

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The Gift of Prophecy

Introduction: Last week we looked at the Great Commission Gifts. Jesus said

Make Disciples, so God gives the **gift of evangelism**.

Teach them to Observe, so God gives the **gift of teaching**.

I am with you Always, so God gives the **gift of shepherding**, also called pastor-teacher.

We looked at what each of these gifts are, but I did not have sufficient time to share with you some insights into how to recognize some signals that God may have given one or more of these gifts to you. I want to begin with that tonight, and then, I hope lead you to consider another of the spiritual gifts that works in close harmony with these three.

When discerning what gifts God has given you there is no substitute for serving the Lord in some area where you yourself have an opportunity to see if God has indeed given you a supernatural capacity to to serve Him in a particular area. The characteristics of people that have certain gifts that I am going to share with you are characteristics seen in some people of the Bible who have these gifts or that I or others have observed are commonly in people today that have those gifts. So these characteristics are neither infallible nor certain. But I think if you are truly seeking to know what gifts God has given you, you will find these summaries helpful.

THE EVANGELIST

Definition: The God given capacity to Proclaim the Good News effectively so that people become disciples of Jesus.

Characteristics:

1. **Has a consuming passion for lost souls.**
2. **Usually outgoing, socially active, lighthearted, enthusiastic, agreeable.**
3. **Has a clear understanding of the gospel.**
4. **Likes to memorize Scripture.**
5. **Is a good listener; remembers names and faces.**
6. **Believes salvation is the greatest gift.**

7. Sometimes impulsive and subjective.
8. Is tolerant, sympathetic, and forgiving.

THE TEACHER

Definition: The Spirit-given capacity to explain clearly and apply effectively the truth of the Word of God..

Characteristics:

1. Has great desire to know and teach whole Bible.
2. Is systematic in approach.
3. Delights in research to validate truth.
4. Accumulates knowledge; gives attention to detail.
5. Is careful to use Scripture in context and often uses Biblical illustrations.
6. Accuracy in concepts, word usage; pronunciation is important.
7. Enthusiastic when explaining; is easily understood.
8. Often uses lists, charts, and graphs.

THE SHEPHERD (PASTOR-TEACHER)

Definition: The Spirit-given capacity to guide, feed, and protect a portion of the flock of God..

Characteristics:

1. Loves people; wants them to learn and grow.
2. Protective of those under his care.
3. A leader more than a follower; desiring to give direction.
4. Likes to study; burdened to teach whole Word of God.
5. Usually patient, tolerant, empathetic, and diplomatic; but also often authoritative.
6. Usually is a “Jack of all and master of one.”
7. Sometimes is too independent becoming a workaholic.

8. Gift applies to any size group.

Now tonight I want to add to our study a gift closely related to the three we have already examined: The Gift of Prophecy

I. WHAT IS THE GIFT OF PROPHECY?

A. Not all prediction is prophecy.

1. There are 2 sources of knowledge about the future.
 - a. God – prophets
 - b. Satan – diviners
2. There are 4 tests for a prophet.
 - a. **100% right** – Deut. 18:22 when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that *is* the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.
 - b. **Consistent with Scripture** – Jn. 17:17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.
 - c. **Given by Spirit** – 2 Peter 1:21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.
 - d. **Points to Jesus** – Rev. 19:10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See *that you do not do that!* I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

Many people predict the future today by astrology or other methods of divination, but none of them pass the four tests of a true prophet.

Not all prediction is prophecy.

B. Not all prophecy is prediction.

The word prophet in both Old and New Testament means to forth tell, not foretell.

Ex. Moses and Aaron (Ex. 4:14-16, 7:1) Aaron spoke for Moses, so he was his prophet. When a man speaks for God, he is God’s prophet.

1. Prophets received God’s message in the Old Testament by dreams, visions, or verbal communication. We want these; they probably wanted writing.
2. **They were to deliver God’s message** and apply it to the lives of people by instructing, warning, promising, rebuking, and even acting. In so doing they did often speak
 - a. **Of the future – exile, Messiah, Millennial and Eternal Kingdoms** – but also

- b. **Of the present – idolatry, covenants – and**
- c. **Of the past – interpreting the acts of God in history as Hosea describes God’s fatherly actions.**

II. PROPHECY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

A. Agabus

- 1. Warned of famine, which happened in reign of Claudius. (Acts 11:27)
- 2. Warned of Paul’s capture by the Jews and imprisonment by Rome.

B. Prophets at Antioch – Acts 13:1

C. Judas and Silas – Acts 15:32

- 1. They delivered the message of Jerusalem Council and exhorted brothers.

D. Philip the Evangelist had 4 daughters who prophesied.

The emphasis is the same in the New Testament – spokesman for God whose message concerned the past, present, or future.

III. WHAT IS THE MODERN GIFT OF PROPHECY?

Since prophecy is telling God’s message, we first ought to note

A. God’s message is complete.

- 1. **Rev. 22:18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;**

B. Prophecy today is still taking the message of God, which is His Word, and using it to point men to the Living Word Jesus.

Definition: The Spirit given capacity to proclaim the written Word of God with clarity in the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit.

IV. THE USE OF THE GIFT

A. Prophecy includes preaching.

It is the gift that enables a man called to preach to take the Word and feed the sheep.

B. Prophecy goes beyond the formal discourse.

Testimony can be prophecy if based on Scripture and is an explanation or application of the Word.

Prophecy could even appear in informal conversation.

C. It has been and still can be possessed by women.

D. Characteristics of the prophet

- 1. Hates sin; quick to point out sin (Amos).**
- 2. Loves sinner (Hosea).**
- 3. Very discerning of people's character (Nathan).**
- 4. Concerned for program of God (Isaiah).**
- 5. Often individualistic, opinionated, dominant, authoritative – especially about Scripture (Elijah).**
- 6. Has great sense of urgency (Elijah).**
- 7. Usually serious rather than lighthearted (Elisha).**
- 8. Needs to express truth verbally (Jeremiah).**