

What are the characteristics of the gift of prophecy?

Gift

Prophecy



Who in Scripture best illustrates the motivational gift of prophecy?

PETER

What guidelines are given for the gift of prophecy in Romans 12:9?

- **LOVE WITHOUT HYPOCRISY**
- **ABHOR EVIL**
- **CLING TO GOOD**

What basic principle does the prophet most need to exercise?

CLEAR CONSCIENCE

A clear conscience allows the prophet to speak the truth boldly with love.

Characteristics

• NEED TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES

Prophets need to express their thoughts and ideas verbally, especially when matters of right and wrong are involved. In the written account of the Gospels, Peter spoke more often than any other disciple. He also became the spokesman for the early Church. (See Acts 2:14, 3:12, 4:8, 11:4.)

• QUICK IMPRESSIONS OF PEOPLE

Prophets tend to make quick judgments about what they see and hear. They also tend to express their views before others speak. In the Gospels, Peter spoke first more than any other disciple did. (See Matthew 14:28; 15:15; 16:16, 22; 17:4; 19:27; John 6:68, 13:6.)

• ALERTNESS TO DISHONESTY

Prophets have an amazing ability to sense when someone or something is not what it appears to be. They react strongly to any form of deception or dishonesty. Peter must have sensed deception in Ananias and Sapphira since he was prompted to question them about it. His condemnation resulted in their deaths. (See Acts 5:3–10.)

• DESIRE FOR JUSTICE

Prophets tend to cut off those who sin so that justice will be done and others will be warned. Peter desired to cut off his offenders, and he asked Jesus how often he would have to forgive them. (See Matthew 18:21.) A prophet knows that “a little leaven leavens the whole lump.”

Misuses

• EXPOSING WITHOUT RESTORING

A prophet's primary concern about stopping the spread of evil tends to motivate him to expose a sinner rather than restore him. In so doing, the prophet will fail a test of spirituality. (See Galatians 6:1.) The prophet, however, believes that exposure of sin is the first step of restoration.

• JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

Prophets tend to draw conclusions from a few known facts. Once a hasty conclusion has been made, prophets tend to look for confirming evidence. This action can result in their taking words and actions of the accused out of context in order to prove their points.

• REACTING HARSHLY TO SINNERS

When a prophet sees sin, he tends to denounce it so strongly that it appears to others as “overkill.” After exposing the sin, the prophet tends to expect immediate repentance regardless of whether his rebuke was given in love or was even fully accurate. His motive in magnifying sin is to promote repentance.

• BEING UNFORGIVING

It is difficult for a prophet to make a separation between sin and the sinner. Therefore, he tends to reject them both with equal vigor. Those who hear his harshness interpret his denunciations as angry tirades. Peter's epistles provide a balance of truth and love.

Characteristics

• OPEN ABOUT THEIR OWN FAULTS

Prophets are as open about their own failures as they want others to be about theirs. When Christ appeared to the disciples, Peter fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8).

• WHOLEHEARTED INVOLVEMENT

Once prophets are committed to a cause, they are wholeheartedly involved in it. Within the context of their commitment, they are quick to respond to situations and opportunities. When Peter recognized Jesus walking on the water, he asked Jesus to bid him to come. (See Matthew 14:28.)

• LOYALTY TO TRUTH VS. PEOPLE

Prophets are loyal to truth even if it means cutting off relationships. When Jesus asked the disciples if they were also going to leave Him, Peter replied that he would stay because Christ had the words of eternal life. (See John 6:67-69.)

• WILLINGNESS TO SUFFER FOR RIGHT

Prophets are eager to suffer when it comes to standing for the truth or doing what is right. Peter rejoiced that he was counted worthy to suffer shame for Jesus when he was beaten for obeying God rather than men. (See Acts 5:29-42.)

• PERSUASIVE IN DEFINING TRUTH

Prophets have a special ability to be articulate in defining what is right and what is wrong. Great conviction was brought to thousands on the Day of Pentecost when Peter pointed out, "... Ye have taken [Jesus], and by wicked hands have crucified and slain [Him]" (Acts 2:23).

Misuses

• CONDEMNING THEMSELVES

The harsh judgments that prophets have for others, they also have for themselves. They tend to be extremely self-critical and feel worthless when they fail. After Peter denied Jesus, the heavenly messenger who proclaimed the Lord's resurrection knew Peter's need for extra reassurance of God's love and said, "... Go ... tell his disciples and Peter ..." (Mark 16:7).

• BEING IMPETUOUS

Because of his tendency to make quick decisions, a prophet can be impulsive and can vacillate between extremes. At first Peter refused to allow Jesus to wash his feet; then, he asked Jesus to wash his whole body. (See John 13:6-10.)

• CUTTING OFF PEOPLE WHO FAIL

Whenever prophets see or hear something that is wrong, they feel responsible to speak out against it. It does not occur to them to ask: "Whose responsibility is this? Do I have all the facts? Do I need to take action at this time?"

• LACKING TACTFULNESS IN REBUKE

Prophets tend to be painfully direct when correcting others, regardless of who they are. This bluntness can cause the prophet embarrassment, as when Peter rebuked Jesus. (See Mark 8:31-33.)

• DWELLING ON THE NEGATIVE

Prophets tend to divide everything into two classes—right or wrong. Once they label a person or activity, that judgment tends to be fixed in their minds, and they often feel compelled to persuade others to agree with them.

What are the characteristics of the gift of serving?

Gift

Serving



Who in Scripture best illustrates the motivational gift of serving?

TIMOTHY

What guidelines are given for the gift of serving in Romans 12:10?

- **KIND AFFECTION**
- **BROTHERLY LOVE**
- **HONOR TOWARD OTHERS**

What basic principle does the server most need to exercise?

AUTHORITY

Being under authority gives the server needed protection as he manages his time.

Characteristics

• SEES AND MEETS PRACTICAL NEEDS

Important needs that seem insignificant to others catch the eye and the attention of the server. These needs are usually physical; however, the server knows that by meeting them he will bring spiritual encouragement and strength to those who receive his help.

Timothy's serving ability is noted by Paul: "For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state" (Philippians 2:20).

• FREES OTHERS TO ACHIEVE

The joy of the server is not just found in initiating tasks but in knowing that through them he is bringing peace of mind to another person, which will allow that person to be more productive in the tasks God has called him to do.

Timothy served Paul so that Paul could carry out his ministry. His serving was "as a son with the father" (Philippians 2:22).

• DISREGARDS WEARINESS

Because the server sees the importance of the tasks that he has begun, he will freely use up personal assets of time, money, and strength. His focus is not on himself but rather on the completion of the tasks, which he knows will benefit the individual and bring joy to himself.

• FINDS IT DIFFICULT TO SAY "NO"

As the server effectively meets one need, others may ask for similar help, not realizing the inner motivation of the server. These requests,

Misuses

• GIVING UNREQUESTED HELP

Sometimes the tasks that the server sees appear to be more important to the server than the one being served. It may even be that the one who has the needs is not aware of them to the degree that the server is aware of them. In either case, a server who uses his initiative to meet these needs may be judged as pushy or intrusive.

• LETTING THINGS BE TOO IMPORTANT

In order to meet the needs of others, servers will often neglect their own homes and personal responsibilities. They will meet others' needs, but leave their families' needs unmet. This transfer of attention may cause reaction by the server's family and the feeling by the one being served that too much attention is being put on physical things.

• WORKING BEYOND PHYSICAL LIMITS

Inner tension that often results in physical ailments, especially stomach problems, frequently occurs in servers. This condition is the consequence of overextending themselves on one job or taking on too many jobs.

We know that Timothy had physical ailments. Paul instructed Timothy to take "a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (1 Timothy 5:23).

• NEGLECTING GOD-GIVEN PRIORITIES

Servers are often placed in positions of responsibility because they are diligent workers. It is then easy for them to volunteer a helping hand or become involved in tasks that they

