

*By addressing the myths that hinder training the prophetic gift, we can grow in it confidently.*

**I. ELEVEN COMMON MYTHS REGARDING THE PROPHETIC GIFT**

**A. MYTH #1: YOU CAN'T GROW OR TRAIN SPIRITUAL GIFTS. THEY JUST HAPPEN.**

- **TRUTH:** Spiritual gifts are *gifts* but also *skills* that we can develop through use. The “gift” is God’s part; the “use” is our part. It is *our* responsibility to grow the gifts God has given us by activating them with our faith (2 Tim. 1:6; Rom 12:6). Just like we have a role in growing our natural talents God has given us, we also have a part in developing our spiritual gifts.

***Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. (2 Tim. 1:6)***

**B. MYTH #2: PROPHECY IS MOSTLY CONCERNED ABOUT FUTURE DETAILS**

- **TRUTH:** *Prophecy is revelation from God about a certain situation, person or thing.* It is not necessarily about the future, but can be about past or present things that God highlights. *All Revelation* comes from God the Father (Mt 11:25,16:17; Gal 1:16; Phil 3:15), God the Son (Mt 11:27; Gal 1:12) or God the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:10; Eph 3:5).
- **TRUTH:** *The main use of prophecy is to strengthen, exhort or comfort others* (1 Cor. 14:3-4)

***3 But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. 4 He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. (1 Cor. 14:3-4)***

*Ten other uses include:*

1. Practical application of Scripture
2. Highlight, release or bring discernment to a gifting (1 Tim 4:14)
3. Release physical or emotional healing
4. Confirmation of mission or ministry (Acts 13:1)
5. Exposure of Satan's tactics or secret sin (Acts 5:3; 1 Cor. 14:24-25)
6. Inspiration towards worship (1 Cor. 14:25)
7. Warnings (Acts 20:23, 21:10-11)
8. Evangelism of unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:24-25)
9. Guidance and direction (Gen. 41:25-32; 1 Tim. 1:18)
10. Prediction (Acts 11:28)

**C. MYTH #3: ONE MUST HAVE A PROPHETIC GIFT IN ORDER TO MOVE IN PROPHECY**

- **TRUTH:** We can all prophesy but there are different levels of gifting. There are roughly three types of prophetic ministry: *simple* (1 Cor. 14:1-3, 39), *established* prophetic ministry (Rom 12:6), the *office* of a prophet (Eph. 4:8). The Holy Spirit dispenses spiritual gifts as He desires. Don’t focus on the measure of

your gifting but on using it (1 Cor. 14:1, 1 Cor 12:11; Eph. 4:11; Rom 12:6).

**Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith... (Rom. 12:6)**

- TRUTH: You can do all the works of Jesus, even “greater works”, (John 14:12) because you do them by the same spirit Jesus did (Phil. 2:6-7; John 14:12; Luke 4:14; Isa. 61:1-3; Acts 1:8). What spiritual gifts do you think Jesus had? He operated in all of the gifts as needed by watching what His Father was doing (John 5:19; John 8:38; Eph. 2:10), so can you! There are some gifts that are more a part of your make-up in the way God created you.

#### D. MYTH #4: IT IS SELFISH TO SEEK SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- TRUTH: Healing, encouragement, comfort, etc... reveal the Father to other deeply in their heart. Why wouldn't we want that? What makes something selfish is our motivation for wanting it and what we plan on doing with it. If we entertain fantasies of our personal exaltation or embrace internal dialogues where we compare ourselves with others, this is selfish ambition or vain conceit which we must confess and give to God (Phil. 2:3; James 3:16).
- TRUTH: All spiritual gifts are to be desired, *especially* prophecy. Everyone is invited to move in simple prophecy. God even commands us to!

**1 Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy... 39 desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. (1 Cor. 14:1, 39)**

#### E. MYTH #5: NT PROPHETIC GIFT IS UNDER THE SAME REQUIREMENTS AS OT PROPHECY.

*In other words, one can't make a “mistake” when prophesying.*

- TRUTH: The NT Apostles wrote epistles and gave directives with God's hand upon them or His words in their mouths like the OT prophets recorded their prophecies. Both wrote inspired words of God. However, the NT gift of prophecy is *in part* (1 Cor. 13:9; 14:30) and mostly through *faint impressions* and *can be fallible*, unlike the writings of the OT prophets and NT apostles. Operating in the gift of prophecy is not equal in authority to Scripture and should be measured by the knowledge of God found in Scripture, the inner witness of the recipient, the counsel of others, etc. (Acts 11:27-30; 21:10-13).
- TRUTH: Paul assumes there are things to test and discard while holding onto the “good” in prophecy (1 Thess. 5:21-22).

**20 Do not despise prophecies. 21 Test all things; hold fast what is good. (1 Thess. 5:21-22)**

- TRUTH: Don't worry about making mistakes when starting out. Prophesying according to 1 Cor. 14:3 is a good starting point. Some people think that if they make a mistake they could be doing “false prophecy” which is not true. Usually uninspired prophecy is simply a “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, 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 and can damage those who receive it. (See also MYTH #11)
- (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.

F. MYTH #6: WE CANNOT TRAIN TO PROPHECY. GOD MAY NOT BE SPEAKING.

- TRUTH: God enjoys revealing things to His children who ask Him because He is good (Luke 11:9-13; 1 Cor. 2:8-10; EG, Dan. 10:12-14; Zech 1:9; Rev. 7:13-16).
- TRUTH: While we cannot determine how prophetic impressions will come, we can be confident in the voice of the Lord to us. The Lord is a flowing river inside us (John 7:38) bringing continual conversation regarding His ongoing works (John 5:17; Eph. 2:10) and thoughts (Col. 2:8-10).

***29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. 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. (1 Cor, 14:29-31)***

***... desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. (1 Cor. 14:39)***

G. MYTH #7: WE MUST WAIT TO BE MATURE BEFORE PROPHECYING

- TRUTH: Believers do not need a watered down version of Christianity but must see and do the works of Jesus to deepen their experience of the Lord's love and power (Mark 16:17-18). With that said, it would be wise to provide training, boundaries and mentors for young believers as they grow in prophecy.
- TRUTH: The Corinthian church was weak in love and immature in character seen by all the issues they had, but they had excelled in spiritual gifts. Paul did not restrict their use of spiritual gifts until they matured, but directed them to learn love in everything they did (1 Cor. 12-14).

***31 But earnestly desire the best [spiritual] gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way [love]. (1 Cor. 12:31)***

H. MYTH #8: PROPHECIES AUTOMATICALLY HAPPEN IF PROPHESED

- TRUTH: Not all "true prophecy" will come about. A true prophetic message must be combined with the recipient's inner witness *and* faith. Faith looks like praying the word, partnering with the practicals of the word, and agreeing with God in bringing the word about. God will do His part; we must do ours.

I. MYTH #9: GIFTING EQUALS CHARACTER

- TRUTH: Just because a person has a well-developed spiritual gift, it doesn't necessarily reflect their character in Christ (Gal. 5:22-26; Mat. 5:1-11; SS 7:1-9; 1 Cor. 13:1-3, 13; cf. Mt. 7:21-23). Test a person's prophetic ministry by their character and fruit from their life more than their ministry gifting. While the ministry may be anointed, they can only produce fruit matching with their character which comes from abiding in Christ (John 15:4-5; Mt. 7:15-20).

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

***22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Mt. 7:22-23)***

J. MYTH #10: ANNOINTING ON A PROPHETIC PERSON MEANS GOD'S FULL ENDORSEMENT

- *Regarding their doctrine or ministry style.* TRUTH: God uses a variety of vessels and not one person has correct theology or practice. If God waited to use perfect people, He wouldn't use anyone or give anyone His Spirit.
- *Regarding their error or sin.* TRUTH: God is *more merciful, more patient, more wise* in dealing with personal errors or willful sin than we are. He provides time to repent while allowing people to go on for a time. Eventually, if they do not repent, He will allow their sin to overtake them and remove them from ministry. His discipline even demonstrates mercy as He wants all to repent for the salvation of their souls.
- TRUTH: Beware of anyone using prophecy to control others (impress, influence, direct) or avoid any normal human relating or accountability in the Body of Christ. This is a type of manipulation (witchcraft). (See MYTH #11 and MYTH # 5, number 2).

K. MYTH #11: PROPHECY IS SIMILAR TO FORTUNE-TELLING

- TRUTH: Fortune telling is done from an evil spirit using means of the kingdom of darkness to motivate a person: fear, manipulation, pride. However, the Holy Spirit releases true prophecy leading a believer into greater obedience to Jesus and godly character. Fortune-telling and any occult activity focuses on the self and the increase of carnal desires (Acts 8:20-25; 16:16; 1 Tim. 4:1; Gal. 5:19-21); true prophecy exalts Jesus and builds His Church (Rev. 19:10; 1 John 4:1; 2 Tim. 1:7; 1 Cor. 14:3; Gal 5:22-25).

***For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Tim. 1:7)***

***19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries,... 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,***

*longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. (Gal. 5:19-23)*

- TRUTH: A prophetic word does not substitute the Lord's leadership in an individual's life but should rather confirm or strengthen it. We don't forsake the general commands of the Bible, godly leadership and the inner witness of the Spirit in a believer in the place of prophecy. Each believer has the indwelling Spirit who counsels, guides, teaches and comforts us. There is no greater gift the Father has given us! (John 10:27; 14:26; 16:12-14)

*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things (John 14:26)*