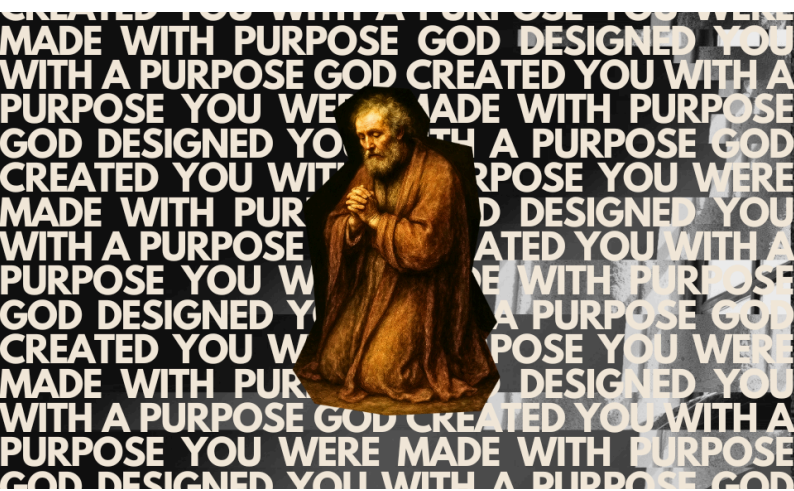




the spiritual gifts

Small Group Guide: The Spiritual Gifts, Week 11

Key Takeaways:

1. The Holy Spirit's role changed between the Old and New Testaments - from coming UPON to dwelling WITHIN believers.
2. Old Testament prophets were infallible when prophesying because God controlled them completely and spoke His exact words.
3. New Testament prophets can make mistakes because they express God's revelation in their own words while maintaining control.
4. All prophecy today must be judged against Scripture and evaluated part by part.
5. The Bible is complete - no modern prophecy should be added to Scripture or treated as equal to it.
6. We can welcome prophetic gifts while maintaining discernment and biblical standards.

Discussion Questions:

1. What surprised you most about the differences between Old and New Testament prophecy?
2. Why do you think God changed how prophecy operates between the two dispensations?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 14:29. What does it mean to "judge" prophecy? Why is this instruction given for New Testament prophecy but not for Old Testament prophecy?
4. Discuss the example of Agabus in Acts 21. What did he get right? What did he get wrong? Why wasn't he punished for his mistakes like an Old Testament prophet would have been?
5. In Pastor Allen's sermon, he states: "New Testament prophecy is revelation from God expressed in human words." What are the implications of this definition? How does this protect the authority of Scripture?

Practical Application:

1. What criteria should we use to judge modern prophetic words? Create a list as a group. (Hint: Does it align with Scripture? Does it produce good fruit? Does it edify the church?)
2. Someone shares a "prophetic word" with you personally. What steps should you take before accepting or acting on it?
3. Read 1 John 4:1-6 and Acts 17:11. How can you develop better discernment when hearing teaching or prophetic words?
4. Think of a time you felt God was leading you in a direction. How did you confirm it was truly from God?

What role did Scripture, wise counsel, and circumstances play?

5. Commit to fact-checking one sermon or teaching this week against Scripture. Practice the discipline of testing everything against God's Word.

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we come to You seeking Your guidance and wisdom. Grant us discernment as we evaluate prophetic words, clearly distinguishing truth from error, and protect us from false teachings and any form of manipulation. Help us balance welcoming the gifts of Your Spirit with holding firmly to biblical standards, keeping our hearts open to Your Spirit while our minds remain anchored in Your Word. Ignite in us a deep hunger for Your Word and to judge all things by the truth You've revealed. Guide us, Lord, in wisdom and truth, and let us walk faithfully in Your ways. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

5-Day Devotional

Day 1: The Infallibility of God's Word

Reading: Deuteronomy 18:15-22

Devotional: In the Old Testament, God established an unmistakable standard for truth. When the Holy Spirit came upon a prophet, that person entered an open-eyed trance and could only speak what God placed in their mouth. This wasn't about human eloquence or interpretation it was God's direct communication to His people. Consider the weight of this reality: God cared so deeply about the purity of His message that He removed all human error from the equation. The prophet became a vessel, wholly surrendered to divine control. This reveals something profound about God's character. He is a God of truth who ensures His people can trust His word completely. Today, we have the completed Scripture, God's infallible Word. Unlike the subjective voices clamoring for our attention, the Bible stands as our unchanging foundation. When confusion surrounds

you, when competing voices claim divine authority, return to this anchor: God's written Word is perfect, complete, and trustworthy.

Day 2: The Spirit Within Us

Reading: John 14:15-27; Romans 8:9-11

Devotional: The shift from Old Testament to New Testament represents one of the most profound changes in human history. In the Old Covenant, the Holy Spirit came upon people temporarily for specific purposes. But through Christ's death and resurrection, everything changed. Now, the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead dwells permanently within every believer. This is not a minor theological detail—it's the foundation of your identity as a Christian. You are not spiritually dead, waiting for occasional divine visitation. You are spiritually alive, permanently indwelt by God Himself. The Holy Spirit doesn't need to "come upon you" because He already lives in you. This means you have constant access to God's presence, wisdom, and power. You don't need to work yourself into a spiritual frenzy or wait for a special moment. The God of the universe has made His home in you. Every moment of every day, you carry His presence.

Day 3: Judging Prophecy with Wisdom

Reading: 1 Corinthians 14:26-33; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

Devotional: New Testament prophecy operates differently than Old Testament prophecy, and understanding this distinction protects us from deception. When someone prophesies today, they're expressing revelation from God in human words, which means it must be carefully evaluated against Scripture. Paul commands us to "let the others judge." This isn't skepticism; it's spiritual maturity. Like a diamond dealer examining stones, we must carefully separate truth from error, testing each part of a prophetic word against God's written Word. Some parts may be accurate while others reflect human interpretation or error. This doesn't diminish the gift of prophecy; it protects it. God has given us His complete, infallible Word in Scripture. Any contemporary prophecy must align with and submit to the Bible. When someone says, "God told me," your response should be, "Let's see if it matches what God has already said in His Word."

Day 4: The Completed Word of God

Reading: 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Revelation 22:18-19

Devotional: The Bible is complete. We don't need additional books, new revelations that supersede Scripture, or modern prophets who speak with biblical authority. God has given us everything we need for life and godliness through His written Word. This truth liberates us from the anxiety of chasing after the latest "word from God" or feeling spiritually inferior because we haven't received dramatic revelations. The same Holy Spirit who inspired Scripture now illuminates it for you as you read. Every time you open your Bible, you encounter God's perfect, preserved, authoritative Word. The apostle Paul knew his mission included completing the New Testament. John added the final words. And when Revelation concluded, God's written revelation to humanity was finished. This doesn't mean God stops speaking; He speaks powerfully through His Word, through His

Spirit within us, and through circumstances. But it does mean we have an unchanging standard by which to measure everything else.

Day 5: Living Under Grace

Reading: Acts 21:1-14; Ephesians 2:1-10

Devotional: The story of Agabus and Paul reveals something beautiful about the dispensation of grace. Agabus prophesied with some inaccuracy; he saw the vision correctly but expressed it with human error. Under the Old Covenant, this would have resulted in death. Under the New Covenant, it resulted in grace. This doesn't excuse carelessness with spiritual gifts, but it does reveal God's heart. We live in the era of grace, where the Holy Spirit works through imperfect people to accomplish perfect purposes. God uses flawed vessels like Agabus, like Paul, like you, while maintaining the perfection of His written Word. You don't have to be perfect to be used by God. You don't have to get everything right to participate in His kingdom work. The same Spirit who raised Christ from the dead lives in you, not because you've achieved spiritual perfection, but because of grace. This should fill you with both humility and confidence, humility because you recognize your limitations, confidence because you trust His power working through you.