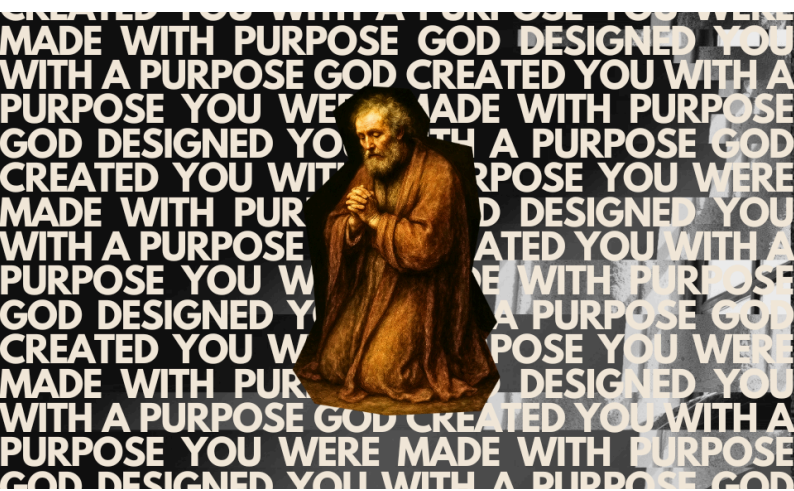




the spiritual gifts

Small Group Guide: **The Spiritual Gifts, Week 10**

Key Takeaways:

1. There's a significant difference between Old Testament and New Testament prophets and prophecy.
2. Old Testament prophets had two main characteristics: a) They were the Lord's messenger (sent by God) b) They spoke the Lord's message (word-for-word from God)
3. Old Testament prophets spoke in first person as if they were God.
4. True Old Testament prophets were infallible - if they weren't, they were considered false prophets.
5. Old Testament prophets went into an "open-eyed trance" when prophesying.

Discussion Questions:

1. Before this sermon, what was your understanding of Old Testament prophecy? How has this information changed or expanded your perspective?

2. Pastor Allen's sermon mentions that Old Testament prophets spoke "word for word what God said." How does this impact your view of the Old Testament scriptures?
3. Discuss the story of Balaam and Balak. What does this narrative teach us about the nature of true prophecy in the Old Testament?
4. How does understanding the infallible nature of Old Testament prophecy help explain some of the more challenging stories in the Old Testament?
5. Pastor Allen discusses how Elijah got "into trouble" with his actions. How does this example demonstrate the potential dangers of misusing prophetic authority?
6. How does Jesus' response to James and John in Luke 9:54-56 provide a New Testament perspective on Old Testament prophetic actions?
7. In what ways does understanding Old Testament prophecy enhance our appreciation for the fulfillment of prophecies in Jesus?

Practical Application:

1. This week, read through one of the Old Testament prophetic books (e.g., Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) with this new understanding. Journal your insights and observations.
2. Research and list some Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled in Jesus' first coming. Reflect on how this strengthens your faith.
3. Discuss with a friend or family member the difference between Old Testament and New Testament prophecy. Share what you've learned from this sermon.

4. Reflect on how God communicates with us today compared to the Old Testament times. How can you be more attentive to God's voice in your life?
5. Pray for discernment in distinguishing between true and false prophecy in our modern context.

Closing Prayer:

Dear God, we thank You for bringing us together today and for the insights we have shared. As we leave, may Your wisdom guide our actions, and may Your peace fill our hearts. Help us to apply what we have learned to grow closer to You and to each other. Keep us safe until we meet again. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

5-Day Devotional

Day 1: The Voice of God's Messengers

Reading: Jeremiah 1:4-10, Exodus 4:10-12

Devotional: God has always spoken through His chosen messengers. In the Old Testament, prophets were called to be the voice of God, speaking His exact words to the people. Today, reflect on how God still speaks to us through His Word and His Spirit. Consider the awesome responsibility of being God's messenger in your own sphere of influence. How can you ensure that your words and actions accurately reflect God's heart? Pray for discernment to recognize God's voice in your life and the courage to share His message with others.

Day 2: The Infallibility of God's Word

Reading: Isaiah 55:10-11, 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Devotional: The transcription emphasizes the infallibility of true prophets in the Old Testament. While we don't have prophets speaking new revelations today, we have the completed, infallible Word of God. Reflect on the power and reliability of Scripture. How does knowing that God's Word never fails impact your faith? Challenge yourself to approach Bible reading with renewed reverence, trusting that every word is God-breathed and useful for your spiritual growth. Ask God to increase your hunger for His Word and to transform you through its truth.

Day 3: God's Heart for Salvation

Reading: Luke 19:1-10, 2 Peter 3:9

Devotional: Jesus rebuked His disciples for wanting to call down fire like Elijah did, reminding them that He came to save, not destroy. This reveals God's heart for redemption rather than judgment. Meditate on God's desire for all to come to repentance. How does this shape your view of those who don't yet know Christ? Pray for a compassionate heart that reflects God's love for the lost. Consider how you can be an instrument of God's saving grace in someone's life today.

Day 4: Discerning God's Will

Reading: Romans 12:1-2, James 1:5-8

Devotional: The story of Elijah calling down fire highlights the importance of discerning God's will rather than acting presumptuously. In our zeal to serve God, we too can sometimes misinterpret His will. Reflect on times when you might have acted in God's name without truly seeking His heart. How can you grow in discernment? Commit to seeking God's wisdom through prayer, Scripture, and godly counsel before making important decisions. Ask the Holy Spirit to align your desires with God's perfect will.

Day 5: The Living Word

Reading: John 1:1-14, Hebrews 4:12-13

Devotional: In the Old Testament, prophets were considered the living Word of God. Now, we have Jesus, the Word made flesh, and the completed Scriptures. Contemplate the incredible gift of having God's Word accessible to us. How can you engage with Scripture in a way that allows it to become alive and active in your life? Reflect on how Jesus, as the living Word, reveals God's character and plan for humanity. Pray for a deeper connection with Christ through His Word, allowing it to penetrate your heart and transform your life.