

# HOW SPIRITUAL GIFTS WORK

## 1 CORINTHIANS 12. 14

### **Introduction**

My aim is to help us understand how spiritual gifts work in our lives and in the church.

I'm going to use prophecy as an example, because there's more written about this gift than other gifts (1 Cor 12-14), and because we are to earnestly and specially desire this gift (1 Cor 14:1).

### **What is prophecy?**

1 Corinthians 14:29-31

Wayne Grudem: prophecy involves "telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind" (Systematic Theology, p.1049).

We must never focus more on prophecy than on Scripture. Scripture is in authority over prophecy. But because Scripture calls us to pursue prophecy, we must not neglect prophecy.

### **How does prophecy function in our lives and the church?**

**earnestly Desire** — we are all called to earnestly desire the gift of prophecy (1 Cor 14:1).

Since we are all to earnestly desire prophecy, that means any of us could potentially receive this gift at any time. Are we supposed to try and discover our gifts? Or are we simply to desire all the gifts and see which gifts God gives?

**Receive** — there will be times when we supernaturally and spontaneously receive a prophecy from the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 14:30).

The way we know we have the gift of prophecy is not because of certain personality traits, it's because God has just given us a gift of prophecy. This makes me doubt the benefit of using spiritual gifts questionnaires.

**Recognize** — recognize those who regularly receive helpful prophecies — they are prophets (1 Cor 14:29).

Being a prophet doesn't mean you can prophesy at will; it depends on God giving the gift every time.

Being a prophet doesn't mean you stop doing other things; it just means that God regularly gives you prophecy.

The fact that some are prophets doesn't mean the rest of us stop prophesying; we are all still called to earnestly desire to prophesy.



## **HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING**

*(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)*

What was the Holy Spirit saying to you Sunday through this passage?

What questions, ideas, objections, encouragements did you come away with?

What's your background with spiritual gifts? No background? An overly supernatural background? A non-supernatural background? A biblically-balanced background? How has this affected you?

How do you feel about earnestly desiring prophecy — at home group, on Sundays, on the way to meet someone at Starbucks? Fearful? Skeptical? Excited? Inadequate? What would Paul say about each of these?

What's the connection between "pursue love" and "earnestly desire spiritual gifts" (I Cor 14:1). If you really love others, can you neglect spiritual gifts?

How can you as a home group pursue spiritual gifts more effectively?

What's your take-away from this message? What are you going to do differently? When? How?

Share prayer requests that come up in the discussion, jot them down below, and pray for each other.

