



the spiritual gifts

Small Group Guide: The Spiritual Gifts, Week 13

Key Takeaways:

1. **Prophecy reveals what God wants to disclose** - It's not about our wisdom but God's revelation.
2. **New Testament prophets must exercise great care** - Since we express revelation in our own words, we can inadvertently add to or subtract from God's message.
3. **Prophecy isn't always comfortable** - True edification builds substance through learning, which can be challenging.
4. **Don't dismiss prophecy based on initial feelings** - Like in Pastor Allen's "Paul prophecy," fulfillment may come decades later.
5. **Prophecy can include multiple gifts** - Word of knowledge, word of wisdom, and discernment of spirits can operate within prophecy.

Discussion Questions:

1. What was your understanding of prophecy before this sermon? How has it changed?
2. Why is it significant that Old Testament prophecy was "verbatim" (God's exact words) while New Testament prophecy is "private interpretation"?
3. Pastor Allen shared the story of Agabus prophesying about Paul. How does this example help you understand the difference between revelation and interpretation?
4. Have you ever received a prophecy? What was your first instinct when you heard it? Did you try to interpret what God was saying?
5. Pastor Allen shared his painful experience with his nephew Joshua. How does this story challenge our assumptions that prophecy always means what we think it means?
6. Discuss the statement: "If a prophecy doesn't make us feel good, then it's not of God." Why is this belief problematic?
7. The sermon explains that "edification" (oikadome) means "building substance" through learning, not just emotional encouragement. Can you share a time when God built substance in your life through something that was initially uncomfortable or painful?
8. What safeguards should be in place when someone gives a prophecy in a church setting? How can we test prophecy while remaining open to God's voice?
9. Pastor Allen mentioned he was called a "doubting Thomas" in a prophecy. How should we respond when we receive correction through prophecy?

Practical Application:

1. If you've received prophecies in the past, review them prayerfully. Ask God for wisdom about their meaning and timing.
2. Identify one person in your group who can pray with you about understanding God's voice more clearly.
3. Before speaking a prophetic word, pause and ask: "Am I adding my own interpretation to what God showed me?"
4. Create a "prophecy shelf" (literally or figuratively) where you place prophecies you don't fully understand, trusting God's timing for revelation.
5. Develop the discipline of weighing prophecy carefully (1 Thessalonians 5:20-21) without quenching the Spirit.
6. Journal about times when God taught you something difficult that built substance in your life.

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we seek Your wisdom to discern Your voice clearly, and we humbly ask for the grace to accept Your guidance and correction through prophecy. Bless those in our group with prophetic gifts, that they may speak Your truth with love and clarity. Thank You for revealing Your plans and purposes to us. We are grateful for Your presence and the comfort Your words provide. In Jesus' name, Amen.

5-Day Devotional

Day 1: The Foundation of Divine Revelation

Reading: 2 Peter 1:19-21; Numbers 24:1-4

Devotional: God's Word is not a collection of human ideas dressed in religious language. When Scripture speaks, it carries the very breath of God. The Old Testament prophets

didn't simply share their best thoughts about God—they entered into His presence and spoke His words verbatim. This truth should revolutionize how you approach your Bible. Every promise, every command, every story comes directly from the heart of God. Today, as you read Scripture, remember you're not reading ancient literature; you're hearing God speak. Ask Him to open your spiritual ears to hear what He's saying specifically to you. The same God who spoke through prophets still speaks today through His unchanging Word.

Day 2: Learning to Discern God's Voice

Reading: Acts 21:7-14; 1 Corinthians 14:29-33

Devotional: Discernment is a critical spiritual skill. Even sincere believers can misinterpret what God reveals. Agabus received genuine revelation but expressed it imperfectly through his own understanding. This teaches us humility—we see through a glass darkly. When someone shares a prophetic word with you, or when you sense God speaking, test it carefully against Scripture. Don't dismiss correction that makes you uncomfortable, but don't blindly accept every spiritual-sounding message either. God's true voice will align with His written Word, build genuine substance in your life, and ultimately point you toward Christ. Pray for wisdom to distinguish between God's pure revelation and human interpretation. Submit everything to the lordship of Jesus and the counsel of mature believers.

Day 3: Building Substance Through Learning

Reading: Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 14:1-5

Devotional: Spiritual growth isn't about feeling good—it's about building substance. God's primary goal isn't your comfort but your maturity. Like a loving parent who corrects their child, God sometimes speaks words that challenge, convict, or redirect us. When Joshua received a "new heart," the prophecy was true but painful in its fulfillment. God was building substance through suffering. The prophetic gifts exist to construct something solid in your life, not just to tickle your emotions. Today, ask God to reveal areas where you need substance rather than just encouragement. Are you willing to receive hard truth that produces growth? Embrace the learning process, even when it's uncomfortable. Maturity comes through building, and building requires both blueprint and labor.

Day 4: The Purpose Behind God's Revelation

Reading: 1 Corinthians 14:3, 24-25; Acts 11:27-30

Devotional: God never speaks without purpose. Every revelation serves to edify, exhort, or comfort His people. When Agabus prophesied about the coming famine, it wasn't mere fortune-telling—it was practical revelation that allowed the church to prepare and help others. God's voice in your life always has intention. He reveals to build you up structurally, to call you forward into His purposes, or to console you in difficulty. Reflect on times when God has spoken to you. What was His purpose? Perhaps He was preparing you for something ahead, calling you to action, or comforting you in pain. Today, listen for His

voice with expectation. He's not silent, but purposeful. Position yourself to hear and respond to whatever He wants to accomplish in and through you.

Day 5: Walking Humbly With Revelation

Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22; James 1:19-25

Devotional: The tension of New Testament prophecy requires humility. Unlike Old Testament prophets who spoke God's exact words in a trance, we now see partially and express revelation through our limited understanding. This means we must hold our interpretations loosely while holding God's truth firmly. When you sense God speaking, express what you've received carefully, acknowledging your humanity. When others prophesy to you, receive it graciously but test it thoroughly. Put prophecies "on the shelf" and watch how God unfolds their meaning over time. Some revelations make sense immediately; others take years to understand. Don't despise prophecy, but don't treat every spiritual impression as infallible either. Walk the humble path of listening attentively, speaking carefully, and trusting God to clarify His purposes in His perfect timing.