

LEARN TO PROPHECY

BY ANTONIO BALDOVINOS

Partnering in the Supernatural Work of God: Gifts of the Holy Spirit

17 It shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams...18 I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy...20 before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. (Acts 2:17-20)

I. DESIRING TO FUNCTION IN SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- A. **All flesh:** All are called to prophecy and function in the gifts of the Spirit. All men and women (not just men), children (not just adults), and all nations (not just Israel).
- B. God's heart is that we would not be uninformed of His promises to empower His people by the gifts of the Spirit. He does not want us to be **ignorant** of His desire to release the *gifts in a greater measure* in context to the end-times. Nor are we to remain **unaware** of our "partnership" (the human role) with the Holy Spirit in *operating in the gifts in maturity*.

1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant... (1 Cor. 12:1)

- C. God is determined to pour out His Spirit with an increase of gifts in the last days of natural human history **in His sovereignty**. However, we cannot abandon the role that He has given us to do. God, also **in His sovereignty**, has given the church a dynamic role in determining a measure of the quality of life that we have in both in natural and in the Spirit.

II. WHAT IS PROPHECY

- A. Prophecy is the testimony of Jesus and is the revelation of what is on His heart for His people.

10 For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (Rev. 19:10)

- B. The first rule of prophetic ministry is that it must always honor the written word of God.
- C. The prophetic spirit can be manifested in dramatic ways or in very subtle ways. The dramatic ways include experiencing an open vision, angelic encounter, the audible voice of the Lord or a prophetic dream. Prophecy is released in us most often by faint impressions given by the Spirit.
- D. **Prophecy:** This is for edification, exhortation, and comfort of people by giving them the prophetic impressions that they have received. Usually these words are given in a small group setting or in a ministry line instead of on the microphone in a public meeting.

- 1. **Edification:** Building up people by giving **confirmation** that brings them hope or focus. A common way to do this is by giving them a Scripture that has been important to them or by confirming their ministry calling (evangelist, school teacher, marketplace, etc.).

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2. **Exhortation:** calling people to *persevere* in their ministry calling or promises, etc.
3. **Comfort:** speaks of giving God's *perspective* in a time of difficulty or uncertainty

III. ADMINISTRATION OF PROPHECY

- A. There are **3 components** of administering prophecy: revelation, interpretation, and application. The Lord often uses a team of prophetic people to administrate prophetic revelation.
- B. **REVELATION:** refers to receiving the prophetic information (the scripture, impression, dream, vision, etc.)

9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. (1 Cor. 13:9)

1. Hearing the voice of God is the privilege of every believer.

27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me (John 10:27)

I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you (John 15:15)

2. Scripture is the primary means through which we hear the voice of the Lord. It is also the rule by which we judge all other "words" we believe to come from the Lord.

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 16-17)

3. How He Speaks:

- a) **Through Nature** (Psalm 19:1-4; Rom. 1:20)

- b) **Through Life Circumstances and Experience** (Acts 10:45-46; Hagg. 1:5-6)

God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world – CS Lewis

- c) **Dreams and Visions**

Dreams and visions were common ways for God to speak throughout the OT (e.g. Jacob, Joseph, Daniel, Jeremiah, Zechariah etc.).

They are the inheritance of all believers under the New Covenant and one of the primary ways in which we should expect God to speak to His church today (Acts 2:17).

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d) Angelic Visitations (Dan.9:22; Luke 1:11,26; 2:9-15; 24:5-6; Acts 1:10-11;8:26; 10:3ff; 27:23-26)

Visiting angels seem to have been so common in the early church that when Peter was released from prison, and visited the church that was praying for his release, they initially assumed he was an angel (see *Acts 12:15*)

e) Audible Voice (Deut 4:33; 1 Sam 3:4-14; Matt.3:17; Matt 17:5; John 12:27-33; Acts 9:1-9)

Very occasionally God will speak audibly from heaven. This is an external audible voice that is heard with your ears. This is not the predominant way in which God communicates to us, and when he does so, it is because ***the message is extremely important*** and, often, ***the task extremely difficult***. The Lord uses to make it absolutely clear what He is saying.

- C. INTERPRETATION:** This refers to understanding the revelatory information. Even with accurate revelation, it is easy to get a wrong interpretation of it. There are often symbolic elements to visions and dreams, etc.
- D.** Often we do not understand the revelation until the circumstances unfold that bring its fulfillment. Some give in to the temptation to manufacture the interpretation before it is clear. Ironically, some who are best at receiving a revelation seem worst at interpreting it.
- E.** When the Lord reveals a piece of hidden information to us, it is important that we ask Him what it means. If we do not get the correct interpretation of the message, ***it may cause more harm than good.***
- F.** On occasion, God may simply want us to deliver the piece of information we have received, however, usually He reveals the piece of information because he wants us to ***convey a message*** or ***cause us to pray*** for an individual or a group of people.
- G.** It is important that we maintain dialogue with the Holy Spirit in the process of receiving a prophetic word. ***Ask questions*** about what you have heard and ***wait*** while ***expecting to receive answers.***
- H. APPLICATION:** This refers to the wisdom to rightly apply the information that is interpreted. I recommend asking the following questions:
1. Who is supposed to share the prophetic word?
 2. Who is supposed to hear it, the leaders, some individuals, the intercessors or the whole church?
 3. How much of it is to be shared, 30% or 100%?
 4. When should it be shared? Why?
 5. What is the desired impact?

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6. The main question is, “What will bring about the maximum amount of edification?”

IV. FUNCTIONING IN SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- A. **Principle:** The demonstration of the Spirit’s power often follows the declaration of God’s word from the lips of a believer. The Spirit moves as we speak words that agree with God’s will.
- B. Prophetic information is given most often in subtle ways in receiving **faint impressions** such as:
1. **Mental pictures:** reoccurring impressions or pictures in our minds that indicate how the Lord will touch others by imparting His grace or healing to them.
 2. **Emotional stirrings:** feeling various emotions like joy, sadness, or a burden for a person or a ministry as an indicator that the Lord will touch others related to that emotion or burden
 3. **Sympathetic pains:** feeling pain in a specific part of our bodies as an indicator that the Lord desires to heal the disease or pain that others are feeling in that particular part of their body.
 4. **Physical sensations:** experiencing the Spirit’s presence (heat, energy, fire, wind, etc.) in a specific area of our bodies or through our five senses (e.g. smell or taste) as an indicator that the Lord desires to touch others in a way related to the physical sensation that we received.
- C. We must be intentional about receiving the Spirit’s prophetic leading when we gather in large or small groups or in social gatherings. We do this simply by asking the Spirit, “**What are You doing or saying?**” He will often answer by giving us faint prophetic impressions.

19 The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do... (Jn. 5:19)

- D. We often do not have prophetic impressions simply because we do not ask for them (Jas. 4:2). Ask the question: “Spirit, what are You saying or doing?” The simple act of asking makes us receptive and attentive to what He is doing and postures us to receive the Spirit’s impressions.

2 Yet you do not have because you do not ask. (Jas 4:2)

- E. The gifts often begin as the still small voice of God or as a subtle impression of the Spirit to our spirit. It can be so subtle that many do not value it. Thus, they ignore it as they wait for an open vision. As they understand and value God’s still small voice to them, they will be attentive to it.

11 Behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; 12 and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. (1 Kgs. 19:11-12)

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- F. First, we function in the gifts by ***giving expression*** to the impressions that the Spirit gives us. These impressions are like a key that unlocks a door. It requires faith to speak them.
- G. Second, we ***dial down emotionally*** or quiet our soul to “listen” or discern the impressions of The Spirit when we are praying for people. This is opposite to stirring our soul up with fervor when ministering to people. Don’t “preach your prayers” over those that you minister to.
- H. Third, we must ***value the power of God*** even when it is released in small measures. We must not despise the smaller measures. It is still God’s power that works when even 10% of someone’s headache is healed. It is not the work of the devil or human ability. We honor it as such and do not despise it.
- I. We are grateful for every good thing from God’s hand.
- J. In our pride, we can despise the smallness of God’s power in ministry. ***Some are only interested in God’s power when it is manifest in a dramatic measure.*** They want to walk in the prophetic on their terms. It takes humility to walk with God on His terms of being faithful and grateful in the days of smallness.
- K. Fourth, do not be preoccupied with the ***fear of missing it***. We should be more concerned with never functioning in the gifts! The more important question is not “What if I miss it?” but rather “What if I miss a chance to release God’s power to someone in need?”
- L. Fifth, be ***supernaturally natural*** without drawing undue attention to the fact that we are prophesying. We encourage people to prophesy in a way that is dialed down emotionally and without an overemphasis on saying, “thus says the Lord” or the “Lord told me” and to use a humble style that is less melodramatic. It’s better to be less dramatic in our prophesying and more helpful to the people. We can say, “I want to pray for you; I believe God wants to touch you.” If we are wrong we will not hurt anyone if we use softer language.
- M. Why do believers neglect to prophesy? It takes love and spiritual vigor to prophesy often. Why? It requires ***attentiveness*** to the Spirit to receive small impressions from Him. It also requires ***energy*** and that we take ***risks*** to act on the impressions. It is easier to draw back from all this. There is an intensity involved in being continually available to the Spirit. To be attentive implies refusing the indulgence of anxiety and self-pity that cause so much emotional traffic.

V. PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR PROPHETIC MINISTRY

- A. People must have an attitude of “open expectancy” related to the fulfillment of a prophecy. The exact way that God brings about a word in our lives is often very different than how we envision. We encourage people to put revelations “on the shelf” until you have a clear interpretation.
- B. We ask all to write their prophecies down to give to the leadership team.
- C. Have the integrity and humility to clean up any messes that are caused by wrong prophecies.

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- D. Create a safe atmosphere so people can grow in their confidence (small group settings). Give mercy to those with a teachable spirit. Allow for the risk and accept the inevitability of being humbled as a congregation as you grow in the prophetic.
- E. The oxen that bring strength to the farm also bring a mess to the stable. Some prefer to have clean stables even if it means losing the strength that the prophetic ministry brings.

4 Where no oxen are, the trough is clean; but much increase comes by the strength of an ox. (Proverbs 14:4)

- F. Paul taught that prophets could control their spirit instead of claiming that they “could not help” what they did. One of the fruits of the Spirit is self-control (Gal. 5:22-23).

29 Let two or three prophets speak...30 If anything is revealed to another...let the first keep silent...32 The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 God is not the author of confusion but of peace...40 Let all things be done decently and in order. (1 Cor. 14:29-33, 40)

VI. PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR PROPHECIC MINISTRY

- A. Don't do anything that is potentially harmful or embarrassing to the individual you are ministering to without his or her permission.
- B. Do not let your behavior be a stumbling block.
- C. We must not prophesy in a way that flatters people (to gain an advantage from them), corrects or embarrasses them. A common example of this is in labeling someone as having a Jezebel spirit.
- D. We prophesy in the light with witnesses (recording it when possible). Beware of people who want to go somewhere private to prophesy to you and ask you to keep it private. The primary reason for doing this is to gain one's confidence to get their money or influence, or to establish a soul tie with them that often ends up with sexual overtones.
- E. Do not speak of promotion or change in a ministry organization without going through the proper protocols.
- F. Do not omit the conditions or qualifiers when giving promises. Prophecies are often conditional. They are invitations not guarantees. They require confirmation, prayer, obedience and hard work.
- G. Most negative prophecy gives insight into Satan's intentions. We assure people that repentance, faith, and obedience can stop Satan's desire for destruction in someone's life.
- H. Remember that Paul emphasized that spiritual gifts be exercised “decently and in order”(1 *Cor.14:40*) within the corporate context.