

Helpful Hints for Spiritual Gifts

**adapted from the sermons & writings by Sam Storms*

1. Acknowledge from the outset that you can do nothing to force God's hand. Whether or not he reveals something to you for the edification of another person is entirely dependent upon His will, not your will! If God chooses to bless you with a word of knowledge, or wisdom, or discernment, then this is a good indication that he has other important plans for you and this gifting in the life of the church.
2. Cry out to God daily that he would bless you with this gifting. Here's where I (Shane) land on this . . . If I have the Holy Spirit living inside of me right now (because God saved me), and I can experience more of his power through spiritual gifts, then why would I NOT want that? So I'm going to ask for it!
3. Keep a close watch on your motivations. Be certain that your longing for this type of gifting is motivated by a love for others. Don't pursue these gifts merely as a way to pump yourself up. That's what 1 Corinthians 13 is talking about. "If I do _____ but don't have love, then I am nothing."
4. Know that God communicates with us through dreams, visions, impressions, internal audible voices, symbols, sympathetic pains, and providential occurrences. Don't be surprised or put off simply because what you hear seems weird. However, don't be weird just for the sake of being weird!
5. Immerse yourself in God's word. Meditate on who God is, what he's done, and how he communicated to others in the Bible. Biblical understanding is vitally important in discerning God's voice. God never reveals anything that is inconsistent with his character or His word.
6. Be attentive to the Spirit of God. Listen! Watch! Write down what you think is a word from the Spirit.
7. Share what you believe God has revealed to you with a trusted friend or your missional community. Seek wisdom from others.
8. Be willing to risk the possibility of being wrong. Step out in faith AND in humility. When you're sharing what you believe is a word from the Lord, perhaps state it like this: "I may have

missed this entirely, but I think God may have put something on my heart for you. If this doesn't make sense, it won't hurt my feelings." Resist the temptation to say "THUS SAITH THE LORD!"

9. Here are some things to avoid . . .

- Be careful about sharing negative or critical words. If you do feel the Lord has given you a less-than-positive message, rather than share it with that person, use it as a prompt to pray for them. Ask the Spirit to reveal what he revealed to you to that particular person.
- Don't assume that every random thought that passes through your brain is a word from God.
- Don't rely on revelatory gifts to make routine decisions in life. (e.g. "Unless the Lord gives me a word, I'm not going to pay my rent this month." — That's just stupid!