

## Teaching & Prophecy

Do you feel equipped to serve?... Do you feel equipped to help build up other believers?... Do you want to see unity in Jesus?... Do you want to see the church become more mature?... I want you to hear this verse and think about it with me: **Ephesians 4:11-13, “11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”**

Here’s the thing. Those with the calling of being apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are called to equip you to serve, to help build up other believers, and to reach unity together in Jesus. They have been given these spiritual gifts to help grow and strengthen the body of Christ.

So let me ask; have you taken advantage of what has been offered to you here at Vertical? Or have you gone through the motions on Sundays of hearing a message and then going on to live your life however you want? Or let me ask this instead; has Vertical equipped you in serving, building up other believers, and reaching unity with other believers in Jesus? Truth is, you and I have been called by God to do these things. And whoever is preaching from this stage; they are called to equip you to do so. Could we as Vertical Church do better with equipping and serving? If so, how?...

Welcome to week 2 of “Know Your Role” where we are diving into the essentials of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus who makes disciples. The next 4 weeks we will be unpacking particular spiritual gifts and helping each of you discover what your spiritual gifts are as well as how God wants you to use them to build up the body of Christ. [Today we are going to discuss two well known spiritual gifts: teaching and prophecy.](#) Regardless of what you thought about these 2 gifts before coming, one thing is true. They are important to understand and to be used.

So unlike other sermons, I’m going to spoil the 3 points we will be addressing when it comes to prophecy and teaching. They’ll actually be 3 questions, which are:

- 1.) What are the gifts of teaching and prophecy?
- 2.) Why does God give these gifts?
- 3.) How do you apply these gifts in your life if you have them?

We’ll go through each question, one at a time, for both gifts. But before we jump into scripture and answer these 3 questions, let’s go to the LORD in prayer.

- 1.) What are the gifts of teaching and prophecy?

First we will address teaching, which in itself holds a lot of responsibility in the church. **James 3:1 says, “Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know**

that we who teach will be judged more strictly.” This is a good warning. You will be held more accountable if you are a teacher because you are teaching people. And you know who cares about the people you teach? God. So be responsible if you are called to teach because God will hold you accountable for how you taught and led people.

But what exactly is the gift of teaching? **The gift of teaching is a gift given by the Holy Spirit, enabling one to effectively communicate the truths of the Bible to others.** The gift of teaching involves the analysis and proclamation of the Word of God. Explaining the meaning, context, and application to the hearer’s life. Those gifted to teach have the unique ability to clearly instruct and communicate knowledge, specifically with the doctrines of the faith and truths of the Bible. **It is important to point out that all pastors are called to teach, while not all teachers are called to pastor.**

A big side note before jumping to prophecy. Scripture does show us that both men and women can have the gift of teaching or the gift of prophecy. God has called both men and women to play a role in the body of Christ.

Now we will address what the gift of prophecy is. Firstly, I want to point out that those who have the gift of prophecy now differ a bit from the Old Testament Prophets **who spoke the authoritative Word of God** directly. The words of Old Testament Prophets were recorded as Scripture as they proclaimed, *“Thus says The Lord,”* whereas the messages from those now with the gift of prophecy are to be tested. In the New Testament the Apostles (not the prophets) took over the role of scriptural proclamation from the Old Testament Prophets.

The Greek word for the gift of prophecy is **propheteia** which is the ability to receive a divinely inspired message and deliver it to others. The messages of prophecy can take the form of exhortation, correction, disclosure of secret sins, prediction of future events, comfort, inspiration, or other revelations given to equip and edify the body of Christ. Check out **1 Corinthians 14:3-4**, Paul tells us how important prophecy is in the context of the gathering of the church: **“3 On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. 4 The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.”** And further down in verses 24-25 Paul says, **“24 But if an unbeliever or an inquirer comes in while everyone is prophesying, they are convicted of sin and are brought under judgment by all, 25 as the secrets of their hearts are laid bare. So they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, “God is really among you!”** The gift of prophecy can impact the lives of both believers and nonbelievers.

It’s important that we realize that those who prophecy today do not constitute the authoritative Word of God. What that means is that if I prophesy my words are not to be given the weight of scripture. The word of God is INFALLIBLE, without error; I AM NOT. The prophecies a person gives today should always be tested against the Scriptures. **1 Thessalonians 5:19-22** says, **“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.”** We aren’t to view prophecy as worthless nor are we to mock it or ridicule it. But we are called to test it and take it seriously if it is truly from God.

The gift of prophecy is not linked to any specific denomination, but it is linked with God's Church as a whole.

Now that we have discussed what the gifts of teaching and prophecy are, let's turn to our next question, which is:

## 2.) Why does God give these gifts?

The gifts of prophecy and teaching are given to some in order to equip the church to serve the Lord as He has called us to. Remember Ephesians 4:12-13? **"12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."** These 2 verses sum up a big reason for why God gives some the gifts of prophecy and teaching. **These two gifts are meant to equip Christians for works of service, to build up Christians, to help us reach unity in faith and knowledge of Jesus, to become mature, and to attain all that is available to us in Jesus.**

These gifts were never meant to be cheered for or admired by people on Sunday mornings to be forgotten by Sunday evening. Those who have the gifts of prophecy and teaching are not super Christians. They are no better than any other Christian. Those with either of these 2 gifts are merely Christians gifted with abilities to further equip you and I in being the Christians who God has called us to be.

You see, Sunday services aren't a talent show of who can flex their gift the hardest for human praise. This isn't a buffet where you consume and reject what you want, then leave full with nothing to share with the world. **The purpose of the Sunday gathering is to worship God together and to be equipped to serve God together.** So those who have the gifts of teaching and prophecy are just playing their role in the body of Christ.

You may have this role to play or not, but regardless... You and I are called to worship God together, to be equipped to serve God together, help other Christians in their faith, and be a witness of Jesus to the world around us. If you don't have the gift of teaching or prophecy, are you ok with being the recipient of someone else using their gift?

Let me be real specific now. **The gift of teaching is meant to help us go deeper into the Word in order to understand it and apply it. The gift of prophecy is meant to help us know something that God wants us to be aware of right now in the moment.** God wants you to understand Him and His Word. He wants you to be aware of what's going on in you and around you. God desires for you to know Him and to be faithful. The teacher and prophet are meant to help us do that.

So now that we know what these 2 gifts are and why God gives them to some, we come to our last and final question:

## 3.) How do you apply these gifts in your life if you have them?

This question is important because by misusing these gifts or by not using these gifts, we would be doing the body of Christ a disservice. This question might be one of the harder ones to answer after we understand what the gifts of prophecy and teaching are. **Sometimes our own human traditions, structures, and time management priorities get in the way of using our spiritual gifts properly.** Which is probably why we tend to serve God in our own strength and talents more than we serve God through His strengths and giftings.

So first, the gift of teaching. Since the gift of teaching is more than teaching random topics, but rather communicating the truths of God and scripture, one place to definitely use the gift of teaching is in the setting of the local church. Some great places to use this gift would be during preaching, vkidz, small group settings, or in opportunities when speaking with people about God is available.

Believe me, we need some small group leaders with the gift of teaching. One of our core values is that we are a church not “with” small groups, but “of” small groups. Maybe one issue for our lack of small groups is because we have some believers sitting on the sidelines not using their gift of teaching.

The gift of teaching can even be used at home in the form of bible study. Parents, if one of you or both of you has the gift of teaching, then maybe you should use it at home to grow your kids in their faith in and knowledge of Jesus. You don't have to lean on the pastor to be your child's only source of truth. God may be calling you to use your gift at home too.

Now that doesn't mean if you are a parent without the gift of teaching then you're off the hook. Scripture says that you are responsible for your children and should be helping them grow in their understanding of the LORD, His Word, and life. You may need to take more time to learn and understand how to do that. But what I am saying is, if you have the gift of teaching, let your family benefit from it.

Another way that the gift of teaching can be used is in the form of writing. Maybe God is calling to write a blog or a book on certain biblical topics. You never know how God could use it. Or maybe God is calling you to start a youtube channel or a podcast where you can use the gift of teaching to help the body of Christ grow and maybe to also help nonbelievers come to trust in Jesus. There have been countless Christians that I have learned from online, on youtube and through podcasts, who have helped me grow in my knowledge of God and His Word. I'm grateful for those people.

If you have the gift of teaching and you are a counselor or a school teacher or whatever, God may have given you the gift of teaching to clearly teach the truth of God and the Bible to people in the settings of your work environment. What I am saying is this: there is a place somewhere where your gift of teaching can be used by God to edify and build up the body of Christ.

One last thing about the gift of teaching before we proceed to prophecy. If you have the gift of teaching, make sure you are letting the Spirit guide you when and where you use your gift. Do not manufacture platforms just to hear your own voice. People don't need your words or your voice. They need God and His Word. Remember, this gift is not meant for your glory, but rather for God's glory. You shouldn't be trying to gain a platform or position, but rather striving to obey and glorify God.

Now for prophecy. If you have the gift of prophecy and God has given you something to share with the church, whether it's an exhortation, correction, disclosure, prediction of events, comfort, inspiration, etc., then share it as the Spirit leads. Check out [Acts 15:32](#), "**Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers.**" You sharing what God has told you to speak can encourage and strengthen others in their faith. Share it with the individual or the group that needs to hear it. And allow there to be space for believers to test what you have spoken. Testing it by scripture. We are to test all things, because you as a human are not perfect or infallible. If what you claim to prophecy goes against scripture, then it is not from God. If it lines up with scripture, then it is probably from God.

But I want to encourage you, do not be afraid to share what God has told you to share. Do not let the possible disapproval of others get in the way of what God has revealed to you because it is not meant for you to hoard to yourself. Rather it is meant for the body of Christ to hear in order for us to grow and be strengthened.

I need you to hear this whether you have the gift of prophecy or not. One thing that will be really crucial for you is to learn to discern between the Lord speaking to you versus your feelings and thoughts. How many times have we heard someone say "**God told me \_\_\_\_**" and when you heard it, you knew it wasn't the Lord, or it sounded strange in a bad way, or it didn't come to pass, or it doesn't match scripture? See we may feel really passionate or emotional about a topic, but we must be led by the Spirit, not by our emotions. God leads us by conviction, not by compulsion.

Pertaining to a Sunday service setting, check out what Paul says in [1 Corinthians 14:29](#) says, "**Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said.**" There needs to be structure to who prophecies and there needs to be others there to test it and weigh it. You aren't supposed to cause chaos or distractions in the body of Christ, but rather speak when it's time. And again, allow there to be space for others to test what is said.

For those who may not have the gift of prophecy or are a receipt of someone prophesying, the big thing to understand about the gift of prophecy is that prophecy is not the main resource by which God communicates with us. It is a way that God can talk to us, but He has given us His Word, His Spirit, wisdom, reason, and teachers. The issue we have is that we either hit two extremes. We either treat prophecy with contempt or we take prophecy beyond its intended limits. There needs to be a balance. That's why testing prophecy is extremely important.

This may not make sense at first, but listen to what Paul shows us about understanding God's will in Romans 12:2, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." I point this out to say that to understand God's will we must examine things with a renewed mind in Jesus, which includes examining prophecy. Meaning that we must read and know scripture, depend on the Holy Spirit, and pray in order to understand God's will. Prophecy is mostly meant for helping the church grow in Jesus and be made aware of current situations we are in.

But when it comes to the value of the spiritual gifts (like prophecy), check out what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14:1, "Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy." All the gifts of Spirit are something we should desire and ask God for... even prophecy. Not because it is the best gift, but because we should desire to be used by God to help others even if that means sharing what God wants us to say. We shouldn't desire the gift of prophecy for power or prestige. Our desire should be to love others. Not to brag or flex on people. Because truthfully, sometimes we might be drowning out what the Holy Spirit is saying because of our sin, so we may need someone to be used by God to directly talk to us in order to wake us up and repent.

So regardless of whether it is the gift of prophecy or teaching, we are called to use our spiritual gifts for the purpose of glorifying God and helping others (not for the purpose of selfish gains). Again look at Acts 15:32, "Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers." We should want to encourage and strengthen other believers in the faith. If you don't have the gift of teaching or prophecy, then we should be praying for those with those gifts. We also should remember that we still have a role to play in the body of Christ, and our role is just as important.

#### Invitation:

So as the worship team comes back up. Let's take some time to press into the Lord in prayer:

- Take time to ask God, "Do I have the gift of teaching or the gift of prophecy?" He may reveal it right now or over the course of the next couple weeks.
  - We can discern God's calling when three factors come together for us (i'd suggest you write these down):
    - 1.) **Affinity** (What human needs do I lean toward? What interests me? What are my passions?)
    - 2.) **Ability** (What am I good at? What do people say I am effective in?)
    - 3.) **Opportunity** (What doors for service are open? What needs to be done?)
  - When all three factors come together, you will better see how God has equipped and called you to do something (or at least to move you in a certain direction).
- But let's take the time to ask God to reveal this to us. If you don't have those 2 gifts, you still have some form of spiritual gifting and you matter to the church just the same.

- Maybe you don't have to ask God if you have the gift of teaching or prophecy because you already know God has given you those gifts. If that is you, then I want you to ask God another question, "How do I use the gift of teaching or the gift of prophecy for Your glory God and for Your church?" You may be surprised by the answer.
  - I'd also suggest that you talk to your location pastor after service if you know you have the gift of teaching or prophecy. In order to start the conversation of how you can use your spiritual gift of teaching or prophecy here with Vertical Church and in the community to grow the church as a whole.
  - Remember a gift misused or not used does God's church a disservice.
- Maybe you are in this room, and you haven't truly surrendered your life to Jesus... Today is the day for you to take your next step and trust in Jesus for salvation and reconciliation with God.
- Pray out