

THE GIFTS

A stylized flame graphic in shades of orange and yellow, positioned to the right of the word 'THE' and partially overlapping the word 'GIFTS'.

SERMON

SERIES

THE GIFTS

SERMON SERIES BASED SMALL GROUP STUDY

Small Group Discussion Guide:

The Gifts Series

Week One

How To Use This Guide:

You and your small group are encouraged to listen to the weekend message. It is not required for this guide to be helpful. This guide will complement, but not compete OR complete what was communicated in the weekend message.

Brief Intro/Teaching for Your Group:

1. God desires for His people to move beyond knowledge of Him and into experience of Him. With this mind, as a church, we are laying a theological, biblical, and practical foundation for what it means to be people who encounter God through this series on the Holy Spirit.
2. Though we tend to think of the Holy Spirit when it comes to gifts, all three members of the Godhead are involved in the giving of gifts - Paul says as much in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 where he says, "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work." This is a clear reference not only to the Triune God, but that the presence of this Triune God is expressed and experienced by the gifts given to His people.

Big Idea for Discussion: God makes Himself known among us through the gifts He gives us.

1. We will be focusing on experiencing and knowing God through the gifts of the Spirit.

Let's pray and invite God into our discussion.

My Story (Help us get to know one another):

1. When I say "encountering God," what is the first thing that comes to mind?
 - a. Are there any bible stories that come to mind when you think of "encountering God?"
2. Have you ever had a "God encounter?"
 - a. What happened?
 - b. How did it make you feel?
 - c. How has your life changed since then?

Digging Deeper (Exploring the big idea in and through God's Word):

1. We all experience God in different ways - sometimes it can be through a private encounter during a time of prayer and worship, and other times it can come through our brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ praying for us. Now that we all know some of each other's personal histories with God, let's dive into our passage for this week.
2. Have someone read the entirety of 1 Corinthians 12
3. Focus on 1 Corinthians 12:7 "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." Why is it important that Paul shares that gifts are given to individuals for the common good of the entire body?
4. Paul jumps from talking about God giving the gifts to discussing those gifts in particular. Read over that list slowly.
 - a. Are there any of these gifts listed that you're not comfortable with?
 - b. Are there any gifts listed you're familiar with?
 - c. Are there any gifts you have questions about, and if so, what are those questions?

Taking It Home (Putting this into action):

1. As we continue into this series, we believe many of those questions you have about specific gifts will be answered, either through the messages or in this small group!
2. Scripture is clear that God gives good gifts to His children when we ask for them. For those who ask to experience more of His presence, to encounter Him through the gifts of the Spirit, we believe not only will God meet you, but that He desires to have a personal, tangible encounter with you. With that in mind, we're going to move into a time of prayer that is open to everyone here, specifically for an encounter with God. However, before we pray, if there are any of those gifts listed that you want to experience or grow in, why don't you go ahead and ask for that?

Move into time of prayer.

- a. Pause for a few moments to give space for people to allow what has been discussed to settle into their mind and heart.
- b. Before moving forward with prayer, ask if anyone has any specific needs - making our needs known helps others in the room know what to pray for, and as we pray for one another we yield ourselves to what the Holy Spirit is saying and doing among us.

- c. For those who desire to experience God:
- As we each seek God with one another our encounters with God can look and feel different. Our body's response to the presence of God differs both internally and externally. Sometimes we may feel a sense of joy, peace, love or other times anticipation and excitement. We may have physical responses of shaking, trembling, fluttering of eyes, tears or weak knees. We simply want to become more aware of what we are feeling and experiencing.
 - As preparation to encounter God we are going to pray together silently with an invitation, "Come Holy Spirit, Come." We are going to wait in this posture of invitation together. As you sense the moving of the Holy Spirit's presence within you feel free to share how we may partner with you in this time of prayer.
 - As individuals begin to share an awareness of God's presence...ask the Holy Spirit to increase awareness of God's presence and power to open hearts to the Kingdom releasing and freeing to more of God's presence. Keep prayers alongside one another short and focused on partnering with the Holy Spirit's promptings. Be patient in waiting and praying over one another. Most often as we partner in prayer either the individual or the group will discern a sense of completion or peace marking the fruition of the encounter with God.

Small Group Discussion Guide:

The Gifts Series

Week Two

How To Use This Guide:

You and your small group are encouraged to listen to the weekend message. It is not required for this guide to be helpful. This guide will complement, but not compete OR complete what was communicated in the weekend message.

Brief Intro/Teaching for Your Group:

1. Last week we focused on encountering God, the Giver of the gifts. This week we will begin diving into the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as well as how and why they manifest in the Body of Christ. However, before we dive into the specifics of the gifts and how they operate, it's important to briefly share Vineyard Columbus' position on the gifts of the Spirit as well as related issues.
2. Vineyard Columbus is a "continuationist" church, meaning that we believe all gifts of the Holy Spirit, including the ones listed in 1 Corinthians 12, have continued throughout history into present time. We are also "charismatic," meaning we have moved beyond a theology or belief about the continuation of the gifts and we desire for these gifts to be manifest among us, making room for them in our worship gatherings, small groups, as well as other ministries. In contrast, there are churches and believers who deny the continuation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, known as "cessationists." We affirm them as brothers and sisters in the faith, but lovingly disagree with their position on this matter.
3. Similarly, we are not Pentecostal. Though we respect the Pentecostal tradition and agree on the continuation of the gifts of the Spirit, we would disagree on matters related to what is known as the "Doctrine of Initial Evidence," or the belief that one must be "baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues" as a separate, subsequent experience to salvation and prior to the manifestation of any of the other gifts of the Spirit. Though we affirm the gift of tongues and will talk about that gift in the coming weeks, we believe all believers have been baptized in the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). Not only do we believe all Christians have already been baptized in the Holy Spirit, but we also believe the Holy Spirit can manifest any of the gifts through any believer at any time! This is

why we make room for the movement of the Holy Spirit at Vineyard Columbus.

4. Because of our convictions discussed earlier, we don't believe there are "super Christians" who can operate in all of the gifts of the Spirit at will - the Apostle doesn't seem to be a fan of that idea either (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). Instead, we depend on and trust the Holy Spirit will manifest these gifts among us "for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7).

Big Idea for Discussion: God, through the Holy Spirit, has given gifts to His church for the common good.

Let's pray and invite God into our discussion.

My Story:

1. What has been your history with the gifts of the Holy Spirit?
 - a. Were you raised in a church that embraced the gifts of the Spirit, or do you come from another tradition?
 - b. Is all of this talk about gifts of the Holy Spirit new to you? If so, how does it make you feel? Uneasy, excited, etc. Why?

Digging Deeper:

1. Have someone in your group read 1 Corinthians 12 in its entirety.
2. Paul is writing this portion of his letter to the Corinthian church (chapters 12-14) to inform them about the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, correct their practice of the gifts of the Spirit, and confront some abuses of the gifts in their gatherings.
 - a. If Paul says "I do not want you to be uninformed" about the gifts, do you think it's possible to be trained in the gifts of the Spirit? If so, how? If not, why?
 - b. Going back to the gospels, Jesus and the Twelve had these gifts manifesting in their ministries. Do you believe Jesus disciplined the Twelve in the ways of the Spirit in a similar way Paul is doing with the Corinthian church?
3. What does it mean for these gifts to be given and manifest "for the common good"?
 - a. Are there any situations you can think of when it would be "the common good" for a gift to manifest in a small group, worship service, or other gatherings of believers?
 - b. What might Paul be correcting with a reminder to the Corinthians that each one is given a gift and gifts given are for the "common good"?

4. In verses 12-31 Paul is making a major point about the need for both unity and diversity with regard to the gifts of the Spirit and how they manifest in the church. Read that section again aloud and take some time as a group to mark how we are to honor unity and how we are to honor diversity.

- a. How does honoring the unity and diversity of individual gifting manifest in the corporate expression of the church confront possible abuse of gifts in our gatherings?
- b. Who is responsible within our gatherings to confront an abuse?

Taking It Home:

1. You can't "will" yourself into the gifts of the Spirit. However, you can make yourself aware of the needs of your brothers, sisters, and others around you, and yield yourself to the Spirit. When the Body of Christ yields to the Spirit, "everyone gets to play" when it comes to these gifts manifesting among us.

2. We are going to move into a time of prayer - once again, if anyone has any specific needs, have the group pray for them using the Vineyard Five-step Prayer Model, which will be listed below. This is a wonderful tool and though it's primarily geared toward praying for healing, those who are praying can receive words of knowledge, prophetic words, discernment, etc. in the form of impressions, images, or a general sense of knowing. We will dive into those gifts in the coming weeks, but for now, during prayer time, if anyone gets an impression, sees something, or feels something while they're praying, just ask "does that mean anything to you?" If it doesn't, don't worry about it and move on - encourage them and thank them for stepping out and taking a risk.

Move into time of prayer.

The Vineyard 5-Step Prayer Model is a framework for praying for others that is designed to be interactive and led by the Holy Spirit. It is not a formula or a magic incantation, but rather a way to approach prayer with intentionality and openness. The five steps are as follows:

1. **Interview:** Ask the person you are praying for to share their needs and concerns. Listen carefully and compassionately. It may be a physical sickness, a need for direction for a big decision, a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit or other need.

2. **Diagnosis:** As the person is talking, silently ask the Holy Spirit to give you insight into the root causes of the person's needs. This may be related to physical, emotional, spiritual, or relational issues.

3. **Prayer Selection:** With your understanding of the person's needs and the Holy Spirit's leading, move into a time of prayer by asking them if you can lay hands on them (on the affected area if appropriate, or have them place a hand on the area as you lay a hand on their shoulder). Prayers may include prayers for healing, forgiveness, deliverance, or guidance. If you feel the person needs pastoral care for their issue, feel free to contact a VC pastor.

4. **Prayer Engagement:** *First things first*, invite the Holy Spirit to come by praying "Come, Holy Spirit." *Second*, ask the Holy Spirit to release the power for whatever is needed. If healing is needed, ask the Holy Spirit to release the power to heal. If wisdom is needed, ask the Holy Spirit to release the power to heal. Pray with confidence and authority, believing that God is able to do anything, but fight the urge to get loud and talk the whole time - just continue to invite the Holy Spirit to move in power and to manifest His presence. *Third*, be aware of what you are sensing, feeling, and hearing - listen for guidance and insight from the Holy Spirit. Pray with your eyes open to pay attention to what the Spirit is doing! *Finally*, ask the person if they are sensing or feeling anything, or if the Holy Spirit is showing them or speaking to them about anything.

5. **Post-Prayer Direction:** After praying, usually no longer than 5-7 minutes depending on how many people you are praying for, ask the person how they are feeling. Be sensitive to their needs and offer to continue praying for them in the future.

Here are some additional tips for using the Vineyard 5-Step Prayer Model:

- Be respectful of the person you are praying for and their privacy.
- Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help from other believers.
- Have faith. Believe that God is able to do anything.
- Be patient and persistent. Prayer is a process, and it may take time to see results.

Small Group Discussion Guide:

The Gifts Series

Week Three

How To Use This Guide:

You and your small group are encouraged to listen to the weekend message. It is not required for this guide to be helpful. This guide will complement, but not compete OR complete what was communicated in the weekend message.

Brief Intro/Teaching for Your Group:

1. The spiritual gifts listed in 1 Cor 12 can be difficult to understand. Part of the problem is that Paul never bothered to define them! Because of that, there is a lot of confusion and misunderstanding about these gifts. This misunderstanding applies to words of wisdom, words of knowledge, and discernment.
2. One way Christians have understood the gifts is through the ways they *manifest* in the Body of Christ (1 Cor 6:7; 1 Cor. 12:12). There are gifts that manifest the mind of Christ, others the hands of Christ, and others the words of Christ. That is what we see here in 1 Corinthians 12. This week we are focusing on the gifts that manifest the mind of Christ in the body: words of wisdom, words of knowledge, and discernment. Let's take a closer look at these gifts..
3. The *word of wisdom* is defined by Paul in 1 Cor. 2:7: "No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began." According to New Testament scholar James Dunn, a word of wisdom is "some charismatic utterance giving an insight into fresh understanding of God's plan of salvation or of the benefits it brings to believers." Similarly, our Founding Pastor Rich Nathan echoes this by saying, "The gift of wisdom is not a function of a person's education. It is not a matter of a person's IQ. High IQ folks may lack this gift and simple people may have it. We are talking about Holy-Spirit-inspired insight regarding God's plan – God's plan for the world in setting it right, and God's plan for us."
4. Dr. Craig Keener defines a *word of knowledge* as "...[the] ability to speak knowledge publicly, [and] undoubtedly means imparting knowledge about God; in other words, the gift of teaching."
5. The gift of distinguishing between spirits, or *discernment*, is the Spirit given ability to discern the source of inspiration. Is it human, is it

demonic, or is it of God? The gift of distinguishing between spirits allows us to know the difference between true and false teaching, provides the ability to test words of prophecy, and to have insight into whether a personal ailment is merely a medical or mental condition, or whether there is also demonic influence at work.

Big Idea for Discussion: The gifts of wisdom, knowledge, and discernment manifest the mind of Christ in the Body of Christ.

Let's pray and invite God into our discussion.

My Story:

1. Some Christian traditions would define these gifts in different ways. Did you grow up or did you spend time in a tradition, denomination, etc. that would define these gifts differently?
2. Have you experienced these gifts either personally, or seen them at work in the Body of Christ?

Digging Deeper:

1. Using the definitions listed above, take a few moments as a group and think through the events in the gospels and Acts - you're not being graded on this so don't get upset if you can't think of one! - but are there any stories you can point to where you see words of wisdom, words of knowledge, and distinguishing of spirits active in the ministry of Jesus and the early church?
 - a. It may be helpful for the small group leader to have a few examples in their back pocket. Here are a few to look at: Matthew 10:18-20, Acts 6:10, Matthew 16:17, and Luke 13:17.
2. Why is the "mind of Christ" needed in the church (the whole Body of Christ around the world, as well as Vineyard Columbus locally) today?
3. Why do you need the "mind of Christ" today?
 - a. Have you ever prayed for wisdom, insight, and understanding of the scriptures? Did you have any "aha!" moments while reading or while listening to someone teach the text?
 - b. Have you personally ever needed God's help in making a decision? Did you receive a word of wisdom, word of knowledge, or discern something prior to making a decision?

Taking It Home:

1. During this series we are making room for the Holy Spirit to move among us and part of that "yieldedness" is encouraging our small groups to spend time in prayer together. The 5-Step Prayer Model you

practiced last week is a great tool for teaching people how to pray for one another, and though it was originally designed to assist in praying for healing, the Holy Spirit usually manifests other gifts while praying, listening to, and yielding to the Spirit.

2. For this week, ask if anyone among you needs a word of wisdom, word of knowledge, or the distinguishing of spirits - this could be because of a major decision coming up, a move, a new job opportunity, etc. Similarly, someone could be asking for insight into scripture or to understand something they've been wrestling with for a while. This could also apply to your group as a whole - maybe you have been debating whether or not to move your small group gatherings from one location to another, one day to another, or to address a topic together following this series. God cares about all of that! And though we cannot guarantee words of knowledge, wisdom, or discernment will manifest during your time of prayer, it is always a wise decision to make room for the Holy Spirit to speak to us.

Move into time of prayer.

The Vineyard 5-Step Prayer Model is a framework for praying for others that is designed to be interactive and led by the Holy Spirit. It is not a formula or a magic incantation, but rather a way to approach prayer with intentionality and openness. The five steps are as follows:

1. **Interview:** Ask the person you are praying for to share their needs and concerns. Listen carefully and compassionately. It may be a physical sickness, a need for direction for a big decision, a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit or other need.

2. **Diagnosis:** As the person is talking, silently ask the Holy Spirit to give you insight into the root causes of the person's needs. This may be related to physical, emotional, spiritual, or relational issues.

3. **Prayer Selection:** With your understanding of the person's needs and the Holy Spirit's leading, move into a time of prayer by asking them if you can lay hands on them (on the affected area if appropriate, or have them place a hand on the area as you lay a hand on their shoulder). Prayers may include prayers for healing, forgiveness, deliverance, or guidance. If you feel the person needs pastoral care for their issue, feel free to contact a VC pastor.

4. **Prayer Engagement:** *First things first*, invite the Holy Spirit to come by praying "Come, Holy Spirit." *Second*, ask the Holy Spirit to

release the power for whatever is needed. If healing is needed, ask the Holy Spirit to release the power to heal. If wisdom is needed, ask the Holy Spirit to release wisdom. Pray with confidence and authority, believing that God is able to do anything, but fight the urge to get loud and talk the whole time - just continue to invite the Holy Spirit to move in power and to manifest His presence. *Third*, be aware of what you are sensing, feeling, and hearing - listen for guidance and insight from the Holy Spirit. Pray with your eyes open to pay attention to what the Spirit is doing! *Finally*, ask the person if they are sensing or feeling anything, or if the Holy Spirit is showing them or speaking to them about anything.

5. **Post-Prayer Direction:** After praying, usually no longer than 5-7 minutes depending on how many people you are praying for, ask the person how they are feeling. Be sensitive to their needs and offer to continue praying for them in the future.

Here are some additional tips for using the Vineyard 5-Step Prayer Model:

- Be respectful of the person you are praying for and their privacy.
- Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help from other believers.
- Have faith. Believe that God is able to do anything.
- Be patient and persistent. Prayer is a process, and it may take time to see results.

Small Group Discussion Guide:

The Gifts Series

Week Four

How To Use This Guide:

You and your small group are encouraged to listen to the weekend message. It is not required for this guide to be helpful. This guide will complement, but not compete OR complete what was communicated in the weekend message.

Brief Intro/Teaching for Your Group:

1. Last week we noted the difficulty in trying to define some of the gifts listed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 because he simply names them without giving any explanation of what they look like. However, this week, the gifts are a little easier to define as they are seen throughout scripture.

2. The *gift of faith* is a supernatural enablement to trust God completely, even when circumstances are difficult. It is a faith that is not based on our own reasoning or understanding, but on the promises, character, and Word of God. It is a persevering, “mountain moving” faith usually expressed in prayer (1 Corinthians 13:1-2). The healing of the Centurion’s servant in Luke 7:1-10, as well as the healing of the woman with the issue of blood in Luke 8:43-48, are classic illustrations of this gift.

3. The *gift of healing* enables us to pray for those in need and see them healed. This gift is seen throughout the ministry of Jesus in the gospels, the ministry of the Twelve, and the continued ministry of the early church, in Acts.

4. The *gift of miracles* is supernatural empowerment to perform signs and wonders that can only be explained by direct intervention of God. They are often visible and dramatic, such as the healing of a blind person, raising someone from the dead, and multiplying loaves of bread and fish to feed a multitude.

5. If the gifts discussed last week manifest the mind of Christ in the Body of Christ, the gifts we are discussing today manifest the hands of Christ.

Big Idea for Discussion: Faith, healing, and miracles manifest the hands of Christ in the Body of Christ.

Let’s pray and invite God into our discussion.

My Story:

1. When it comes to the gifts, no one really has a problem with the ones we discussed last week. Issues begin to arise when we discuss the gifts we’re focusing on this week and next week (prophecy and tongues). With that being said, how is the teaching and our discussions sitting with you?

- a. Have you learned anything new?
- b. Did you have any questions at the start of this series that have since been answered? What were the questions, and what were the answers?
- c. Do you have new questions?

2. Do you have any experience with the gifts we’re talking about today?

- a. Ever prayed for and seen someone healed? Been healed?
- b. Ever witnessed a miracle?
- c. Prayed for something or someone with a supernatural level of faith that resulted in change?

Digging Deeper:

1. In context (1 Corinthians 12-14), Paul is outlining these gifts, correcting false teaching about these gifts, and encouraging the Corinthians to yield to the Spirit so these gifts will manifest among them. Why is it important for us to correct false teaching about these gifts?

- a. Are there any gifts you’ve seen abused in modern church culture? How so?

2. Miracles and healing are often lumped together, but Paul lists them as separate gifts here. Do you believe healing is a miracle, or is there a reason why Paul separates these gifts?

- a. Think back through the stories of Jesus, the Twelve, and the early church - again, no one is being graded on this! - are healings and miracles (signs and wonders) the same thing or do they point to different things? E.g. the divinity of Christ, the presence of the Kingdom, confirmation of the gospel, etc.

3. Why do we need the “hands of Christ” in the Body of Christ today?

Taking It Home:

1. During this series we are making room for the Holy Spirit to move among us and part of that “yieldedness” is encouraging our small groups to spend time in prayer together. The 5-Step Prayer Model you’ve been practicing is a great tool for teaching people how to pray

for one another, and though it was originally designed to assist in praying for healing, the Holy Spirit usually manifests other gifts while praying, listening to, and yielding to the Spirit.

2. For this week, we're going to focus on praying for healing, but encourage everyone to be vocal about any of their needs that you as a group can pray about.

Move into time of prayer.

The Vineyard 5-Step Prayer Model is a framework for praying for others that is designed to be interactive and led by the Holy Spirit. It is not a formula or a magic incantation, but rather a way to approach prayer with intentionality and openness. The five steps are as follows:

1. **Interview:** Ask the person you are praying for to share their needs and concerns. Listen carefully and compassionately. It may be a physical sickness, a need for direction for a big decision, a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit or other need.

2. **Diagnosis:** As the person is talking, silently ask the Holy Spirit to give you insight into the root causes of the person's needs. This may be related to physical, emotional, spiritual, or relational issues.

3. **Prayer Selection:** With your understanding of the person's needs and the Holy Spirit's leading, move into a time of prayer by asking them if you can lay hands on them (on the affected area if appropriate, or have them place a hand on the area as you lay a hand on their shoulder). Prayers may include prayers for healing, forgiveness, deliverance, or guidance. If you feel the person needs pastoral care for their issue, feel free to contact a VC pastor.

4. **Prayer Engagement:** *First things first*, invite the Holy Spirit to come by praying "Come, Holy Spirit." *Second*, ask the Holy Spirit to release the power for whatever is needed. If healing is needed, ask the Holy Spirit to release the power to heal. If wisdom is needed, ask the Holy Spirit to release wisdom. Pray with confidence and authority, believing that God is able to do anything, but fight the urge to get loud and talk the whole time - just continue to invite the Holy Spirit to move in power and to manifest His presence. *Third*, be aware of what you are sensing, feeling, and hearing - listen for guidance and insight from the Holy Spirit. Pray with your eyes open to pay attention to what the Spirit is doing! *Finally*, ask the person if they are sensing or feeling

anything, or if the Holy Spirit is showing them or speaking to them about anything.

5. **Post-Prayer Direction:** After praying, usually no longer than 5-7 minutes depending on how many people you are praying for, ask the person how they are feeling. Be sensitive to their needs and offer to continue praying for them in the future.

Here are some additional tips for using the Vineyard 5-Step Prayer Model:

- Be respectful of the person you are praying for and their privacy.
- Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help from other believers.
- Have faith. Believe that God is able to do anything.
- Be patient and persistent. Prayer is a process, and it may take time to see results.

Small Group Discussion Guide:

The Gifts Series

Week Five

How To Use This Guide:

You and your small group are encouraged to listen to the weekend message. It is not required for this guide to be helpful. This guide will complement, but not compete OR complete what was communicated in the weekend message.

Brief Intro/Teaching for Your Group:

1. This week we will be focusing on prophecy, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. Sadly, these gifts have been misunderstood and caused division for close to 2000 years, but they are beautiful manifestations of the Spirit in the church.
2. We want to challenge a couple of misunderstandings of “prophecy.” One common misunderstanding of prophecy in our culture is to reduce the prophetic to being radical, subversive, or countercultural. Some claim that to be a prophetic Christian just means that you live differently. That’s not what Paul means here.
3. Another misunderstanding is that the gift of prophecy is focused on the End Times, or the details on how God is going to finish up his kingdom project on earth. But that’s not what we see happening in 1 Cor. 12 and 14, and it’s not the typical model for prophetic words in the New Testament. In the New Testament prophecy is almost always words of personal revelation to strengthen individuals.
4. A final misunderstanding of prophecy, at least for the time we have this week, is to equate it to the gift of preaching. The claim is that spontaneous revelatory words from God don’t occur any longer now that we have the New Testament. However, Paul says prophecy is more than preaching. Preaching doesn’t “reveal the secrets of hearts” (1 Cor. 14:24-25). To contrast this view, Dr. Craig Keener notes, “Early Christians would have understood that “prophecy comes in a variety of forms: visions, dreams, audible voices, ecstatic trances, and probably most often the Spirit bringing words to the heart and/or mouth of a prophet.”
5. When Paul talks about the *gift of tongues* in 1 Cor. 12 and 14 the context is public worship, and in that setting, that gift that is paired with another gift—the *gift of interpretation*. Prophecy is words from God to us. Tongues are words from us to God. Speaking and praying in tongues builds up our faith. Prophecy builds up others’ faith.

Prophecy can be evangelistic and therefore speaks to those who don’t know Christ. Tongues is for insiders.

6. With that in mind, we’re going to talk about the gifts of the Spirit that manifest the words of Christ to the Body of Christ.

Big Idea for Discussion: The gifts of prophecy, tongues, and interpretation of tongues manifest the words of Christ in the Body of Christ.

Let’s pray and invite God into our discussion.

My Story:

1. Knowing there’s differences of opinion on these gifts, and knowing some of us come from various backgrounds, how have you heard these gifts taught before?
 - a. For those who don’t come from a Christian background, how does talk of prophecy and tongues sit with you?

Digging Deeper:

1. Paul really digs into the gifts of prophecy and tongues in 1 Corinthians 14:1-5. Have someone read that passage aloud, and then float this question to the group: Compared to Old Testament prophetic ministry, what are some key changes with prophetic ministry in the New Testament?
 - a. Who can prophesy?
 - b. What is the point of prophecy?
2. How can prophetic ministry be used to strengthen the church today?
3. Paul holds a tension between the Spirit manifesting these gifts “just as he determines” (1 Cor 12:11), the gift being “subject to the prophet,” (1 Cor 14:32) as well as making sure everything is “...done in an orderly a fitting way” (1 Cor 14:40). What is at stake if these gifts don’t have guidelines like he has listed among 1 Corinthians 12-14?
 - a. What is wrong with unchecked, indiscernible prophetic ministry?
 - b. What is wrong with uninterpreted tongues?

Taking It Home:

1. One question that sometimes I hear when we preach on tongues is, “Why doesn’t Vineyard practice speaking in tongues during worship?” The answer is we absolutely do believe in this gift and encourage its devotional use in private and its public use (with interpretation) in the

appropriate settings. Both prophecy and tongues are best practiced in a smaller setting, such as a small group or a worship night, where typically everyone present is a believer and where there is more space to weigh words, and wait and see if the Spirit provides an interpretation.

2. With that in mind, we're going to move into a time of prayer and make space for these gifts to manifest among us. Again, we cannot guarantee anyone will get a prophetic word, a tongue, or an interpretation, the point is to yield to the Spirit and see what God wants to do among us!

3. When it comes to "weighing" prophetic words, it is important to stress that if someone "gets it wrong," it doesn't mean they are a false prophet. It means they are learning to distinguish the Spirit from other things. Likewise, they could be seeing something from the Spirit, but their interpretation and application of what they sensed, heard, or saw could be off. This is why we have the gift of discernment and must weigh words.

4. A few quick "rules" for prophetic ministry: "no dates, no mates, and no babies." The gift of prophecy is not fortune telling, match-making, nor for shaming someone for secret sin. It is for "strengthening, encouraging and comfort" (1 Corinthians 14:3). Finally, if someone gives you a personal prophetic word, it is your job to weigh it and discern its inspiration. If someone gives a prophetic word to a group, it is the group's duty to weigh and discern its inspiration.

5. Start with worship, either having someone lead you in worship or playing music. As you worship together, some of you may begin to see pictures in your mind, feel or sense something, or hear something. If anyone has something, encourage them to share it with the group, praying for discernment, or if it is a tongue, pray for interpretation. Likewise, if anyone comes forward with a need that needs prayer, following the 5-Step Prayer Model, while praying please encourage anyone praying to share what they are sensing, seeing, or hearing.

Move into time of prayer.

The Vineyard 5-Step Prayer Model is a framework for praying for others that is designed to be interactive and led by the Holy Spirit. It is not a formula or a magic incantation, but rather a way to approach prayer with intentionality and openness. The five steps are as follows:

1. **Interview:** Ask the person you are praying for to share their needs and concerns. Listen carefully and compassionately. It may be a

physical sickness, a need for direction for a big decision, a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit or other need.

2. **Diagnosis:** As the person is talking, silently ask the Holy Spirit to give you insight into the root causes of the person's needs. This may be related to physical, emotional, spiritual, or relational issues.

3. **Prayer Selection:** With your understanding of the person's needs and the Holy Spirit's leading, move into a time of prayer by asking them if you can lay hands on them (on the affected area if appropriate, or have them place a hand on the area as you lay a hand on their shoulder). Prayers may include prayers for healing, forgiveness, deliverance, or guidance. If you feel the person needs pastoral care for their issue, feel free to contact a VC pastor.

4. **Prayer Engagement:** *First things first*, invite the Holy Spirit to come by praying "Come, Holy Spirit." *Second*, ask the Holy Spirit to release the power for whatever is needed. If healing is needed, ask the Holy Spirit to release the power to heal. If wisdom is needed, ask the Holy Spirit to release wisdom. Pray with confidence and authority, believing that God is able to do anything, but fight the urge to get loud and talk the whole time - just continue to invite the Holy Spirit to move in power and to manifest His presence. *Third*, be aware of what you are sensing, feeling, and hearing - listen for guidance and insight from the Holy Spirit. Pray with your eyes open to pay attention to what the Spirit is doing! *Finally*, ask the person if they are sensing or feeling anything, or if the Holy Spirit is showing them or speaking to them about anything.

5. **Post-Prayer Direction:** After praying, usually no longer than 5-7 minutes depending on how many people you are praying for, ask the person how they are feeling. Be sensitive to their needs and offer to continue praying for them in the future. Here are some additional tips for using the Vineyard 5-Step Prayer Model:

Be respectful of the person you are praying for and their privacy.

- Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help from other believers.
- Have faith. Believe that God is able to do anything.
- Be patient and persistent. Prayer is a process, and it may take time to see results.