

# Spiritual Gifts

## (3 As of Spiritual Gifts)



What are the supernatural gifts that the Holy Spirit gives believers?

### Scripture

Jesus did many supernatural things during his time on earth, and taught that his followers would also do such things as they were empowered by the Holy Spirit. (Mark 16:17-19, John 14:12 and Acts 1:8)

The Apostle Paul mentions many gifts that God's Spirit gives to followers of Jesus to enable them to act supernaturally (see 1 Corinthians 12:4-11). We'll focus on the one gift that Paul said he wanted follows of Jesus to have the most - the gift of prophesy.

Read the passage below and note what stands out to you.

1 Corinthians 14:1-6 (Paul teaches about the gift of prophesy)

What do you learn from this about what prophesy is?

How is this similar or different to what you understood prophesy to be?

Is this a gift you would like to have? Why?

### Story

A young woman had started coming along to some small group evenings because she had seen a big change in the life of her friend, but she was struggling to get her head around whether God was real. One particular evening, five group members were stood outside at the end of the group praying together and asked this woman if they could pray for her. Immediately one of the group received the words of a prophetic message 'Alice in Wonderland', but thought this was a bit odd and sat on it for a few minutes while others prayed for her. It wouldn't go away and so, expecting to look like a fool, they said to this woman, 'Do the words Alice in Wonderland mean anything to you'. She went pale and started to tremble. Speechless for several minutes with shock and tears she eventually managed to say 'How did you know? God IS real isn't he?' She later explained that all evening during the group she had been seeing images in her head of the Cheshire cat and the caterpillar and feeling and thinking that she was like 'Alice in wonderland'. She had been asking God to show her He was real, she had told no one. That night she was filled with God's Spirit and the next day she met with someone from the small group and heard the gospel afresh and gave her life to the Lord, she was baptised soon after.

What stories do you have about the gift of prophesy?

## Shape

How we receive and use spiritual gifts can be helpfully summarised using the following **3 As of Spiritual Gifts**.

In Mark 11:24 Jesus said, 'whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.' Jesus is teaching us how to receive the things from God that we know he wants to give us, including spiritual gifts.

**Ask** – 'Whatever you ask for in prayer'. Similar to asking your parents what you would like for your birthday, we are to ask God specifically for the spiritual gifts that we would like. Jesus teaches that we are to ask, not simply wait for him to drop them into our laps.

**Accept** – 'believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.' We receive gifts from God by taking a step of faith and choosing to

believe that he has given us what we have asked for. We may or may not feel something happen to us as we receive a spiritual gift. However, we are not to base our confidence that we have received a gift on our feelings, but are to have confidence in what God has said – that he desires us to have spiritual gifts and gives them to us as when we ask.

**Act** – In confidence that you have received the gift that you have asked for, step out and use the gift. If you asked for the gift of tongues, take a step of faith and begin to speak your new language. If you asked for the gift of prophesy, take action and ask God for an encouraging message for someone and note what comes to mind. Taking steps of faith like this often feel a bit risky, but as we take them, we act supernaturally, people are blessed and we grow in confidence.



## So What?

As a whole Missional Community spend some time asking God to give each person the gift of prophesy.

Believing that God has answered, accept this gift in faith and thank God for giving it just like he said he would.

Spend some time using this new gift. Encourage each person to ask the Holy Spirit to bring someone to mind that he would like to give a strengthening, encouraging or comforting message to. Encourage people to go around the room sharing whatever Bible verse, image or other kind of message that God has brought to mind for this person and then pray for them.

Note on discernment

When you are first listening to God for messages, you may initially struggle to distinguish between what is from God and what is your own imagination. This is very common so don't worry. The gift of discernment is another spiritual gift that you can ask God for (1 Corinthians 12:10). You may also find these tips helpful as you grow in discernment:

- A message from God never goes against Scripture so check the message against the Bible.
- Prophecy encourages, strengthens and comforts people (1 Corinthians 14:3). Checking that the message does at least one of these things.
- It is wise to stay clear of sensitive topics as you start learning to give prophetic words. E.g. romance, marriage, pregnancy/birth, leaving jobs, judgement of sin, etc.
- Share messages with others in a gentle and open way rather than a strong or overbearing way. I.e., saying: 'I sense the Lord saying/showing/doing this...' rather than: 'Thus says the Lord...'

## **Grow Further**

### **Memory Verse:**

1 Corinthians 14:1

'Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy.'

### **Other Bible passages:**

- Acts 2
- Romans 12:6-8
- 1 Corinthians 12, 13 and 14
- Ephesians 4:11-16
- 2 Timothy 1:6-7
- 1 Peter 4:10-11

### **Other resources:**

*Unlocking Spiritual Discernment* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KcKnoJwIxZg>