

Session 3a: The Prophetic Process, Growing

I. GROWING IN THE PROPHETIC GIFT

- A. Soak in the **Scripture**. Let your thoughts and heart think about His Word, what He says. Let His written Word *come alive* in you in your behavior, thoughts, conversations, dreams, etc... Study the Word till you feel your mind is clean or you feel lighter, refreshed. This may be a faint feeling but it is a sign that you have encountered the Living God in His Word. Talk to Him about what you study and pray it back to Him. Develop a lifestyle in these things.
- B. **Fast** for the purpose of prayer and meditation. Devote time with God and His Word when fasting.
- C. **Worship the Lord**. Worship with music and enjoy God! Some times you will have to keep worshipping until you feel the atmosphere shift: peace, stillness, joy. After that time, it is easier to talk with God and journal.
- D. Cultivate a **still spirit**. Learn to wait on God in a state of prayer without worshipping or speaking. Know the still small voice. (1 Sam 3:1-10)
- E. **Practice** writing and speaking the little you get. God will many times give you more when you utter the first things He gives you.
- F. Be willing to **take risks**. Don't be afraid to miss it! Don't let fear hold you back. The Enemy and your flesh will fight against you when you try to step out. You learn by doing it.
- G. **Ask God** for the gift and for chances to grow! (James 4:2) Tell God you want to grow in this gifting!
- H. Ask your pastor or a prophetically gifted person to **lay hands on you** to receive the gift. It won't always be released in this way as the Holy Spirit ultimately distributes gifts according to his sovereign plan (1 Cor. 12:11) but often the laying on of hands does have something to do with the impartation of a spiritual gift. (Rom 1:11; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6)
- I. If you are a group leader or pastor, seek to **create space for God to speak** and **for your group to respond** to Him. Start in small ways. Sometimes it takes a while to turn the boat. *What would this look like for during worship songs, small group time or services?*

II. THREE LEVELS OF PROPHETIC MINISTRY

- A. **Simple Prophecy**: any believer who speaks something God has brought to mind. We all are to earnestly seek to prophesy (1 Cor. 14:1, 39). Yet, "not all are prophets" (1 Cor. 12:29).
 - 1. Usually for small groups or in ministry times at church
 - 2. Usually get simple revelation from God and occasional words of knowledge

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- B. **Prophetic gifting or ministry** - believers who's gifting has been recognized for regular ministry in the local church.
1. They will receive words and dreams on a regular basis. They will sometimes receive detailed information such as names, faces, dates, and future events. They occasionally operate in other sign gifts (healing, miracles, and deliverance). They may in private expose unconfessed sin (2 Sam. 12:1-7). They give simple prophecies yet also give direction and correction.
 2. These people are gifted in that they receive an unusual amount of revelation, but are still being trained. They still need to submit to local church leadership.
- C. **Office of the Prophet** - believers whose ministry is like the prophets of the Old Testament. they give correction, direction and bring new emphases in teh Church body. They minister in signs and wonders and regularly prophesy with great accuracy. They provide direction, correction to those in government int eh church, marketplace or political arenas.
1. Predict future events with accuracy. Their predictions often are confirmed with natural weather happenings (earthquakes, floods, etc...)
 2. This takes years for a person's ministry to develop into this.
 3. Some are even sovereignly chosen by God (miraculous birth, angelic visitation, etc...).
 4. Those in the office of prophet must have gifts (accurate revelation); fruit (mature character), wisdom (understanding of God's corporate purpose and ways).

III. WISDOM WITH PROPHETIC

- A. **Don't confuse your identity with gifting.** God loves you. You are a son or daughter in His family. Being good at prophecy does not make you a better or holier person. Being gifted does not mean you are more important or special.
- B. **Beware of subtle temptations** to use prophetic gifts in a manipulative way (trying to impress people, gain favor, or influence).
- C. **Avoid believing** these common myths:
1. Myth #1: Anointing equals character.
 2. Myth #2: Anointing equals God's endorsement of one's ministering style.
 3. Myth #3: Anointing equals complete doctrinal truth.
 4. Myth #4: NT and OT prophetic standards and roles are the same.

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Session 3b: The Prophetic Process, Testing

I. TESTING PROPHETIC PEOPLE THAT MINISTER TO YOU

A. **Consider the character** of those who prophesy (Mt 7:15-23)

1. Do they have a passion for Jesus?
2. Do they honor and uphold the Bible?
3. Are they living accountably and growing?
4. Do they submit to the authority of the church in which they minister? Are they in community with other people?
5. Are they servants? "Learn the lesson that if you are to do the work of a prophet, what you need is not a scepter but a hoe." (Bernard of Clairveaux)
6. Are they emotionally and psychologically stable?
7. Are their motives usually pure?
8. Are they growing in maturity?

B. **Consider the ministry** of a prophetically gifted individual

1. Does it produce godly fruit? Does it cause people to repent and seek God?
2. Is it consistently accurate and effective? Testing individual prophecies can be difficult and is not the best method of discernment. It is more advisable to test a collection of them from various settings over time.
3. Does it glorify Jesus Christ or does it exalt the one prophesying?
4. Does it reflect God's heart or does it have a vindictive, sharp edge to it?

II. APPLYING AND TESTING WORDS YOU RECEIVE

A. Make sure you have it written down or ***recorded***. Word for word recordings are best. People can often hear parts of words they like or mishear words, leading to distortions and disappointments. If we don't ***rightly steward*** the things God gives us, how can He trust us with more?

B. ***Test*** the prophecy with an open heart - 1 Thes. 5:20.

1. Does the prophecy **agree with Scripture** and the **nature of God**?

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2. Test the prophecy by the **witness of your own heart** and the Holy Spirit.
3. Look for **confirmations** in the natural or more prophetic things. It usually should already highlight something God has spoken to you. If not, I would be more cautious and wait on God to confirm and make it clear.
4. **Community and Authority**. Ask your leaders or close friends regarding the content and how to apply it.
5. Does the prophecy edify, exhort or comfort you? (1 Cor 14:1-3)
6. Does the word glorify the name of Jesus Christ? (1 Cor 12:2-4)

C. ***Distinguish*** between true, false, and "non-prophecy."

1. **True prophecy** is a revelation from the Lord that is accurately communicated by the person prophesying. It can suffer from some degree of impurity, poor delivery, imperfect grammar, bad diction, etc. and still remain in essence a true prophecy. It is inspired by the Spirit of God and has power that produces godly fruit.
2. **False prophecy** is inspired by an evil spirit. It has evil power and produces ungodly fruit. The message is twisted in content or tone (condemnation, fear, control, etc...) and is damaging in its sense.
3. **"Non-prophecy"** is a message given in prophetic form with an acceptable content, but it comes out of the thoughts of the speaker rather than the inspiration of the Lord. Sometimes called 'a blessed thought,' it produces nothing and has no power. It will fall flat, possibly even as it is delivered.

D. If you agree the prophetic word is good, then ***contend*** for your word.

1. Pray it and continue to seek the Lord on it. Keep your faith in God.
2. Ask God how to respond to it. Don't make any rash moves. Keep doing what you are doing but follow the Lord with greater clarity. I always hesitate with any quick change of course unless it deals with attitudes or places of sin.
3. Don't try to make it happen. Don't build your life on the prophetic. Some words take years to mature! This is especially true if give from someone in an established office of prophet.