 Cor. 14:25)
8. Warnings (Acts 20:23, 21:10-11)
9. Evangelism of unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:24-25)
10. Guidance and direction (Gen. 41:25-32; 1 Tim. 1:18)
11. Prediction (Acts 11:28)

IV. ACTIVATIONS - Activities we do to “learn by doing”.

- A. “Activations” are a good way to learn to prophecy and hear from God. Activations help create an environment where people can *build their confidence* in hearing God and form a *prophetic community*. Besides “activations” you can learn by in your normal day to day life or when ministry opportunities arise.

- B. Activations can be used also to enhance a specific group of people to go deeper in their role partnering with the Holy Spirit: prophetic singers, evangelists, prayer ministers engaged in inner healing, preachers and those in personal ministry. Here are a few examples:
1. SINGERS: Develop “new songs” to the Lord. Step one, sing a few Bible verses verbatim; Step two, paraphrase the same passage; Step three, begin to sing whatever comes from your heart to God regarding that passage. This is a “new song” given by God (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Ps. 33:3; 40:3; Rev 5:9).
 2. PRAYER MINISTERS: Practicing giving simple personal words in small groups or in prophetic lines. Practice getting words of knowledge that God can use for emotional healing. Practice “encountering God” in small groups to sharpen spiritual sight and listening.
 3. EVANGELISTS: Practice getting words of knowledge so when they witness on the streets, they can function in that gifting and draw people’s hearts to God while sharing the gospel.

Part Two - How to Receive and Deliver Simple Prophetic Words

I. BIBLICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF PROPHECY

A. Prophecy should be exercised in love.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge . . . but have not love, I am nothing. (1 Cor 13:2)

B. Prophecy is not to be despised, but embraced. Prophecy can be used in a multitude of ways and settings. We should find out how to create space for the Spirit to move in the venues which we oversee.

19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies. 21 Test all things... (1 Thes 5:19-21)

C. Prophecy is to be orderly. Prophecies are controllable. Prophecies are to be given in turn

30 But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets... 40 Let all things be done decently and in order. (1 Cor 14:32-40)

D. Prophecies are to be given under the leadership of the church, to assist the governmental leadership rather than usurp it.

E. Prophecy should be weighed and evaluated (1 Cor 14:29-32; Acts 21:10-15; 1 Thess. 5:20-21). Some things you can ask: Does it *agree with Scripture* and the *nature of God*? Is there an *inner witness* in your heart? For important messages God often brings *other confirmations*. Submit your word in *community* and *under authority*.

Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. (1 Cor 14:29)

20 Do not despise prophecies. 21 Test all things; hold fast what is good. (1 Thess 5:20-21)

F. If you find you have been given a true prophetic word, then pray over it and keep your faith in the Lord. As a general rule, don't try to make it happen. Don't do anything rash or quick but let the Lord accomplish it. Prophetic words are contingent on our obedience and response to the Lord.

G. It is also important to test the character and ministry (history, fruit) of the prophetic minister who is ministering.

II. THREE BASIC COMPONENTS OF PROPHECY

There are *three basic components of prophecy*: **Revelation**, **Interpretation**, and **Application**.

Most issues that come with prophecy come because of missing or misunderstanding one of these three aspects.

A. REVELATION

1. What is it like when God is talking to me? How will I know it is God talking to me? When we ask God to speak, we need to believe and not doubt that He wants to share things with us. We need to be aware of the "*faint impressions*" that *the Spirit gives us* and dial into these.
2. **Revelation is what we first receive from God.** Revelation is like raw data from a computer. Or if you were a scientist, a read-out from your research. Below is a list of ways God may talk with you, although it is not limited to this list.
 - a) **Pictures**: You may receive a picture of something or someone moving or still. Ask God questions and the picture may unfold or you may see more.
 - b) **Bible verses**. God may highlight a Scripture or a Bible character to you that relates to the person.
 - c) **A phrase** may pop into your head.
 - d) **Impressions**. An impression is a knowing in your inner man. You may "know" something. You may be not sure why you are thinking of it. It may begin very faint, but work with it.
 - e) **Emotions**. You may feel stirred with an emotion for a person but you aren't sure why at first. Begin to dialogue with God to find out why you are sensing that emotion.

- f) **Dreams.** God will often share things with us in dreams. Developing our dream language (how God communicates to us in dreams) takes time and discipline, but is worth it. We need to discern what are soulish dreams or God-given. A lot can be said here. Enough for another workshop!
- g) **Sensations in your body.** If you have an unexplained sensation, it could be that God is giving you that sensation because it pertains to someone nearby.
- h) **Visions.** Moving pictures we can see where God tells us what is on His heart (Joel 2:28-29).
Internal: You can have them in your mind's eye, spiritual eye. It is not coming from your imagination but your spirit communicating through your imagination. There is a difference.
External: You can actually see pictures moving in front of you with your natural eye (more rare). It is like a movie screen.
- i) **Trances.** Similar to a vision but that you are fully experiencing your visionary state even though you are aware of your body and sometimes unable to move (Acts 11:5; 22:17-18).
- j) **Audibly.** We hear God's voice speaking to us. Internal: This is most common when people refer to hearing God's voice. Hear it either loudly inside us or a still small voice (1 Kings 19:11-13).
External: although this is a rare experience, there are however contemporary testimonies of God speaking externally as you would talk to another human being. (Ex 3:4, 1 Samuel 3:8)

B. INTERPRETATION

1. **Interpretation is what the revelation means.** I think I have something, now what does this mean?
2. We can interpret what God gave us by asking questions back to Him and waiting on His response. It is a dialogue and relationship. Eg, Why am I seeing this, God? What does this mean?
3. Interpretations can have layers. Some times two interpretations are correct; but one may be more accurate. Don't get worried about that.

C. APPLICATION

1. Now that I think I know what it means, what do I do with it? We need to apply it. **Application is how to respond to what we have received.** Is it consistent with Scripture? Is it consistent with the character of God? Ask God for his heart on the matter. Then if you should speak it, you can move with God's heart.
2. Ask God what to do with it: *pray it, deliver it or wait?*
3. Don't worry about making mistakes when starting out. Prophesying according to 1 Cor. 14:1-3 is a good starting point. Some people think that if they make a mistake they could be doing "false prophecy" which is not true. Usually it is just a "non-prophecy".

- a) **True prophecy** is a revelation from the Lord that is accurately communicated by the person prophesying. It can suffer from some degree of impurity, poor delivery, imperfect grammar, etc. and still remain in essence a true prophecy. It is inspired by the Spirit of God and has power that produces godly fruit.
- b) **False prophecy** is inspired by an evil spirit. It has evil power and produces ungodly fruit. The message is twisted in content or tone and is damaging in its sense.
- c) **"Non-prophecy"** is a message given in prophetic form with an acceptable content, but it comes out of the thoughts of the speaker rather than the inspiration of the Lord. Sometimes called 'a blessed thought,' it produces nothing and has no power. It will fall flat.

III. QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN BEGINNING PERSONAL PROPHECY

- A. Ask God about *how He sees them* or *what He wants to say to this person or situation*. He may highlight His feelings for them, the persons's identity, giftings, or role in body of Christ. This is an open-ended question that could go anywhere.
- B. Seasons - *Ask God what season they are in*. Ask God to elaborate what it means and share it with them. Here are a few example: wilderness season; coming out of the desert, new season beginning, training season, season of expanding, growth. Ask God more questions about what He is showing you.
- C. Ask God to highlight any *life experiences* they have been through, past, present and future and what He would say about it.
- D. Ask the Lord what Bible character they are like and why. Share that with them.
- E. Other miscellaneous questions -
 - 1. If Jesus was standing in front of them, what would He say to them?
 - 2. How do they affect a room when they enter it?
 - 3. What is a challenge they are facing and how does God say about it?
 - 4. How does God say this person blesses him?
 - 5. What is God saying about their family? Job? free time? Role at the church?