

Session 2: The Prophetic Process, How to Hear God

I. BIBLICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF PROPHECY

A. We should eagerly desire to prophesy. However the Holy Spirit dispenses spiritual gifts as he desires, to whomever he wishes. Paul assumes we can all prophesy, but we'll have different level of giftings.

Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. (1 Cor 14:1)

But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. (1 Cor 12:11)

B. Prophecy should be exercised in love

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge . . . but have not love, I am nothing. (1 Cor 13:2)

C. Prophecy is not to be despised, but embraced. We want to cultivate a life that moves with the Spirit.

19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies. 21 Test all things; hold fast what is good. 22 Abstain from every form of evil.(1 Thes 5:19-22)

D. Prophecy is to be orderly (1 Cor 14:32-40)

30 But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints... 40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

1. Prophecies are controllable

2. Prophecies are to be given in turn

E. Prophecies are to be given under the leadership of the church, to assist the governmental leadership rather than usurp it.

F. Prophecy should be weighed and evaluated. (1 Cor 14:29-32; Acts 21:10-15; 1 Thess. 5:20-21)

Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. (1 Cor 14:29)

20 Do not despise prophecies. 21 Test all things; hold fast what is good. (1 Thess 5:20-21)

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II. THREE BASIC COMPONENTS OF PROPHECY

There are *three basic components* of *prophecy*: **Revelation**, **Interpretation**, and **Application**.

III. REVELATION

- A. **Revelation is the information one first receives from God.** It's like raw data from a computer. Or if you were a scientist, a read-out from whatever you were researching. Here are some but not all of the ways God communicates with us.
- B. **Pictures:** You may receive a picture of something or someone moving or still. Ask God questions and the picture may unfold or you may see more. Eg, I see guys coming in and out of a house.
- C. **Bible verses.** God may highlight a Scriptural reference or a Bible character to you that relates to the person. EG, "You are my son whom I am well pleased," (Matthew 3:17)
- D. **A phrase** may pop into your head. Eg, "singer", "lonely"
- E. **Impressions.** An impression is a knowing in your inner man. You simply feel like you "know" something. You may be not sure why you are thinking of it. It may begin very faint, but work with it.
- F. **Emotions.** You may feel stirred with an emotion for a person but you aren't sure why at first. Begin to dialogue with God to find out why you are sensing that emotion.
- G. **Dreams.** God will often share things with us in dreams. Developing our dream language (how God communicates to us in dreams) takes time and discipline, but is worth it. We need to discern what are soulish dreams or God-given. A lot can be said here. Enough for another workshop!
- H. **Sensations in your body.** If you have an unexplained sensation, it could be that God is giving you that sensation because it pertains to someone nearby. Eg, healthy, young student having hip pain.
- I. **Visions.** Moving pictures we can see where God tells us what is on His heart (Joel 2:28-29). **Internal:** You can have them in your mind's eye, spiritual eye. It is not coming from your imagination but your spirit communicating through your imagination. There is a difference. **External:** You can actually see pictures moving in front of you with your natural eye (more rare). It is like a movie screen.
- J. **Trances.** Similar to a vision but that you are fully experiencing your visionary state even though you are aware of your body. (Acts 11:5; 22:17-18). Sometimes in a trance, you are physically not able to move.
- K. **Audibly.** We hear God's voice speaking to us. **Internal:** This is most common when people refer to hearing God's voice. Hear it either loudly inside us or a still small voice (1 Kings 19:11-13). **External:** although this is a rare experience, there are however contemporary testimonies of God speaking externally as you would talk to another human being. Usually very important. (Ex 3:4, 1 Samuel 3:8)

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IV. INTERPRETATION

- A. **Interpretation is what the revelation means.** Now that I have something I think is from God, what do I do with it?
- B. We can interpret what God gave us by asking questions back to Him and waiting on His response. It is a dialogue and relationship. Eg, Why am I seeing this, God? What does this mean?
- C. Interpretations can have layers. Some times two interpretations are correct; but one may be more accurate. Don't get worried about that.

III. APPLICATION

Now that I think I know what it means, what do I do with it? We need to apply it. **Application is how to respond to what we have received.** Here are some questions we can ask.

- A. Is it consistent with Scripture? Is it consistent with the character of God?
- B. Ask God for his heart on the matter. Then if you should speak it, you can move with God's heart.
- C. Ask God what to do with it: pray it, deliver it or wait? So much of this answer depends on your setting: Ministry line at church, prophetic team ministry, out on the street individually... This is where you get to grow with the Lord in how to move with Him.
- D. Delivery: Is now the time?
 - 1. Should a pastor or leader hear it first? (usually for a directional word or a word for a group where there is an overseer)
 - 2. Is it appropriate in this setting?
 - 3. Do I have peace about this word?
- E. Deliver the Word. *(Most of this is obvious, but I am telling you this to build confidence and set healthy parameters.)*
 - 1. Ask God how much to share. Being very wordy can lose the message, especially if it is not recorded. Just a few words can make a big difference for someone!
 - 2. Speak simply. You don't have to make the message elaborate or flowery. Just talk normal.
 - 3. Speak with love. Make sure it is encouraging, edifying or comforting. That is the litmus test.
 - 4. Speak as you normally would, especially as you are growing in prophecy. Third person speaking is better with people you do not have a relationship with. "I sense God is saying..." or "I hear God saying..."

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5. Occasionally first person in small contexts where emotional/relational content is primary.
6. Don't let your pet peeves affect the delivery. If you have strange habits, now is a good time to stop them so people can receive from you in the easiest way. :)
7. Speak revelation and interpretation. "I am sensing this and I believe it means..."
8. Leave room to be wrong. But give your message confidently.
9. Protect the individual's dignity.
10. Find a way for it to be recorded if it is more than a sentence. This will help the person pray, process, and test the word.

IV. PROPHETIC ACCURACY

- A. God speaks accurately: God is 100% accurate in what He gives us.
- B. Man hears inaccurately: Because the way we perceive revelation is usually with mixture, the word may reflect a mature word that hits the mark or a weak word that still encourages, but is not as effective. As we grow in the Lord and in our prophetic gifting we will see an increase of mature words!

V. OTHER RULES

- A. Never subvert testing process or authority of individual to run his/her own life
- B. No prophecies about weddings, romances, or babies
- C. No secret prophecy: "don't tell anyone..."
- D. Don't prophesy negative consequences