


Q. What do you think the term *perfecting of the saints* mean?

Q. Who is to benefit (or be edified) by this gift?


A Christian with the gift of prophecy is one who has a passion for declaring and defending the truths of the Bible. He desires others to grow in knowledge and obedience to the word of God and will devote his own time, effort and abilities to achieving that task.

 For what areas of ministry do you think the man with the gift of prophecy is best suited? Are there areas of ministry that might be more difficult for this person?


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### How to Appreciate the Gift of Prophecy

Just like a fleshly body, each member of the church should learn to contribute to its body as a whole, and should in turn appreciate the contribution of each of the other members. As a church we must learn to appreciate those that have the gift of prophecy.

 Discuss the following questions as a group.

1. Because we share different gifts, sometimes it may be difficult to see eye-to-eye. Of the following gifts, Ruling, Exhorting, Faith, Giving, Helping, Mercy, which do you think it's possessor might have the most difficult time serving harmoniously with one that possesses the gift of prophecy? Why?
2. How might the church suffer if it did not have members who possess the gift of prophecy?
3. In Acts 6:1-4, we find men who had the gift of prophecy but had become distracted with other tasks. Read this passage, what tasks did they become distracted by? In what area did they desire to place their efforts? Which gift do you think could best be used to alleviate the problem?

 1 Cor 12:1. What does Paul *not want us to be* regarding spiritual gifts?

Paul, inspired by God, told the Corinthians that he did not want them to be ignorant concerning spiritual gifts. It is the goal of this series to ensure that we as a church are also not ignorant, but well informed regarding spiritual gifts. This includes learning the characteristics of each gift, which gift we possess, how each gift functions within the church and how to appreciate those who have gifts differing from our own.

### Christ's Body: The Church

As a group, alternate reading these verses: 1 Cor 12:14-26.

1. What analogy does Paul use to describe the church? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What bad attitude might some church members have according to vss 15,16?
3. What would be the problem if everyone in the church had the same gifts and abilities? (v17)
4. What does v18 teach about our gifts and our place of service in the church?
5. What is essential for the church to be a body? vss 19,20
6. What is the proper attitude for church members to have toward one another? vss 21,22

With the above questions in mind, discuss some attitudes or ways of operating that might undermine the proper function of the church body.


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### Understanding the Gift of Prophecy

The first spiritual gift that we will deal with in this series is the *gift of prophecy*. When we hear the word "prophet", generally we think of men of the Old Testament who foretold future events or who performed great miracles. Certainly the foretelling of events and the performance of miracles was a key function of the prophet, but primarily his role was that of a *messenger of God*. These men were God's ambassadors, delivering his word to men on earth.

Although the gift of miracles, like that of Elijah or Moses has ceased, the role of God's messengers still remains. It is in this sense that the gift of Prophecy exists today. God still chooses men to be his mouthpiece on earth. He still empowers and instructs men to deliver his message. Today his message does not come to us in the form of a direct revelation, but in the form of his completed word – the Bible. *Today's "prophets" are those whom God calls and equips to study and learn his word for the purpose of delivering his message to the world.*


There is an example of two such prophets in the early church.

 Acts 15:32. Who are the prophets spoken of here?

The apostles chose Judas (not Iscariot) and Silas to visit the churches in Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. But they were not sent to perform miracles or to deliver a message about future events. Let's look at these verses to see what their role was.

The apostles wrote letters for the gentile churches to encourage them, and to instruct them that circumcision was not a necessary custom for the Christian (v24-26).

 What was the message of Silas and Judas according to v27?

 Acts 15:27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the \_\_\_\_\_ by mouth.


**Q.** v30. What did Judas and Silas do when the multitude was gathered together?

**Q.** v32. What two things did Judas and Silas do for the church at Antioch?

According to this passage, Judas and Silas were prophets. It is interesting to note that they did not deliver a message about futuristic events or perform great miracles in the church at Antioch. Instead, they delivered the message from the Apostles, encouraged the church and strengthened it. *This is the very same task that men with the gift of prophecy have today, to deliver the message of the apostles and to encourage and strengthen the church with the word of God.*

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The following is a list of characteristics devised by Bill Gothard in his material on spiritual gifts. Each of these characterizes the man that possesses the gift of prophecy.

 Alternate reading these qualities and discuss them as a group. After each quality discuss how it might be used properly and then how it might be used improperly. Write a few notes under each line.


1. The need to express thoughts and ideas verbally, especially regarding right and wrong.
2. The tendency to make quick judgments on what is seen and heard, and to speak quickly.
3. An amazing ability to sense when someone or something is not what it appears to be and to react harshly to dishonesty.
4. A desire to reject those that offend so that justice will be done and others will be warned
5. An openness about personal faults and failures and an honesty about himself as well as others.
6. A tendency to be impulsive in actions and to be wholeheartedly involved in whatever is done.
7. A tendency to be painfully direct when correcting friends.
8. A desire to give open evidences of loyalty and total commitment.
9. A willingness to suffer for doing what is right.
10. An ability to be very persuasive in defining what is right and what is wrong.

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### Applying the Gift of Prophecy

Each spiritual gift must be exercised in the power of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise they can be misused and can bring shame to the name of Christ instead of glory.

In Ephesians 4:11,12 we are told what the purpose of the *declarative gifts* are, that is, those gifts that revolve around the declaration of the word of God.

 Eph 4:11,12. What three purposes do we find in these verses?