

## **DEVELOPING THE GIFT OF PROPHECY**

- 1 Cor 12:31 – covet earnestly
  - 1 Cor 13:9 – For we know in part and we prophesy in part
  - 1 Cor 14:3 – but he prophesies to edify, exhort and comfort
  - 1 Cor 14:4 – edify the Church
1. Realize that prophecy was a vital part of the early Church ministry.
  2. Must step out in faith to release a prophecy.  
Rom 12:6-8.
  3. Learn to operate and flow under the anointing.
  4. Learn to receive a word from the Lord.
  5. Possess a clear conscience.
  6. Keep attitude and motives right.
  7. Practice releasing by faith a word that falls in your mind by the Holy Spirit.
  8. Assess the atmosphere before stepping out at the right time.
  9. For beginners, it is not advisable to say “thus saith the Lord” but rather, “I have an impression in my heart, is this correct?”
  10. Learn to discern and differentiate one’s own thoughts and feelings from those of the Holy Spirit.
  11. Stir up your gift – rekindle and keep practicing it until it becomes accurate. The gift of prophecy is from God and so the word of the Lord is also correct, but our spirit needs to be trained well to receive accurately.
  12. Cultivate a hunger for the spiritual gifts.
  13. Speak forth the word of God for the purposes of God.
  14. Receive the quickening of the Holy Spirit.
  15. Be sensitive to the prophetic flow so as to avoid going beyond what the Holy Spirit has revealed.
  16. Learn how to begin speaking in the prophetic spirit.
  17. Cultivate self-control and temperance in the operation of the prophetic gift. Don’t let your emotions dominate in the exercise of this gift.
  18. Maintain a consistent worship life as this will sustain accuracy in the gift.

### **What to avoid when flowing in Prophecy**

- The Apostle Paul gave very clear and concise instructions concerning the use of spiritual gifts.
- Problems will develop in the church because of a lack of knowledge when operating in the gifts of the Spirit. We must understand the importance of proper training in this area.

## Warning Signs

### 1. **Avoid cross currents**

One should understand the flow of the worship, flow of the Spirit and check whether one's prophetic impressions flow with the spiritual atmosphere before releasing a prophecy. If not, you may write the prophecy and submit to your senior leaders.

### 2. **Avoid using prophecy to advance your personal agenda**

Your prophecy that has come from the Holy Spirit should not be mixed to advance your agenda or to exploit it for your selfish desires and motives. This will grieve the Holy Spirit. People who are sensitive in the spirit can perceive the difference.

### 3. **Avoid hasty and uncomfortable prophecies**

It is better to check your prophecy than to hastily release them. Do not release a prophecy which you are not comfortable with or unclear of its purpose.

### 4. **Avoid extending the prophecy beyond the anointing**

Every person has a measure of anointing. Some have the grace of giving long but accurate prophecies. We should not imitate them by going beyond our own level of anointing. Mistakes could occur in this attempt.

### 5. **Avoid prophecy from an empty heart**

You should be a student of the Word. You must understand the character of God and also His principles. This will enable you to test your prophecy rather than prophesying out of an empty heart.

### 6. **Avoid prophesying when discouraged, depressed, doubting, angry, sick or bitter**

One who has bitterness, although the prophecy is from the Holy Spirit, when it gets mixed with the bitter emotions and troubled mind, the content will definitely be changed and will create confusion.

### 7. **Avoid giving a prophecy that reveals a person's sins**

Negative prophecies and sins of a person must not be revealed openly. When releasing weaknesses and sins, wisdom, understanding and tactfulness are required. The ultimate purpose of prophecy is to edify, comfort and exhort. It should bring people to conviction, repentance and restoration. It should not bring guilt and condemnation (Rom 8:1).

### 8. **Avoid giving a prophecy with prediction, time frames, guidance, direction, correction and judgments**

The above prophecy should be given by a Prophet. One who is not a Prophet but is operating in the gift of prophecy, should limit his or her prophecies within the boundaries of edifying, comforting and exhorting. But if they receive such revelations, they should submit it to the Prophet or to their Senior Pastor.

**9. Avoid giving prophecies regarding marriage or divorce**

Much confusion has happened when marriage is decided solely on prophecy especially when it is one-sided and forced on the other person without mutual consent or reciprocated feelings. Prophecies can help one to decide but marriage should be based on criteria like unconditional love for each other, willing to make a lifetime commitment, both must be born again Christians, etc. it must be emphasized that God respects our personal choice, regardless of prophecy given.

**10. Avoid giving prophecies about destruction and death**

Prophecy of death to a sick person will expedite death. Negative prophecies need more wisdom as to how, where and when to deliver them.

**11. Avoid using physical mannerism that will distract from the prophetic word given**

Screaming or speaking very softly or physical movements can distract people from receiving the prophecy. The ultimate purpose is to deliver the prophecy clearly so that all can hear and understand.

**Working with Prophecies**

Unlike scriptural prophecies which are unconditional, all personal prophecies are conditional. They have to be tested and interpreted well before actually working with prophecies for their fulfillment.

**Test of Prophecies – 1 Thess 5:19-22**

1. Verse 19 – Do not quench the Spirit. One should allow the Spirit to flow freely.
2. Verse 20 – Do not despise prophecies. God even today speaks through prophecies. Just because someone in the church gave an inaccurate prophecy, we should not despise it.
3. Verse 21 – Test all things; hold fast what is good.
  - a. Test whether it is in line with the scriptures and the whole counsel of God.
  - b. Test it by the discerning of spirits whether it witnesses to your spirit.
  - c. Test whether it glorifies Jesus.
  - d. Test whether it is in context of your life and ministry.

**3 steps to take when you receive a prophecy**

- Revelation
- Interpretation
- Application

## 1. Revelation

A prophecy given to an individual must be tested to identify the revelation part of the prophecy. This is because a prophecy can be mixed with natural information.

## 2. Interpretation

The meaning of the prophecy must be understood clearly before it is applied. It will be helpful to present the prophecy to a senior leader, mentor or pastor who has known and spoken into your life before.

## 3. Application

After understanding the full meaning of the prophecy, we must now apply the prophecy within the right context of our life and situation. Wrong application will not bring right results but will create confusion.

## Learning how to work with Prophecy

Now that we have tested the prophecy and are also able to apply it in line with our situation, we must move forward to know how you can work with the prophecy until its fulfillment.

### 1. Must receive the prophecy, as from God.

Since God is speaking through the prophecies, we must take it as a direct word from God.

### 2. Must meditate on it.

It is important to record the prophecy in the first place. Write down the prophecy and after all the testing, you must begin to study it and meditate on it.

### 3. Must mix the prophecy with faith.

Rom 10:17 – faith comes by hearing the word.

Since personal prophecies are conditional we have to mix faith with it.

*Heb 4:2 – “...but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.”*

### 4. Must pray with the prophecy.

1 Kings 18:1 – The Lord speaks to Prophet Elijah that rain is coming after having 3 years of drought.

V41 – He releases the prophecy to King Ahab of Israel.

V42-46 – But Prophet Elijah goes up to Mt Carmel and begins to intercede with the prophecy. On the seventh time of intercession the cloud of rain appears. So one must pray with prophecy until it happens.

**5. Must understand the timing of the prophecy.**

*Heb 6:12b – “...but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”*

Personal prophecies have their own timing. God uses prophecy to mould our lives until we are able to fulfill it. The dream given to Joseph at the age of 17 was fulfilled at the age of 30, but all the way, because he believed and waited in patience, he was moulded and prepared for its fulfillment at the right time. Many are not willing to be patient and do not allow God to prepare them. So not only is the prophecy not fulfilled, but they are also not transformed.

**6. Must obey the scriptural principle in the prophecy.**

A personal prophecy must always be within the boundaries of scriptural principles. Paul said that even if an angel gave you another gospel – we should not accept it.

**7. Must stir up the prophecy.**

When waiting for its fulfillment, one should stir up the prophecy, to keep it alive in you so that your faith is always increasing to watch its fulfillment.

**8. Must submit the prophecy to the Church Elders.**

When confused, we must submit prophecies to senior leaders for the right counsel.

When prophecy is about your ministry, it must be submitted to your senior leaders for evaluation and proper counsel – Heb 13:17.

❖ 1 Cor 14:39-40

*Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order.*

All may desire to prophesy and must not forbid the practice of speaking in tongues. All things must be done decently and orderly.

As being orderly is a requirement for the free flow of the prophetic, so also there must be transformation both in our actions and thoughts to ensure accuracy in this gift.