

# **Practical Application of Spiritual Gifts in the life of the Christian and their church**

Week 1 Foundation

Week 2 Prophecy

Week 3 Tongues and Interpretation, Healings, Miracles, distinguishing spirits

Week 4 Recap, Application, Q&A

## **Week 1 Foundation**

Good Morning and welcome! My name is Jay Johnson and I'll be your guide for the next 4 weeks as we discuss the Holy Spirit, Spiritual Gifts and their practical application in the life of every believer.

The next 4 weeks our class topics will be

**Foundation**

**Prophecy**

**Tongues, Interpretation, Gifts of Healings, Miracles**

**Application, Q&A**

I think this verse describes my goal for our time together.

*"For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you- that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine." -Romans 1:11-12*

Let me open with prayer....

When you attend a class or teach a class, one of the worst experiences is to leave with a misunderstanding or an unanswered question. Our subject matter can lead to much of both, so I want to give plenty of opportunity for question and strive for clarity. During each class, I'll pause and solicit questions, feel free to ask away! Also, here are some notecards

for questions you want to ask anonymously, or perhaps you ask a question that I'm going to cover in a later class. In that case, I'll write the question down so we don't forget. You can also text me questions as they pop into your head during the week. 602-561-4350. Feel free to ask tough questions, I'm sending those to Rich anyway.

## **Foundation**

At Sovereign Grace Church in Gilbert, we believe that Holy Spirit is a person, part of the trinity, and active in the life of every Christian. We believe that spiritual gifts are for every believer, given at the time of conversion, and are available for the church today. WOW! I've said a lot. If you're a member then that's not new news to you. Our class is designed to be a practical application of the spiritual gifts in the life of the believer, and while there isn't a lot time to go into detail of this extremely important doctrine, I don't want to gloss over these points. So, while I'm giving a brief summary of Rich's teaching 'The Forum: The Holy Spirit' this week, we also have copies of this for you to take with you for a more detailed explanation of the doctrinal position of Sovereign Grace church.

Regardless of your background, my goal is to lay a solid foundation so we can accurately and faithfully apply the gifts of the Holy Spirit into the life of our church. This foundation is the lens through which we will filter all discussion, experience and pursuit of spiritual gifts. However, for questions like 'Are

Spiritual Gifts active today?', I recognize it's not enough to just quote a few verses and move on. That's why we've provided the complete transcript of Rich's recent teaching. The Forum was also recorded and is available on the church website.

So, let's jump right in, Foundation, here we go!

Spiritual Gifts are given to every believer Acts 21:9, 1 Cor 11:5, 1 Cor 14:1, 1Cor 14:5

The Holy Spirit is alive and the source of ALL growth in the life of a Christian. John 14:26

"Therefore, the continual immediate inspiration or operation of the Holy Spirit, is the one only possible ground of our continually loving God". – William Law

For upbuilding, edification and encouragement 1 Cor 14:3, 1 Cor 14:17

For Equipping, and building up of the church 1 Cor 14:12

Spiritual Gifts are used to serve one another. 1 Peter 4:10-11

Spiritual Gifts are for today. 1 Cor 13:8-12

A Spiritual Gift is an expression of faith that aims to strengthen faith- John Piper

Ability is not a spiritual gift, unless by using that ability you receive grace and disperse grace. For example, people can be great teachers and not have the gift of teaching. Unless their

teaching is causing them to rely on the Holy Spirit and their teaching goes beyond the exchange of information to their audience.

A Spiritual Gift is relying on God and encouraging others to rely on God. Romans 1:11-12

Spiritual gifts encourage the body, testify to Christ's glory. John 15:26 *"But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me."*

A spiritual gift will strengthen faith, yours and theirs. Romans 1:11-12

Proper use of a spiritual gift draws attention to and glorifies God, not you. God is closer than we imagine, more loving than our experience and more merciful than we deserve. John 15:26

Spiritual gifts are given by a sovereign infallible God (1 Cor 7:7), but used by limited, wretched sinners. Probably don't need any scripture references for this one!! 1 Tim 1:15

Spiritual gifts create healthy dependence on one another in the church body. Romans 12:4-5

Gifts differ, according to grace. Romans 12:6-8

We are to be faithful, not successful. 1 Cor 4:2. The Apostle Paul was granted the gift of healing 4 times but failed to heal 4 times.

Spiritual Gifts are given by God, they cannot be earned, summoned or coerced. 1 Cor 12:4-11

We must not equate spiritual maturity with spiritual gifting. The church in Corinth was in such a place. Spiritual gifts run amok, with not enough spiritual maturity.

Spiritual gifts are not a result of anyone's specialness, rather the gifts are tools that God uses to shower His grace, mercy and love upon His people. In 1 Corinthians, near the end of a spiritual beat down, Paul pens this phrase that should put our pride in check, 1 Cor 1:26 *"For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth."* And so, it is with the church, with our church today, everything is from God, salvation, blessings, gifts,

We are commanded to pursue spiritual gifts.

1 Cor 14:1 *"Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy."*

We are commanded to love one another John 13:4 *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."*

To contribute to the needs of others Romans 12:12-13 *"Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer."*

*Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.*

and a willingness to be obedient to God.

We are called to test the spirits. 1 John 4:1

God's will is for his people to be empowered by the Holy Spirit for worship, witness and works.

Don't value gifts above love, service, righteousness 1 Cor 13

Truth has priority over everything, charisma, excitement, awe.

*John 4:23-24 "But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."*

Don't chase gifts, chase Christ. *"But seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you."* Matthew 6:33

### **What are Spiritual Gifts used for?**

Magnify the person and finished work of Jesus. John 15:26

Edify, to bless others 1 Cor 14:26, 1 Cor 12:7

Equips for service Acts 4:8, 4:31, 6:10, 1 Cor 12 and 14

Buildup, encourage 1Cor 14:12

Transform 2 Cor 3:18, 2 Thess 2:13, Romans 8:13, Phil 1:19

Assurance of our future hope 2 Cor 1:22

Insight, revelation, small 'r' 1 Cor 14:6, 1 Cor 14:26, Eph 1:17

Promote unity in the church 1 Cor 12:12-31

Prayer Romans 8:26-27

Preaching

It is not necessary to label spiritual gifts, *"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit"* 1 Cor 12:4 to use them rightly and benefit from them.

The Bible identifies some, but not all spiritual gifts.

Distinguishing spirits, tongues and interpretation, service, teaching, (exhortation, contributing, mercy-these commands are given to all Christians), wisdom, knowledge, helping, working of miracles, administration, prayer, prophecy, faith, gifts of healings, leadership, evangelism, discernment Romans 12:6-8, 1 Cor 12:27-30, 1 Cor 12:7-10

Disclosure of sin 1 Cor 14:25

Revealing God's depth 1 Cor 2:10

Utterance of wisdom, Utterance of knowledge 1 Cor 12:7-10

Proper use of a spiritual gift draws attention to and glorifies God, not you. God is closer than we imagine, more loving than our experience and more merciful than we deserve. John 15:26

Spiritual Gifts are to be used so that 3 things happen

1) Personal Fellowship with Jesus increases

2) Personal Transformation

3) Assurance is intensified

### **When do Gifts Arrive 1 Cor 14:1**

While the Holy Spirit is given to us at the moment of conversion, spiritual gifts are given by God, for His glory and in His timing. However, based upon what we know about God, here are some thoughts. Spiritual Gifts often become evident

When we seek Christ

When we seek to serve

When we seek to encourage, love others

When we have an obedient posture, humble attitude

When we are eager to 'hear' God's voice and obey, like Peter in the boat, he thought he saw Christ, asked "is it you, bid me come..." but he had to get out of the boat.

Here's how Tim Keller, explains how spiritual gifts are discovered and nurtured.

The church stirs up spiritual gifts through teaching and training

Individuals aspire, pursue, listen, practice spiritual gifts. We desire, we look for opportunity, we must be available

The church body confirms or tests, then encourages or corrects.

Not performance based. A sovereign God chooses who, when and how.

## **How are gifts used?**

Always in harmony with God's character, for example

With love 1 Cor 13:1-8

With Wisdom 1 Cor 13:11

Surrendering our rights 1 Cor 9:19-20

Awareness of our weakness

With humility 1 Cor 13:12

1 Thess 5:16-21 *"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast to what is good."*

With much prayer

With testing or discernment (internal testing) Does this need to be said or done? Does it need to be said or done now? Am I the one to say, or do it?

With joy, not excitability Luke 10:17

## **Why do we not use gifts or pursue them?**

Bad experiences 1 Thess 5:20

Fear of man

Pride

Lack of knowledge

Laziness

Sin

Lack of faith

Paul's charge to the Corinthians is not to stop using gifts, but to rightly use gifts. You can't rightly use a gift that you never practice

In week 4, we will dive deeper into the practice of spiritual gifts, but before we discuss practice, we must understand and desire spiritual gifts. The bible doesn't call us to practice, but we can find ourselves like Timothy, as he was encouraged by Paul in 1 Tim 1:6

*"For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.*

As we leave today, here are a few questions to pray and meditate upon this week.

### **Questions to consider**

When were you last surprised by God? His power, His love, His mercy?

Take a moment to reflect on a time that God moved powerfully in your life. Do you see a spiritual gift in operation?

Are you concerned or scared by the gifts of the Spirit?

Have you ever had a burden to pray for someone, that seemingly came from 'out of the blue'?

How has the Holy Spirit empowered you in the past?

Do you think God has called you to do something that you don't have the talent/strength to do?

Have you prayed for spiritual gifts?

Do you have a spiritual gift?

Are you eager and willing to gather together with believers, and see God save people? Relationships reconciled? People are healed? Encouraged? Strengthened?

This week, meditate and pray on 1 Cor 14:1 *"Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy."*

Thanks for coming today, next week we'll spend the entire time talking about Prophecy, what it is, what it isn't, and why we should pursue this gift.

# **Practical Application of Spiritual Gifts in the life of the Christian and their church**

## **Week 2 Prophecy**

As we discussed last week, the topic of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts is deep, much too deep for my simple mind to comprehend. Today, as we talk about the gift of prophecy, we'll precede as if we were studying a diamond, reflecting on the beauty, complexity and perfection of each cut as we turn the jewel in our hand. I'll attempt to lay a firm foundation that we can use as we make ourselves available and pursue this gift for the benefit of our church.

It is with much thanks to Jon Payne, and Rich Richardson that I present the material this week. Both men have been instrumental in my growth as a Christian, with their wisdom, teaching, encouragement and friendship. In addition, faithful friends like Bob Newsome, Wayne Woodmansee, were instrumental, especially in the area of prophecy.

Jon Payne story, first note, first word, get out of your seat and walk, let God do the rest...not cool.

Rich- Philadelphia trip

## Foundation

Last week, we laid the foundation through which all spiritual gifts should function. This week, let's pull out those foundations that are more specific to the gift of prophecy.

Used for encouragement 1 Cor 14:30-31

Upbuilding 1 Cor 14:1-5

Consolation, Comfort Acts 9:31, 2 Cor 1:4

Discernment, disclosure of sin 1 Cor 14:24-25, Acts 5:1-4 Peter confronts Ananias and Sapphira over their sin, which the Holy Spirit revealed to him

We should expect prophecies, 1 Cor 14:26

Prophecies should be in order 1 Cor 14:30-31. 'does this need to be said?, am I the one to say it? Does it need to be said now?

Prophecy is NOT predicting the future, nor are they directional. For example, "God told me you're supposed to move to Kansas City"

Prophecy can be confirming a work that the Holy Spirit is doing in another person. "You came to mind today, are you thinking about moving?" We'll talk about what to do next in just a few minutes.

The bible calls prophecy a revelation, small r, or knowledge that God chooses to reveal 1 Cor 14:6 *"Now, brothers, if I come to*

*you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching?"*

1 Cor 14:30 *"If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent."*

Rev Dr. Graham Houston, "Prophecy is a gift for today."

At Sovereign Grace in Gilbert, we use a separate microphone, the prophecy mic, to allow for this gift to operate in our corporate worship meetings. As we gather together to worship, fellowship and renew our minds through the preached word, we also want to allow for the gifts to operate to build up, encourage or console. For prophecies, someone comes to the person in charge of the mic, tells them what they feel God has given them, that person discerns if the prophecy is to go forward or not. If someone has a tongue or interpretation, we would have them wait with us, while we pray for the other half to arrive. Unless they have them both. We'll talk more about this topic next week.

We always choose our words carefully, 'bring to mind', "I think/feel God...", "I sense", "I have a burden", I have an impression are all much better than 'thus says the Lord.'" While it is true, an accurate prophecy did come from God, a 'thus says the Lord' attitude is raising our stature, and for whose benefit? For example, you could say 'as I was praying today, God brought this to my mind, does this mean anything to you...'"

No matter how strongly you 'feel it's right', or 'know', we must remember that the prophetic gift is imperfect, 1 Cor 13:9 *"For we know in part and we prophesy in part"* You could have the correct prophecy but giving it to the wrong person, or giving it to the right person at the wrong time or the right person, right time, and wrongly interpret the prophecy.

In Acts 21:10-11, *"While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his feet and hands and said, 'Thus says the Holy Spirit, this is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles'"*.

Well, they got most of it correct, but they interpreted a lot wrong too. They thought the prophecy meant for Paul to NOT go, but it seems the prophecy encouraged Paul TO go.

*"Then Paul answered, 'What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.'"*

It also appears that though the Jews did arrest Paul, they in fact saved his life because after dragging him into the street *"they were seeking to kill him"*

Let us remember, the same Holy Spirit that prompted you to give a prophecy is at work in the hearer, for discernment, encouragement, edification, etc.

If it's from God, the Holy Spirit will cause it to speak with great power to the hearts of those who need to hear.

Test all things, hold on to what is good, what is in line with the character of God. Just like we should for teaching, preaching, so it is for prophecy

The prophetic gift is imperfect, that's why we are called to test it 1 Thes 5:20 *"Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good"*

Prophecies have no authority, prophecies are not commandments or instructions and they are to be governed 1 Cor 14:29

Scripture is more important than prophecy, Matthew 4:4 *"...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God".*

*Telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind*  
-Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology

Faithful in Philly story

*"A Spirit guided expression of something we otherwise we not know or say that's powerful for that particular moment to bring conviction, exhortation, consolation, awakening, upbuilding of faith."* John Piper

Bad Experiences, while these happen, we must not cease to pursue prophecy. 1 Thes 5:20. After hearing a theologically inaccurate worship song, do we neglect to praise?

Sometimes, prophecies are accompanied by a vision/picture, perhaps an emotion or even a physical condition. I consider these as 'motivators' to get me out of my seat, and are most often not part of the prophecy.

We ask God to let us know if we should communicate the vision/picture, we should consider our audience, their spiritual maturity.

Although describing the picture can be helpful (spaghetti, chopsticks story)

*Romans 12:5-8 "so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness."*

Why does Paul connect faith to prophecy? Could it mean that it takes faith to step out into the unknown, speaking to people we don't really know, about things we don't truly understand so they could be encouraged?

-Using it to exalt Jesus Christ. Grant me what I need to magnify Christ the most.

-We will use it humbly (not 'thus sayeth the Lord') and boldly (no fear of looking silly)

-Make love the measure of what you say. It's not a sin to be wrong, is it a sin to be unloving. 1 Cor 13

An accurate prophecy is preceded by the Holy Spirit to the hearer, lengthy prophecies are not necessary and often are not helpful. The same God that gave you a prophecy is at work on the hearer. We should be obedient, say what we believe God has asked to say, nothing more, nothing less and let 'our ever present help in time of need' do the real work!

Prophecy may be a scripture verse or may be accompanied by scripture

Spurgeon, young man and gloves story

### **Application Points**

Earnestly desire to prophecy. Ask God! "Lord tonight would you grant me a gift of prophecy in my small group. Stir my mind in ways that I haven't thought of, meet the needs of my friends, not because I am worthy of such a gift, but because you are a merciful, graceful and powerful God, able to do much more than I can ask of think."

Seek to serve others

Consider others

Worship and pray

Pursue love 1 Cor 14:1

Pursue faith Romans 12:6

Pursue Opportunities. Start small, baby steps. Close friends, Small Group, Prayer meetings, Sunday service

Pray, anticipate, obey

-Use prophecy to exalt Jesus Christ. Grant me what I need to magnify Christ the most.

Use prophecy humbly (not 'thus sayeth the Lord') and boldly (no fear of looking silly)

Make love the measure of what you say. It's not a sin to be wrong, is it a sin to be unloving. In 1 Corinthians, Paul saturates the spiritual gifts, especially prophecy, with love

*1 Cor 13:2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing."*

*1 Cor 13:13 "So now faith, hope and love abide, these three, but the greatest of these is love."*

*1 Cor 14:1 "Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy."*

Did you notice in verse 2, another connection between faith and prophecy? Perhaps our desire for the gift of prophecy should include a desire to have the faith to be obedient.

## **Giving a Prophecy**

So how does this all come together? Great question, and I wish I could give you a definitive answer. Something like  $2+2=4$ , but alas, I cannot. Here's what I can tell you, putting together the truths we have found in the bible, along with experiences of believers, we can pursue, even 'practice' the gift of prophecy. In all cases, experiences take a back seat to biblical truth.

We have a great foundation about what prophecy is, and the time has arrived. The Holy Spirit has prompted you with an urge, a desire, He's given you what to say, "Are you haunted by sins of your past?" He's even 'pointed' out the person you're to talk to! We'll call them 'Z'. What's next? Here are a few thoughts. We must have

1) Boldness in message- It's all about Jesus! 1 Chron 29:11, John 1:14, Romans 5:2

2) Humility in delivery, 'I could be wrong', I am a sinner, 1 Tim 1:15

3) Give all Glory to God- He gives gifts as He sees fit, 1 Cor 12:28

4) Leave them by highlighting God's Love- For God so loved the world.. John 3:16

We should also consider your audience

Are they a believer?

Are they spiritually mature (cucumber cake)

Are they an unbeliever?

Is this in a group or 1 on 1?

You could be wrong, but obeying what God has asked YOU to do may yield more fruit for you and for them. Remember, this is God we're talking about, He *"is able to do, far more abundantly than all we ask or think, according to the power at work within us"* Eph 3:20

Ask God what is this prophecy used for  
encouragement 1 Cor 14:30-31

Upbuilding 1 Cor 14:1-5

Consolation, Comfort Acts 9:31, 2 Cor 1:4

Discernment, disclosure of sin 1 Cor 14:24-25. This is a difficult area. Could the Holy Spirit reveal to you a very specific sin that someone was engaged in? Absolutely. Why? For their encouragement, to show them how powerful God is, to show them they are not too far away from God, the list goes on.

Here is an example, Ferris wheel prophecy

Now let's go back to our example of Z, being haunted by the sins of his past. It could be something like this

"This may not be for you, but as I was praying this morning, God brought this word to mind, haunted. I could be wrong, but I think it's for you, like you're haunted by your past? Does that mean anything to you?"

You will typically have 1 of 2 outcomes

### **1) Direct hit!**

They acknowledge that you are correct, Yay God!! God is good!

Now is your time to listen, as they may want to tell you all about it, pray for them and point them to God. A note of caution, prophecy is not counseling and our prayer is not about how to apply the prophecy. Our prayer should give glory to God, point the person to the truths that we are so faithfully taught here at Sovereign Grace Gilbert.

We are blessed to have such great teaching at Sovereign Grace. It can be very easy to go into full on counseling mode. We can be tempted to start the sanctification process immediately. Let God do what only God can do, change a heart.

### **2) Oops, a misfire, your prophecy doesn't apply to them or is wrong**

Thank them for listening to you and allowing you access. You're trying to be faithful to what God is asking you to do. The bible

says we only see in part..., ask them if they need prayer for anything else. (healing story)

Don't quit trying! Ask God for more clarity, ask God to use you again.

### **Prophesying as a group**

Sometimes you may only have a part, a portion of the encouragement. As we grow together to function as the body of Christ, prophecy may function this way. Person 1 gets the subject "disillusioned" Person 2 gets the person "Sally" and then Person 3 gets a scripture verse. God is truly on display to orchestrate such an event!

### **Testing a Prophecy**

Is it encouraging

Is it edifying

Is it equipping

Is it consoling

Can I give it in love? How?

At the end of a prophecy, God should seem closer, more loving and more powerful. Thanks be to God!

The world has stolen glory from God through our word choices, 'guess who I bumped into today', fate, luck, happenstance, coincidence have replaced any notion that God is in control, bringing people to mind, allowing our paths to cross so we might pray for them, for our mutual benefit. At the risk of hyper-spiritualizing our daily activities, what is the danger of acting as though God is in control? Believing that our thoughts of others is God prompting us to pray for them? To pray that we might be given the chance to encourage them?

Next week we will discuss Gifts of Healings, Tongues and Interpretation, Miracles and Discerning spirits.

Let me leave you with a quote from Asahel Hooker, a Baptist pastor, describing the revival that took place in New England in the late 1700's "It is the evident design of Providence to confound all attempts which should be made by philosophy and human reason to account for the effects wrought without ascribing them to God, as the marvelous work of His Spirit and grace."

May God confound all our attempts to explain His work by human reason and philosophy.

# **Practical Application of Spiritual Gifts in the life of the Christian and their church**

## **Week 3 Praying in the Spirit, Gifts of Healings, Tongues and Interpretation, Discerning spirits**

As we have discussed each week, the topic of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts is deep, much too deep for my simple mind to comprehend. Today, our discussion is taking into deeper water still! We'll proceed as if we were studying a diamond, reflecting on the beauty, complexity and perfection of each cut as we turn the jewel in our hand. I'll attempt to lay a firm foundation that we can use as we make ourselves available and pursue these gifts for the benefit of our church. If at any time, you have questions, please share. Clarity is an essential element in the unity of our church body. We have one more week left, and it's all devoted to Q&A, practical application and review.

### **Praying in the Spirit**

#### **Foundation**

This is not tongues. Meyers Commentary defines praying in the Spirit as

“praying so that the Holy Spirit is the moving and guiding power”

We are called to pray in the Spirit several times in Scripture  
Ephesians 6:18 *“...praying at all times in the Spirit...”*

Jude 1:20-21 *“But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.”*

John Piper put it this way, “So praying in the Holy Spirit would mean not only experiencing the POWER of the Spirit to help us pray when we are weak, but also experiencing the guidance of the Spirit to help us when we are foolish, confused or selfish.  
*James 4:3 “When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.””*

Romans 8:26 *“ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”*

I love this description of prayer from “Power through Prayer”  
“Stop! Pause! Consider! Where are we? What are we doing? Preaching to kill? Praying to kill? (No!) Praying to God! The great God, the Maker of all worlds, the Judge of all Men! What reverence! What simplicity! What sincerity! What truth in the inward parts is demanded! How real we must be! How hearty! Prayer to God the noblest exercise, the loftiest effort of man, the most real thing! Shall we not discard forever accursed preaching that kills and prayer that kills, and do the real thing,

the mightiest thing—prayerful praying, life-creating preaching, bring the mightiest force to bear on heaven and earth and draw on God’s exhaustless and open treasure for the need and beggary of man?” -Edward M. Bounds

### **Application Points**

God is sovereign, yet we are told to act, to pray in the Spirit. We are also told to ‘walk’, fight sin, confess the Lordship of Christ or worship “in the Holy Spirit.”

First, we must have faith, we pray in the Holy Spirit when we take our stand on the cross of Christ and trust God for his help through the Holy Spirit...with no confidence in our ability.

Second, our prayers must be in conformity to God’s word. We should be in the word, meditating on it, memorizing verses to carry with us, then our prayers will be shaped by the Word and the Holy Spirit.

Where the bible is absent in teaching or explanation, it’s best for us to not build doctrine. However, knowing what we know about God’s character, it’s safe to believe that praying in the spirit is not loud, not drawing attention to the prayer, done in order, and as Jude says, to *“keep yourselves in the love of God”*

## **Tongues and Interpretation**

### **Foundation**

1 Cor 14:1-12 *“Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up. Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played? And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? So, with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air. There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning, but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me. So, with*

*yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church”*

Tongues are a language, a language you’ve not heard. It could be a known language as in Acts 2:4-11 or an unknown language 1 Cor 14:1 ...*“for **no one** understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit.”*

Often causes controversy because it’s weird.

Then why bother? 1 Cor 14:2-4. There is a self-edification component as fear of man is replaced with a deepened relationship with Christ

Tongues and Interpretation will edify and buildup your relationship with God

Paul is talking to Christians (brothers) about tongues in the context of their relationships and gatherings. Tongues build up the individual, unless you have an interpretation. With an interpretation, a tongue can build up the body.

For my tongue to build me up does it have to be audible to others? I would say most likely not. Personal, audible tongues would seem to go against Paul’s charge in 1 Cor 14:33 *“for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.”*

Paul is quoting Isaiah 28:11-12 where God’s passed judgment on unbelievers in Israel because they wouldn’t listen and repent.

A tongue is from man to God, thus the interpretation would be communicating attributes of God, perhaps even worship

When the church is gathered don't devote your time to tongues, *"strive to excel in building up the church."* and definitely if there isn't an interpretation present

Tongues are incomprehensible speech that will not guide but confuse, without an interpretation

### **Application Points**

During corporate worship, we would not let a tongue or an interpretation go forward from the mic unless we had them both. If someone came forward with either, we would have them stand with us, and pray for the missing part to come forward.

If you have a tongue, as you pray about it, do you feel 'built up'? If not, it may not be meant to be given.

### **Gifts of Healings**

*"Is anyone among your suffering? Let him pray Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, eh will be forgiven. Therefore,*

*confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.” James 5:13-16*

## **Foundation**

Gifts of Healings is the literal translation of the plurals in 1 Cor 12:9, meaning there are not people today who always have the gift to heal. But rather, God heals today, and He uses people to accomplish this purpose. Sometimes He uses some people more frequently or more spectacularly than others. He may also use people for specific healings. Paul’s language doesn’t suggest a super, rock star like person with the gift of healing.

Ministry of healing is seen in the lives of Jesus (Matt. 8:16-17), the apostles and other members of the early church.

It is right to ask God for healing. Jesus often healed ALL who were brought to Him. 3 John 2, *“I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in health.”*

*“God can and does heal today, by His choosing, for His glory. He is more concerned with our eternal soul, than our temporal comfort.” -John Piper*

*It’s easy for us to take an Advil for a headache, it should be as easy for us to ask God to heal our infirmities. ...”You do not have, because you do not ask.” -James 4:2*

God can use doctors or medicine to heal or relieve pain. 1 Tim 5:23, Paul instructs Timothy to 'use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and frequent ailments.'

God is to be glorified, whether He heals or not. "...my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." - 2 Cor 12:9

Methods shown in the Bible varied from case to case

- frequently included the laying on of hands Luke 4:40, Matt. 9:18

- Anointing with oil. Mark 6:13, James 5:14-15

- Simple prayer or command. Luke 17:19

Faith plays a role, sometimes

- of the sick person, Matthew 9:22, Luke 8:48, Luke 17:19

- of those praying, Mark 9:17-24

- of family or friends, Matt 15:28, Mark 2:5

- faith is NOT mentioned, John 5:1-9

"Faith is a confession of our personal inability and of God's limitless power." -Sam Storms

Confession of sins is important in healing *"Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working."* -James 5:16. Perhaps the presence of sin and the

lack of repentance are factors in healing. Stubbornness, bitterness, resentment, unforgiveness or spiritual insensitivity of people could lead to their ailment and God's willingness to heal.

Sign to authenticate the Gospel message, as many believed that were healed in the New Testament

Brings comfort and health to those that are ill

Equips people for service as ailments are removed

Foretaste of Heaven when we be healed of all infirmities and have perfect bodies

God is glorified!! We see His power, mercy, love, goodness, closeness. Phil 2:27 *"indeed he was ill, near to death, But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow."*

### **Application Points**

Laying on of hands and anointing with oil are not requirements for healing (see above references) ,but rather should be considered an act of faith or obedience (yours and/or theirs), and should only be done with permission.

Laying on of hands between men and women should be done with extreme caution and always bringing someone with you.

Ask questions and listen. Where does it hurt? How long?  
What have doctors said? Is it physical, emotional, spiritual?  
How can I help?

Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you and them to possible causes, bacteria, stress, anxiety, disease, unforgiveness, spiritual attack or sin could all be causes. Often times the cause will simply be unknown, don't attempt to draw conclusions, but be open to revelation from the Holy Spirit. For example, you get an impression and say, "*Could anxiety be playing a part in your chronic back pain?*"

Pray for God to be glorified, whether He heals or not. "...my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." -2 Cor 12:9

Pray with a simple request. There are no magic words, no special prayer. It's God who heals, not us.

Pray with compassion

Pray with boldness. James 5:16 ..."that you may be healed."

Pray with humility. Paul's healing prayers were answered with a 'yes' 4 times in the New Testament (apparently, he healed everyone on the island of Malta who came to him, Acts 28:9), but he also experienced a 'no', or 'not yet' (Epaphroditus). He was unable to heal himself, Trophimus (2 Tim 4:20) and Timothy.

It's Ok to keep your eyes open when you're praying for them to notice if anything changes in their demeanor, shaking, weeping,

etc. Take your time, linger in prayer. If you notice changes, it's OK to ask questions...What do you feel? Is God doing something?

### **When God heals**

-Point them to God, His mercy, His love, His power, His sovereignty

-Be encouraged!

### **When God doesn't heal**

-Point them to God, His grace, His strength, His faithfulness, His peace

-Love bears all things

-Pray and continue to pray. Healing isn't always immediate, it can be a process over time

-God is sovereign, give thanks that we can trust Him to bring good from every situation. Romans 8:28 *"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."*

-Point them to scripture, Romans 8:18 *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us"*

Romans 8:23 ...*"we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies."*

2 Cor 12:9 *"Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me."*

-Ps 119:71- *"it is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes"*

Never suggest that a lack of healing is the result of their lack of faith. Especially since it could be your lack of faith! It could also be that God's answer to them is the same answer He gave Paul. 1 Cor 12:9 *"But He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."*

Encourage them to ask for healing prayer again and again. God does not grow tired of our pursuit of Him and His mercy.

As we pray for people to be healed, remember healing is not the measure of success, obedience is.

## **Discerning Spirits, Casting out demons**

### **Foundation**

A Holy Spirit empowered ability to distinguish between the works of the Holy Spirit and works of another spirit (demonic or human)

Only mentioned once in the New Testament, 1 Cor 12:10, although spiritual warfare is mentioned a number of times

1 John 4:1 *“test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world”*

Acts 16:16-18 Paul discerns that the power of a slave girl is a demonic spirit

Acts 13:8-11 Paul discerns that Elymas, the magician was demonically motivated in his attempt to oppose the gospel

Several types of evil spirits, infirmity (Luke 13:11), divination (Acts 16:16), dumb and deaf (Mark 9:25,29), error (1 John 4:6)

Demonic activity is often of a physical nature, from violent to bizarre, (Mark 1:24, 9:20, Matt. 8:29)

Many times, demons were cast out by simple commands. Acts 16:18, Matt 8:16,

The devil flees when we resist. *“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”* James 4:7

Demons oppose and try to destroy every work of God, yet they are limited by God’s control and have limited power.

Not all sin is from Satan and demons, but some is.

*“And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.”* 2 Tim 2:24-26

A Christian cannot be 'possessed' by a demon. A more accurate description would be tormented or afflicted.

Demons can aggravate or intensify our chosen acts of sin, crippling us with feelings of shame or guilt.

Lines between mental illness, demonic oppression and sin are not easily defined. They may also be intertwined, with influence of all 3 present.

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works I do; And greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father."* John 14:12

"Spiritual warfare is not a horizontal tug of war, but a vertical chain of command." -Neil Anderson

### **Purpose of this gift**

Protect the gospel message, protect the church

A foretaste of heaven when we will be made perfect, and able to recognize Satan and his influence

Build up the church and equip the saints for service

## **Application Points**

*“After this the Lord appointed 72 others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. Luke 10:1*

*“The 72 returned with joy, saying “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” Luke 10:17*

*“Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” Luke 10:19-20*

Ask God to give you this gift for the benefit of the church

Praying for someone with demonic activity

- Bring another Christian with you
- Know that you don't know, but God does!
- Always pray with your eyes open
- Satan is not hard of hearing
- Conduct an interview
  - who do they say Jesus is to them?
  - What is their spiritual background? Exposed to anything occult, white magic, etc.

-What are they experiencing?

At this point, there appears to be 2 paths to take. An encounter with truth, as in 2 Tim 2:24-26, or an encounter with power, as in Acts 16:18 for example.

Truth encounter

Ask the individual to renounce the enemy

Ask them to confess and repent of any known sin

Affirm the truth of the scripture, ask God for specific direction

Ask them to submit to the authority of Christ

Pray!

Power encounter

Confront the enemy directly, may ask the demon to identify themselves

Cast it out by the power of Christ. For example, you could say "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and through power of His shed blood and resurrected life, I take authority over any demonic spirit either present in or around \_\_\_\_\_. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I command any and every demonic spirit to leave \_\_\_\_\_ and never return."

Forbid it to return

Often, when freed from demons, there will be physical signs, loud, expressive.

If nothing changes, there are a few possible reasons

- person doesn't want demon to go
- more prayer is needed as in Mark 9:29
- there was never a demon, it's sin or mental illness

Pray the truth in love and boldness. Jesus is the one and only Son of God, who defeated death, sits at God's right hand, all things are subject to Him!

# **Practical Application of Spiritual Gifts in the life of the Christian and their church**

## **Week 4 Recap, Q & A**

What would happen if we ascribe to God the positive things that happen to you and others? Salvation, Transformation, Sanctification we typically ascribe much to God, but perhaps the more you identify the power of the Holy Spirit at work in your life, the more you will see God at work and PARTICIPATE!

The circumstances of life, are they random? Don't we believe that a sovereign God is in control of all, ALL things? So, every interaction we have, those are not chance, luck, or fate. Let's ask God if those pre-ordained meetings might be an opportunity for us to use a spiritual gift to encourage, edify, or equip one another.

Renew your mind to see God at work, Romans 12:2

A person could have multiple gifts active at the same time. Discernment leading to mercy leading to prayer leading to prophecy/healing

There is an old saying, I don't know who to credit for it, but the saying is "If you have only the Word, you dry up. If you have only the Spirit, you blow up. But if you have both, you grow up."

There are as many gifts for the body of Christ as there are people in the body of Christ

God inhabits the praises of His people. Worship of God, fervent, passionate, whole hearted often precedes the movement of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts. However, it is not a prerequisite. God can break into an episode of 'American Pickers' and ask you to use your gifting for the benefit of the body.

"Before my conversion, I viewed God as a little old lady asking for compliments. After conversion, I understood that what is needed most was to give God compliments." -C.S. Lewis

After our Sunday morning message, our cars are not our destination, people are!! For their encouragement, edification and up building.

Faith. During our 3 weeks together, looking at spiritual gifts, we have seen faith mentioned several times. Paul addresses this head on in Romans 12.

*"For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them:"* Romans 12:3-6

It would appear that faith is a standard or measure for us.

Faith is the root of all gifts, and faith is 'assigned by God'.

Faith is the measure so we cannot boast in any gift

Faith deflects glory from me to Christ

Gifts differ according to grace so that we must be interconnected to one another. If we all had the same gift, we would not need one another.

### **How do we find our spiritual gifts?**

*Romans 1:8-12 "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. For I long to see you that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you---that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine."*

Do you hear the love that Paul has for his Christian family in Rome? I thank my God, without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers, he longs to see them, to encourage and be encouraged. Love is his motivation for using the gifts that God has given him.

*Romans 12:6 "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them;"*

We all have different gifts, we must use them!

We must seek to love our church body, our friends, our family with the gifts God has given us. We find our spiritual gifts when we seek to love people and they are affected, when the Holy Spirit takes our efforts and multiplies! Your gift could be in teaching, praying, mercy, hospitality, prophecy, healing, generosity, and on and on. Let's step out and seek to love one another, that's where we'll find our spiritual gifts.

## **Closing**

In John 14:12, Jesus says *“ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”*

The power of the Holy Spirit is alive and longs to be active inside every believer, empowering us to live for Christ today. That power is visible as we battle sin, serve others, love people and achieve any sort of godly behavior. That power is also visible in spiritual gifts, like preaching, teaching, prophecy, healings, tongues, interpretation, just to name a few. Always used to encourage, edify, console and equip the saints. In an article title “Greater works than Jesus”, John Piper puts it this way...

“Jesus’s vision for transforming society never consisted of platforming a few hyper-anointed mega pastors to pack an auditorium with their electrifying sermons. His vision of

greatness of the church consisted in each believer being filled with, and used by, the Holy Spirit.” -John Piper

Did you know in Acts, 39 of the 40 miracles were done outside of the gathered church? We certainly know that there are many people not putting church attendance on their list of TTDs. The power of the Holy Spirit is not just for a Small Group, not just for Sunday morning, we NEED the power of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts to participate in the great commission!

J.D. Greear “He (Holy Spirit) is in every believer, the collective impact of ordinary Christians filled with the Spirit is greater than if Jesus had stayed on earth to lead the Church. The vision is for every believer, being filled with and used by the Holy Spirit.”

Martyn Lloyd-Jones “The Holy Spirit in you is better than Jesus beside you. We must see the Holy Spirit as God and as a person. Study doctrine! Doctrine is not enough!

We need fullness of spirit and depth of the Gospel

Let’s move into our lives assuming that God is at work, that the person you think of at lunch tomorrow was placed there by a sovereign God who wanted you to pray for that person and perhaps step out of your comfort zone to call them with a specific form of encouragement. How cool is that?!!

## Resources

Systematic Theology Wayne Grudem

Why Christians can still prophesy, article, Christian Times

The Forgotten God Frances Chan

The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God Jonathon Edwards

The Spirit of Revival Archie Parrish and R.C. Sproul

Surprised by the power of the Holy Spirit Jack Deere

Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire Jim Cymbala

Practicing the Power Sam Storms

Keep in step with Spirit J.I. Packer

Numerous teachings from Cornerstone Church, Knoxville, TN and Covenant Fellowship Church, Philadelphia, PA.

The Forum: Experiencing God , Rich Richardson

'Under the Faucet', sermon, Matt Chandler

Greater works than Jesus, article, Desiring God

Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Wayne Grudem

The work of the Holy Spirit, an experimental and practical view, Octavius Winslow

The Holy Spirt, Sinclair Ferguson

Spiritual Gifts, sermon, John Piper, with many resources from Desiringgod.org

Power Through Prayer, Edward M. Bounds

An humble, affectionate, and earnest address to the Clergy, William Law

Learning to Pray in the Spirit and the Word, sermons, John Piper



The following pages are the class handouts. I removed some my examples, and tried to streamline it for the attendees.

The next 4 weeks our class topics will be

**Foundation**

**Prophecy**

**Tongues, Interpretation, Gifts of Healings, Miracles**

**Application, Q&A**

I think this verse describes my goal for our time together.

*“For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you- that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine.” -Romans 1:11-12*

Let me open with prayer....

When you attend a class or teach a class, one of the worst experiences is to leave with a misunderstanding or an unanswered question. Our subject matter can lead to much of both, so I want to give plenty of opportunity for question and strive for clarity. During each class, I’ll pause and solicit questions, feel free to ask away! Also, here are some notecards for questions you want to ask anonymously, or perhaps you ask a question that I’m going to cover in a later class. In that case, I’ll write the question down so we don’t forget. You can also text me questions as they pop into your head during the week.

602-561-4350. Feel free to ask tough questions, I'm sending those to Rich anyway.

## **Foundation**

At Sovereign Grace Church in Gilbert, we believe that Holy Spirit is a person, part of the trinity, and active in the life of every Christian. We believe that spiritual gifts are for every believer, given at the time of conversion, and are available for the church today. WOW! I've said a lot. If you're a member then that's not new news to you. Our class is designed to be a practical application of the spiritual gifts in the life of the believer, and while there isn't a lot time to go into great detail of this extremely important doctrine, I don't want to gloss over these points. So, while I'm giving a brief summary of Rich's teaching 'The Forum: The Holy Spirit' this week, we also have copies of this for you to take with you for a more detailed explanation of the doctrinal position of Sovereign Grace church.

Regardless of your background, my goal is to lay a solid foundation so we can accurately and faithfully apply the gifts of the Holy Spirit into the life of our church. This foundation is the lens through which we will filter all discussion, experience and pursuit of spiritual gifts. However, for questions like 'Are Spiritual Gifts active today?', I recognize it's not enough to just quote a few verses and move on. That's why we've provided the complete transcript of Rich's recent teaching. The Forum was also recorded and is available on the church website.

So, let's jump right in, Foundation, here we go!

Spiritual Gifts are given to every believer Acts 21:9, 1 Cor 11:5, 1 Cor 14:1, 1Cor 14:5

The Holy Spirit is alive and the source of ALL growth in the life of a Christian. John 14:26

“Therefore, the continual immediate inspiration or operation of the Holy Spirit, is the one only possible ground of our continually loving God”. – William Law

For upbuilding, edification and encouragement 1 Cor 14:3, 1 Cor 14:17

For Equipping, and building up of the church 1 Cor 14:12

Spiritual Gifts are used to serve one another. 1 Peter 4:10-11

Spiritual Gifts are for today. 1 Cor 13:8-12

A Spiritual Gift is an expression of faith that aims to strengthen faith- John Piper

Ability is not a spiritual gift, unless by using that ability you receive grace and disperse grace. For example, people can be great teachers and not have the gift of teaching. Unless their teaching is causing them to rely on the Holy Spirit and their teaching goes beyond the exchange of information to their audience.

A Spiritual Gift is relying on God and encouraging others to rely on God. Romans 1:11-12

Spiritual gifts encourage the body, testify to Christ's glory. John 15:26 *"But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me."*

A spiritual gift will strengthen faith, yours and theirs. Romans 1:11-12

Proper use of a spiritual gift draws attention to and glorifies God, not you. God is closer than we imagine, more loving than our experience and more merciful than we deserve. John 15:26

Spiritual gifts are given by a sovereign infallible God (1 Cor 7:7), but used by limited, wretched sinners. Probably don't need any scripture references for this one!! 1 Tim 1:15

Spiritual gifts create healthy dependence on one another in the church body. Romans 12:4-5

Gifts differ, according to grace. Romans 12:6-8

We are to be faithful, not successful. 1 Cor 4:2. The Apostle Paul was granted the gift of healing 4 times but failed to heal 4 times.

Spiritual Gifts are given by God, they cannot be earned, summoned or coerced. 1 Cor 12:4-11

We must not equate spiritual maturity with spiritual gifting. The church in Corinth was in such a place. Spiritual gifts run amok, with not enough spiritual maturity.

Spiritual gifts are not a result of anyone's specialness, rather the gifts are tools that God uses to shower His grace, mercy and love upon His people. In 1 Corinthians, near the end of a spiritual beat down, Paul pens this phrase that should put our pride in check, 1 Cor 1:26 *"For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth."* And so, it is with the church, with our church today, everything is from God, salvation, blessings, gifts,

We are commanded to pursue spiritual gifts.

1 Cor 14:1 *"Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy."*

We are commanded to love one another John 13:4 *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."*

To contribute to the needs of others Romans 12:12-13 *"Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality."*

and a willingness to be obedient to God.

We are called to test the spirits. 1 John 4:1

God's will is for his people to be empowered by the Holy Spirit for worship, witness and works.

Don't value gifts above love, service, righteousness 1 Cor 13

Truth has priority over everything, charisma, excitement, awe.

John 4:23-24 *"But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."*

Don't chase gifts, chase Christ. *"But seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you."* Matthew 6:33

### **What are Spiritual Gifts used for?**

Magnify the person and finished work of Jesus. John 15:26

Edify, to bless others 1 Cor 14:26, 1 Cor 12:7

Equips for service Acts 4:8, 4:31, 6:10, 1 Cor 12 and 14

Buildup, encourage 1Cor 14:12

Transform 2 Cor 3:18, 2 Thess 2:13, Romans 8:13, Phil 1:19

Assurance of our future hope 2 Cor 1:22

Insight, revelation, small 'r' 1 Cor 14:6, 1 Cor 14:26, Eph 1:17

Promote unity in the church 1 Cor 12:12-31

Prayer Romans 8:26-27

Preaching

It is not necessary to label spiritual gifts, *“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit”* 1 Cor 12:4 to use them rightly and benefit from them.

The Bible identifies some, but not all spiritual gifts.

Distinguishing spirits, tongues and interpretation, service, teaching, (exhortation, contributing, mercy-these commands are given to all Christians), wisdom, knowledge, helping, working of miracles, administration, prayer, prophecy, faith, gifts of healings, leadership, evangelism, discernment Romans 12:6-8, 1 Cor 12:27-30, 1 Cor 12:7-10

Disclosure of sin 1 Cor 14:25

Revealing God’s depth 1 Cor 2:10

Utterance of wisdom, Utterance of knowledge 1 Cor 12:7-10

Proper use of a spiritual gift draws attention to and glorifies God, not you. God is closer than we imagine, more loving than our experience and more merciful than we deserve. John 15:26

Spiritual Gifts are to be used so that 3 things happen

- 1) Personal Fellowship with Jesus increases
- 2) Personal Transformation
- 3) Assurance is intensified

## **When do Gifts Arrive 1 Cor 14:1**

While the Holy Spirit is given to us at the moment of conversion, spiritual gifts are given by God, for His glory and in His timing. However, based upon what we know about God, here are some thoughts. Spiritual Gifts often become evident

When we seek Christ

When we seek to serve

When we seek to encourage, love others

When we have an obedient posture, humble attitude

When we are eager to 'hear' God's voice and obey, like Peter in the boat, he thought he saw Christ, asked "is it you, bid me come..." but he had to get out of the boat.

Here's how Tim Keller, explains how spiritual gifts are discovered and nurtured.

The church stirs up spiritual gifts through teaching and training

Individuals aspire, pursue, listen, practice spiritual gifts. We desire, we look for opportunity, we must be available

The church body confirms or tests, then encourages or corrects.

Not performance based. A sovereign God chooses who, when and how.

## **How are gifts used?**

Always in harmony with God's character, for example

With love 1 Cor 13:1-8

With Wisdom 1 Cor 13:11

Surrendering our rights 1 Cor 9:19-20

Awareness of our weakness

With humility 1 Cor 13:12

1 Thess 5:16-21 *“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast to what is good.”*

With much prayer

With testing or discernment (internal testing) Does this need to be said or done? Does it need to be said or done now? Am I the one to say, or do it?

With joy, not excitability Luke 10:17

### **Why do we not use gifts or pursue them?**

Bad experiences 1 Thess 5:20

Fear of man

Pride

Lack of knowledge

Laziness

Sin

Lack of faith

Paul's charge to the Corinthians is not to stop using gifts, but to rightly use gifts. You can't rightly use a gift that you never practice

In week 4, we will dive deeper into the practice of spiritual gifts, but before we discuss practice, we have to understand and desire spiritual gifts. Actually, the bible doesn't call us to practice, but we can find ourselves like Timothy, as he was encouraged by Paul in 1 Tim 1:6

*"For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.*

As we leave today, here are a few questions to pray and meditate upon this week.

### **Questions to consider**

When were you last surprised by God? His power, His love, His mercy?

Take a moment to reflect on a time that God moved powerfully in your life. Do you see a spiritual gift in operation?

Are you concerned or scared by the gifts of the Spirit?

Have you ever had a burden to pray for someone, that seemingly came from 'out of the blue'?

How has the Holy Spirit empowered you in the past?

Do you think God has called you to do something that you don't have the talent/strength to do?

Have you prayed for spiritual gifts?

Do you have a spiritual gift?

Are you eager and willing to gather together with believers, and see God save people? Relationships reconciled? People are healed? Encouraged? Strengthened?

This week, meditate and pray on 1 Cor 14:1 *"Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy."*

Thanks for coming today, next week we'll spend the entire time talking about Prophecy, what it is, what it isn't, and why we should pursue this gift.

# **Practical Application of Spiritual Gifts in the life of the Christian and their church**

## **Week 2 Prophecy**

As we discussed last week, the topic of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts is deep, much too deep for my simple mind to comprehend. Today, as we talk about the gift of prophecy, we'll precede as if we were studying a diamond, reflecting on the beauty, complexity and perfection of each cut as we turn the jewel in our hand. I'll attempt to lay a firm foundation that we can use as we make ourselves available and pursue this gift for the benefit of our church.

It is with much thanks to Jon Payne, and Rich Richardson that I present the material this week. Both of these men have been instrumental in my growth as a Christian, with their wisdom, teaching, encouragement and friendship. Especially in the area of prophecy.

## Foundation

Last week, we laid the foundation through which all spiritual gifts should function. This week, let's pull out those foundations that are more specific to the gift of prophecy.

Used for encouragement 1 Cor 14:30-31

Upbuilding 1 Cor 14:1-5

Consolation, Comfort Acts 9:31, 2 Cor 1:4

Discernment, disclosure of sin 1 Cor 14:24-25, Acts 5:1-4 Peter confronts Ananias and Sapphira over their sin, which the Holy Spirit revealed to him

We should expect prophecies, 1 Cor 14:26

Prophecies should be in order 1 Cor 14:30-31. 'does this need to be said? am I the one to say it? Does it need to be said now?

Prophecy is NOT predicting the future, nor are they directional. For example, "God told me you're supposed to move to Kansas City"

Prophecy can be confirming a work that the Holy Spirit is doing in another person. "You came to mind today, are you thinking about moving?" We'll talk about what to do next in just a few minutes.

The bible calls prophecy a revelation, small r, or knowledge that God chooses to reveal 1 Cor 14:6 *“Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching?”*

1 Cor 14:30 *“If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent.”*

Rev Dr. Graham Houston, “Prophecy is a gift for today.”

At Sovereign Grace in Gilbert, we use a separate microphone, the prophecy mic, to allow for this gift to operate in our corporate worship meetings. As we gather together to worship, fellowship and renew our minds through the preached word, we also want to allow for the gifts to operate to build up, encourage or console. For prophecies, someone comes to the person in charge of the mic, tells them what they feel God has given them, that person discerns if the prophecy is to go forward or not. If someone has a tongue or interpretation, we would have them wait with us, while we pray for the other half to arrive. Unless they have them both. We’ll talk more about this topic next week.

We always choose our words carefully, ‘bring to mind’, ‘I think/feel God...’, ‘I sense’, ‘I have a burden’, I have an impression are all much better than ‘thus says the Lord.’ While it is true, an accurate prophecy did come from God, a ‘thus says the Lord’ attitude is raising our stature, and for whose benefit? For example, you could say ‘as I was praying today, God brought this to my mind, does this mean anything to you...’

No matter how strongly you 'feel it's right', or 'know', we must remember that the prophetic gift is imperfect, 1 Cor 13:9 *"For we know in part and we prophesy in part"* You could have the correct prophecy but giving it to the wrong person, or giving it to the right person at the wrong time or the right person, right time, and wrongly interpret the prophecy.

In Acts 21:10-11, *"While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his feet and hands and said, 'Thus says the Holy Spirit, this is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles'"*.

Well, they got most of it correct, but they interpreted a lot wrong too. They thought the prophecy meant for Paul to NOT go, but it seems the prophecy encouraged Paul TO go.

*"Then Paul answered, 'What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.'"*

It also appears that though the Jews did arrest Paul, they in fact saved his life because after dragging him into the street *"they were seeking to kill him"*

Let us remember, the same Holy Spirit that prompted you to give a prophecy is at work in the hearer, for discernment, encouragement, edification, etc.

If it's from God, the Holy Spirit will cause it to speak with great power to the hearts of those who need to hear.

Test all things, hold on to what is good, what is in line with the character of God. Just like we should for teaching, preaching, so it is for prophecy

The prophetic gift is imperfect, that's why we are called to test it 1 Thes 5:20 *"Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good"*

Prophecies have no authority, prophecies are not commandments or instructions and they are to be governed 1 Cor 14:29

Scripture is more important than prophecy, Matthew 4:4 *"...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God".*

*Telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind*  
-Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology

Faithful in Philly story

*"A Spirit guided expression of something we otherwise we not know or say that's powerful for that particular moment to bring conviction, exhortation, consolation, awakening, upbuilding of faith."* John Piper

Bad Experiences, while these happen, we must not cease to pursue prophecy. 1 Thes 5:20. After hearing a theologically inaccurate worship song, do we neglect to praise?

Sometimes, prophecies are accompanied by a vision/picture, perhaps an emotion or even a physical condition. I consider these as 'motivators' to get me out of my seat, and are most often not part of the prophecy.

We ask God to let us know if we should communicate the vision/picture, we should consider our audience, their spiritual maturity.

Although describing the picture can be helpful (spaghetti, chopsticks story)

*Romans 12:5-8 "so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness."*

Why does Paul connect faith to prophecy? Could it mean that it takes faith to step out into the unknown, speaking to people we don't really know, about things we don't truly understand so they could be encouraged?

-Using it to exalt Jesus Christ. Grant me what I need to magnify Christ the most.

-We will use it humbly (not 'thus sayeth the Lord') and boldly (no fear of looking silly)

-Make love the measure of what you say. It's not a sin to be wrong, is it a sin to be unloving. 1 Cor 13

An accurate prophecy is preceded by the Holy Spirit to the hearer, lengthy prophecies are not necessary and often are not helpful. The same God that gave you a prophecy is at work on the hearer. We should be obedient, say what we believe God has asked to say, nothing more, nothing less and let 'our ever-present help in time of need' do the real work!

Prophecy may be a scripture verse or may be accompanied by scripture

Spurgeon, young man and gloves story

### **Application Points**

Earnestly desire to prophecy. Ask God! "Lord tonight would you grant me a gift of prophecy in my small group. Stir my mind in ways that I haven't thought of, meet the needs of my friends, not because I am worthy of such a gift, but because you are a merciful, graceful and powerful God, able to do much more than I can ask of think."

Seek to serve others

Consider others

Worship and pray

Pursue love 1 Cor 14:1

Pursue faith Romans 12:6

Pursue Opportunities. Start small, baby steps. Close friends, Small Group, Prayer meetings, Sunday service

Pray, anticipate, obey

-Use prophecy to exalt Jesus Christ. Grant me what I need to magnify Christ the most.

Use prophecy humbly (not 'thus sayeth the Lord') and boldly (no fear of looking silly)

Make love the measure of what you say. It's not a sin to be wrong, is it a sin to be unloving. In 1 Corinthians, Paul saturates the spiritual gifts, especially prophecy, with love

*1 Cor 13:2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing."*

*1 Cor 13:13 "So now faith, hope and love abide, these three, but the greatest of these is love."*

*1 Cor 14:1 "Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy."*

Did you notice in verse 2, another connection between faith and prophecy? Perhaps our desire for the gift of prophecy should include a desire to have the faith to be obedient.

## Giving a Prophecy

So how does this all come together? Great question, and I wish I could give you a definitive answer. Something like  $2+2=4$ , but alas, I cannot. Here's what I can tell you, putting together the truths we have found in the bible, along with experiences of believers, we can pursue, even 'practice' the gift of prophecy. In all cases, experiences take a back seat to biblical truth.

We have a great foundation about what prophecy is, and the time has arrived. The Holy Spirit has prompted you with an urge, a desire, He's given you what to say, "Are you haunted by sins of your past?" He's even 'pointed' out the person you're to talk to! We'll call them 'Z'. What's next? Here are a few thoughts. We must have

1) Boldness in message- It's all about Jesus! 1 Chron 29:11, John 1:14, Romans 5:2

2) Humility in delivery, 'I could be wrong', I am a sinner, 1 Tim 1:15

3) Give all Glory to God- He gives gifts as He sees fit, 1 Cor 12:28

4) Leave them by highlighting God's Love- For God so loved the world.. John 3:16

We should also consider your audience

Are they a believer?

Are they spiritually mature (cucumber cake)

Are they an unbeliever?

Is this in a group or 1 on 1?

You could be wrong, but obeying what God has asked YOU to do may yield more fruit for you and for them. Remember, this is God we're talking about, He *"is able to do, far more abundantly than all we ask or think, according to the power at work within us"* Eph 3:20

Ask God what is this prophecy used for  
encouragement 1 Cor 14:30-31

Upbuilding 1 Cor 14:1-5

Consolation, Comfort Acts 9:31, 2 Cor 1:4

Discernment, disclosure of sin 1 Cor 14:24-25. This is a difficult area. Could the Holy Spirit reveal to you a very specific sin that someone was engaged in? Absolutely. Why? For their encouragement, to show them how powerful God is, to show them they are not too far away from God, the list goes on.

Here is an example, Ferris wheel prophecy

Now let's go back to our example of Z, being haunted by the sins of his past. It could something like this

"This may not be for you, but as I was praying this morning, God brought this word to mind, haunted. I could be wrong, but I think it's for you, like you're haunted by your past? Does that mean anything to you?"

You will typically have 1 of 2 outcomes

**1) Direct hit!**

They acknowledge that you are correct, Yay God!! God is good!

Now is your time to listen, as they may want to tell you all about it, pray for them and point them to God. A note of caution, prophecy is not counseling and our prayer is not about how to apply the prophecy. Our prayer should give glory to God, point the person to the truths that we are so faithfully taught here at Sovereign Grace Gilbert.

We are blessed to have such great teaching at Sovereign Grace. It can be very easy to go into full on counseling mode. We can be tempted to start the sanctification process immediately. Let God do what only God can do, change a heart.

**2) Oops, a misfire, your prophecy doesn't apply to them or is wrong**

Thank them for listening to you and allowing you access. You're trying to be faithful to what God is asking you to do. The bible says we only see in part..., ask them if they need prayer for anything else. (healing story)

Don't quit trying! Ask God for more clarity, ask God to use you again.

## **Testing a Prophecy**

Is it encouraging

Is it edifying

Is it equipping

Is it consoling

Can I give it in love? How?

At the end of a prophesy, God should seem closer, more loving and more powerful. Thanks be to God!

The world has stolen glory from God through our word choices, 'guess who I bumped into today', fate, luck, happenstance, coincidence have replaced any notion that God is in control, bringing people to mind, allowing our paths to cross so we might pray for them, for our mutual benefit. At the risk of hyper-spiritualizing our daily activities, what is the danger of acting as though God is in control? Believing that our thoughts of others is God prompting us to pray for them? To pray that we might be given the chance to encourage them?

Next week we will discuss Gifts of Healings, Tongues and Interpretation, Miracles and Discerning spirits.

Let me leave you with a quote from Asahel Hooker, a Baptist pastor, describing the revival that took place in New England in the late 1700's "It is the evident design of Providence to confound all attempts which should be made by philosophy and human reason to account for the effects wrought without ascribing them to God, as the marvelous work of His Spirit and grace."

May God confound all our attempts to explain His work by human reason and philosophy.

## **Practical Application of Spiritual Gifts in the life of the Christian and their church**

### **Week 3 Praying in the Spirit, Gifts of Healings, Tongues and Interpretation, Discerning spirits**

As we have discussed each week, the topic of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts is deep, much too deep for my simple mind to comprehend. Today, our discussion is taking into deeper water still! We'll proceed as if we were studying a diamond, reflecting on the beauty, complexity and perfection of each cut as we turn the jewel in our hand. I'll attempt to lay a firm foundation that we can use as we make ourselves available and pursue these gifts for the benefit of our church. If at any time, you have questions, please share. Clarity is an essential element in the unity of our church body. We have one more week left, and it's all devoted to Q&A, practical application and review.

## Praying in the Spirit

### Foundation

This is not tongues. Meyers Commentary defines praying in the Spirit as

“praying so that the Holy Spirit is the moving and guiding power”

We are called to pray in the Spirit several times in Scripture

Ephesians 6:18 *“...praying at all times in the Spirit...”*

Jude 1:20-21 *“But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.”*

John Piper put it this way, “So praying in the Holy Spirit would mean not only experiencing the POWER of the Spirit to help us pray when we are weak, but also experiencing the guidance of the Spirit to help us when we are foolish, confused or selfish.

*James 4:3 “When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.””*

Romans 8:26 *“ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”*

I love this description of prayer from “Power through Prayer”  
“Stop! Pause! Consider! Where are we? What are we doing?  
Preaching to kill? Praying to kill? (No!) Praying to God! The  
great God, the Maker of all worlds, the Judge of all Men! What  
reverence! What simplicity! What sincerity! What truth in the  
inward parts is demanded! How real we must be! How hearty!  
Prayer to God the noblest exercise, the loftiest effort of man,  
the most real thing! Shall we not discard forever accursed  
preaching that kills and prayer that kills, and do the real thing,  
the mightiest thing—prayerful praying, life-creating preaching,  
bring the mightiest force to bear on heaven and earth and draw  
on God’s exhaustless and open treasure for the need and  
beggary of man?” -Edward M. Bounds

### **Application Points**

God is sovereign, yet we are told to act, to pray in the Spirit.  
We are also told to ‘walk’, fight sin, confess the Lordship of  
Christ or worship “in the Holy Spirit.”

First, we must have faith, we pray in the Holy Spirit when we  
take our stand on the cross of Christ and trust God for his help  
through the Holy Spirit...with no confidence in our ability.

Second, our prayers must be in conformity to God’s word. We  
should be in the word, meditating on it, memorizing verses to  
carry with us, then our prayers will be shaped by the Word and  
the Holy Spirit.

Where the bible is absent in teaching or explanation, it's best for us to not build doctrine. However, knowing what we know about God's character, it's safe to believe that praying in the spirit is not loud, not drawing attention to the prayer, done in order, and as Jude says, to *"keep yourselves in the love of God"*

## **Tongues and Interpretation**

### **Foundation**

1 Cor 14:1-12 *"Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up. Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played? And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? So, with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will*

*be speaking into the air. There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning, but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me. So, with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church”*

Tongues are a language, a language you've not heard. It could be a known language as in Acts 2:4-11 or an unknown language 1 Cor 14:1 ...*“for **no one** understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit.”*

Often causes controversy because it's weird.

Then why bother? 1 Cor 14:2-4. There is a self-edification component as fear of man is replaced with a deepened relationship with Christ

Tongues and Interpretation will edify and buildup your relationship with God

Paul is talking to Christians (brothers) about tongues in the context of their relationships and gatherings. Tongues build up the individual, unless you have an interpretation. With an interpretation, a tongue can build up the body.

In order for my tongue to build me up does it have to be audible to others? I would say most likely not. Personal, audible tongues would seem to go against Paul's charge in 1 Cor 14:33 *“for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.”*

Paul is quoting Isaiah 28:11-12 where God's passed judgment on unbelievers in Israel because they wouldn't listen and repent.

A tongue is from man to God, thus the interpretation would be communicating attributes of God, perhaps even worship

When the church is gathered don't devote your time to tongues, "*strive to excel in building up the church.*" and definitely if there isn't an interpretation present

Tongues are incomprehensible speech that will not guide but confuse, without an interpretation

### **Application Points**

During corporate worship, we would not let a tongue or an interpretation go forward from the mic unless we had them both. If someone came forward with either, we would have them stand with us, and pray for the missing part to come forward.

If you have a tongue, as you pray about it, do you feel 'built up'? If not, it may not be meant to be given.

## **Gifts of Healings**

*“Is anyone among your suffering? Let him pray Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, eh will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.” James 5:13-16*

## **Foundation**

Gifts of Healings is the literal translation of the plurals in 1 Cor 12:9, meaning there are not people today who always have the gift to heal. But rather, God heals today, and He uses people to accomplish this purpose. Sometimes He uses some people more frequently or more spectacularly than others. He may also use people for specific healings. Paul’s language doesn’t suggest a super, rock star like person with the gift of healing.

Ministry of healing is seen in the lives of Jesus (Matt. 8:16-17), the apostles and other members of the early church.

It is right to ask God for healing. Jesus often healed ALL who were brought to Him. 3 John 2, *“I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in health.”*

“God can and does heal today, by His choosing, for His glory. He is more concerned with our eternal soul, than our temporal comfort.” -John Piper

It's easy for us to take an Advil for a headache, it should be as easy for us to ask God to heal our infirmities. ...*“You do not have, because you do not ask.”* -James 4:2

God can use doctors or medicine to heal or relieve pain. 1 Tim 5:23, Paul instructs Timothy to ‘use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and frequent ailments.’

God is to be glorified, whether He heals or not. “...”my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” - 2 Cor 12:9

Methods shown in the Bible varied from case to case

- frequently included the laying on of hands Luke 4:40, Matt. 9:18

- Anointing with oil. Mark 6:13, James 5:14-15

- Simple prayer or command. Luke 17:19

Faith plays a role, sometimes

- of the sick person, Matthew 9:22, Luke 8:48, Luke 17:19

- of those praying, Mark 9:17-24

- of family or friends, Matt 15:28, Mark 2:5

- faith is NOT mentioned, John 5:1-9

“Faith is a confession of our personal inability and of God’s limitless power.” -Sam Storms

Confession of sins is important in healing *“Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”* -James 5:16. Perhaps the presence of sin and the lack of repentance are factors in healing. Stubbornness, bitterness, resentment, unforgiveness or spiritual insensitivity of people could lead to their ailment and God’s willingness to heal.

Sign to authenticate the Gospel message, as many believed that were healed in the New Testament. In many instances, Jesus healed ALL that came to Him.

Brings comfort and health to those that are ill

Equips people for service as ailments are removed

Foretaste of Heaven when we be healed of all infirmities and have perfect bodies

God is glorified!! We see His power, mercy, love, goodness, closeness. Phil 2:27 *“indeed he was ill, near to death, But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.”*

## **Application Points**

Laying on of hands and anointing with oil are not requirements for healing (see above references), but rather should be considered an act of faith or obedience (yours and/or theirs), and should only be done with permission.

Laying on of hands between men and women should be done with extreme caution and always bringing someone with you.

Ask questions and listen. Where does it hurt? How long? What have doctors said? Is it physical, emotional, spiritual? How can I help?

Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you and them to possible causes, bacteria, stress, anxiety, disease, unforgiveness, spiritual attack or sin could all be causes. Often times the cause will simply be unknown, don't attempt to draw conclusions, but be open to revelation from the Holy Spirit. For example, you get an impression and say, *"Could anxiety be playing a part in your chronic back pain?"*

Pray for God to be glorified, whether He heals or not. "...my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." -2 Cor 12:9

Pray with a simple request. There are no magic words, no special prayer. It's God who heals, not us.

Pray with compassion

Pray with boldness. James 5:16 ...”that you may be healed.”

Pray with humility. Paul’s healing prayers were answered with a ‘yes’ 4 times in the New Testament (apparently, he healed everyone on the island of Malta who came to him, Acts 28:9), but he also experienced a ‘no’, or ‘not yet’ (Epaphroditus). He was unable to heal himself, Trophimus (2 Tim 4:20) and Timothy.

It’s Ok to keep your eyes open when you’re praying for them to notice if anything changes in their demeanor, shaking, weeping, etc. Take your time, linger in prayer. If you notice changes, it’s OK to ask questions...What do you feel? Is God doing something?

### **When God heals**

-Point them to God, His mercy, His love, His power, His sovereignty

-Be encouraged! Pray for others to be healed, but remember, God chooses who, when and if there is a healing.

### **When God doesn’t heal**

-Point them to God, His grace, His strength, His faithfulness, His peace

-Love bears all things

-Pray and continue to pray. Healing isn't always immediate, it can be a process over time

-God is sovereign, give thanks that we can trust Him to bring good from every situation. Romans 8:28 *"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."*

-Point them to scripture, as appropriate, Romans 8:18 *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us"*

Romans 8:23 *..."we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies."*

2 Cor 12:9 *"Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me."*

-Ps 119:71- *"it is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes"*

Never suggest that a lack of healing is the result of their lack of faith. Especially since it could be your lack of faith! It could also be that God's answer to them is the same answer He gave Paul. 1 Cor 12:9 *"But He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."*

Encourage them to ask for healing prayer again and again. God does not grow tired of our pursuit of Him and His mercy.

As we pray for people to be healed, remember healing is not the measure of success, obedience is.

## Discerning Spirits, Casting out demons

### Foundation

A Holy Spirit empowered ability to distinguish between the works of the Holy Spirit and works of another spirit (demonic or human)

Only mentioned once in the New Testament, 1 Cor 12:10, although spiritual warfare is mentioned a number of times

1 John 4:1 *“test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world”*

Acts 16:16-18 Paul discerns that the power of a slave girl is a demonic spirit

Acts 13:8-11 Paul discerns that Elymas, the magician was demonically motivated in his attempt to oppose the gospel

Various types of evil spirits, infirmity (Luke 13:11), divination (Acts 16:16), dumb and deaf (Mark 9:25,29), error (1 John 4:6)

Demonic activity is often of a physical nature, from violent to bizarre, (Mark 1:24, 9:20, Matt. 8:29)

Many times demons were cast out by simple commands. Acts 16:18, Matt 8:16,

The devil flees when we resist. *“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”* James 4:7

Demons oppose and try to destroy every work of God, yet they are limited by God's control and have limited power.

Not all sin is from Satan and demons, but some is.

*“And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.”* 2 Tim 2:24-26

A Christian cannot be ‘possessed’ by a demon. A more accurate description would be tormented or afflicted.

Demons can aggravate or intensify our chosen acts of sin, crippling us with feelings of shame or guilt.

Lines between mental illness, demonic oppression and sin are not easily defined. They may also be intertwined, with influence of all 3 present.

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works I do; And greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”* John 14:12

*“Spiritual warfare is not a horizontal tug of war, but a vertical chain of command.”* -Neil Anderson

## **Purpose of this gift**

Protect the gospel message, protect the church

A foretaste of heaven when we will be made perfect, and able to recognize Satan and his influence

Build up the church and equip the saints for service

## **Application Points**

*“After this the Lord appointed 72 others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. Luke 10:1*

*“The 72 returned with joy, saying “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” Luke 10:17*

*“Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” Luke 10:19-20*

Ask God to give you this gift for the benefit of the church

Praying for someone with demonic activity

- Bring another Christian with you
- Know that you don't know, but God does!
- Always pray with your eyes open

-Satan is not hard of hearing

-Conduct an interview

-who do they say Jesus is to them?

-What is their spiritual background? Exposed to anything occult, white magic, etc.

-What are they experiencing?

At this point, there appears to be 2 paths to take. An encounter with truth, as in 2 Tim 2:24-26, or an encounter with power, as in Acts 16:18 for example.

Truth encounter

Ask the individual to renounce the enemy

Ask them to confess and repent of any known sin

Affirm the truth of the scripture, ask God for specific direction

Ask them to submit to the authority of Christ

Pray!

Power encounter

Confront the enemy directly, may ask the demon to identify themselves

Cast it out by the power of Christ. For example, you could say "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and through power of His shed blood and resurrected life, I take authority over any

demonic spirit either present in or around \_\_\_\_\_. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I command any and every demonic spirit to leave \_\_\_\_\_ and never return.”

Forbid it to return

Often times, when freed from demons, there will be physical signs, loud, expressive.

If nothing changes, there are a few possible reasons

- person doesn't want demon to go
- more prayer is needed as in Mark 9:29
- there was never a demon, it's sin or mental illness

Pray the truth in love and boldness. Jesus is the one and only Son of God, who defeated death, sits at God's right hand, all things are subject to Him!

# **Practical Application of Spiritual Gifts in the life of the Christian and their church**

## **Week 4 Recap, Q & A**

What would happen if we ascribe to God the positive things that happen to you and others? Salvation, Transformation, Sanctification we typically ascribe much to God, but perhaps the more you identify the power of the Holy Spirit at work in your life, the more you will see God at work and PARTICIPATE!

The circumstances of life, are they random? Don't we believe that a sovereign God is in control of all, ALL things? So, every interaction we have, those are not chance, luck, or fate. Let's ask God if those pre-ordained meetings might be an opportunity for us to use a spiritual gift to encourage, edify, or equip one another.

Renew your mind to see God at work, Romans 12:2

A person could have multiple gifts active at the same time.  
Discernment leading to mercy leading to prayer leading to prophecy/healing

There is an old saying, I don't know who to credit for it, but the saying is "If you have only the Word, you dry up. If you have

only the Spirit, you blow up. But if you have both, you grow up.”

There are as many gifts for the body of Christ as there are people in the body of Christ

God inhabits the praises of His people. Worship of God, fervent, passionate, whole hearted often precedes the movement of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts. However, it is not a prerequisite. God can break into an episode of ‘American Pickers’ and ask you to use your gifting for the benefit of the body.

“Before my conversion, I viewed God as a little old lady asking for compliments. After conversion, I understood that what is needed most was to give God compliments.” -C.S. Lewis

At the conclusion of our Sunday morning message, our cars are not our destination, people are!! For their encouragement, edification and up building.

Faith. During our 3 weeks together, looking at spiritual gifts, we have seen faith mentioned several times. Paul addresses this head on in Romans 12.

*“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually*

*members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them:" Romans 12:3-6*

It would appear that faith is a standard or measure for us.

Faith is the root of all gifts, and faith is 'assigned by God'.

Faith is the measure so we cannot boast in any gift

Faith deflects glory from me to Christ

Gifts differ according to grace so that we must be interconnected to one another. If we all had the same gift, we would not need one another.

### **How do we find our spiritual gifts?**

*Romans 1:8-12 "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. For I long to see you that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you---that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine."*

Do you hear the love that Paul has for his Christian family in Rome? I thank my God, without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers, he longs to see them, to encourage and be encouraged. Love is his motivation for using the gifts that God has given him.

Romans 12:6 *“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them;”*

We all have different gifts, we must use them!

We must seek to love our church body, our friends, our family with the gifts God has given us. We find our spiritual gifts when we seek to love people and they are affected, when the Holy Spirit takes our efforts and multiplies! Your gift could be in teaching, praying, mercy, hospitality, prophecy, healing, generosity, and on and on. Let’s step out and seek to love one another, that’s where we’ll find our spiritual gifts.

## **Closing**

In John 14:12, Jesus says *“ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”*

The power of the Holy Spirit is alive and longs to be active inside every believer, empowering us to live for Christ today. That power is visible as we battle sin, serve others, love people and achieve any sort of godly behavior. That power is also visible in spiritual gifts, like preaching, teaching, prophecy, healings, tongues, interpretation, just to name a few. Always used to encourage, edify, console and equip the saints. In an article title *“Greater works than Jesus”*, John Piper puts it this way...

“Jesus’s vision for transforming society never consisted of platforming a few hyper-anointed mega pastors to pack an auditorium with their electrifying sermons. His vision of greatness of the church consisted in each believer being filled with, and used by, the Holy Spirit.” -John Piper

Did you know in Acts, 39 of the 40 miracles were done outside of the gathered church? We certainly know that there are many people not putting church attendance on their list of TTDs. The power of the Holy Spirit is not just for a Small Group, not just for Sunday morning, we NEED the power of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts to participate in the great commission!

J.D. Greear “He (Holy Spirit) is in every believer, the collective impact of ordinary Christians filled with the Spirit is greater than if Jesus had stayed on earth to lead the Church. The vision is for every believer, being filled with and used by the Holy Spirit.”

Martyn Lloyd-Jones “The Holy Spirit in you is better than Jesus beside you. We must see the Holy Spirit as God and as a person. Study doctrine! Doctrine is not enough!

We need fullness of spirit and depth of the Gospel

Let’s move into our lives assuming that God is at work, that the person you think of at lunch tomorrow was placed there by a sovereign God who wanted you to pray for that person and perhaps step out of your comfort zone to call them with a specific form of encouragement. How cool is that?!!

