



Discover God's Unique Design for Your
SPIRITUAL GIFT OF PROPHECY

YOUR GIFT:

PROPHECY



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YOUR GIFT: PROPHECY

by Dr. Marvin Osborn



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HOW TO DEVELOP AND USE THE GIFT OF PROPHECY
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“Sure, I have the gift of prophecy, but how do I get started?” Appendix two will provide essential disciplines to fulfill God’s will in the gifted prophet’s life.

FOREWORD

*And he gave some, apostles; and some, **prophets**; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:11-13).*

God gave the church spiritual gifts, including the gift of prophecy, for use in and through the church and for edifying the church. There have been many misconceptions about the spiritual gift of prophecy in the New Testament church. This book seeks to clarify the purpose of the gift, the accurate definition of the gift, and the appropriate use of this gift in the church today.

I am pleased to present to you *How to Develop and Use the Gift of Prophecy*, the ninth and final book in the “How to Develop and Use the Gift...” series. I pray you will find this book useful for developing your God-given spiritual gift of prophecy for your personal ministry and the work of the church.

Dr. Larry Gilbert, Founder
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INTRODUCTION

Much of what pastors do is focused on meeting the spiritual needs of people. Motivated by a passion for God and compassion for people, pastor/shepherds exist to glorify God by caring for and making disciples of those in our sphere of influence. We cannot accomplish that task without the help of others who exercise their God-given gifts to do the many jobs that need to be done and to meet various needs in the ministry so that together we can accomplish what God desires.

The church is made up of people who do so many different things. Some prepare meals for church dinners; receive the offering in church services; count, deposit and record the funds received; write checks to cover expenses and make certain missionaries get the funds they need; make repairs when necessary and keep the building well maintained; set up the facilities for special meetings; plan outreach efforts; teach small groups; provide counsel to others; and on and on. If someone did not do these things, the people who come to faith through the church's ministry might not even come to church to hear the Gospel. Every part is important in the body of Christ.

According to on-line research about two percent identify prophecy as their dominant spiritual gift when completing the *Team Ministry Spiritual Gifts Inventory* (or *Your Gifts Spiritual Gifts Survey*). This book has been designed to help gifted yet inexperienced prophets develop their gift to maximize their effectiveness in ministry. I trust the material discussed in the following chapters will help you become the most effective prophet you can be, contributing to the understanding of God's Word and the spiritual growth of the body of Christ.

Dr. Marvin Osborn
Author and Pastor
Birmingham, Ohio

CHAPTER ONE

What Is the Gift of Prophecy?

The prophet is the man or woman of God supernaturally chosen by God to proclaim the message of God.

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph. 4:11-15).

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith” (Rom. 12:6).

“To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues” (1 Cor. 12:10).

“Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

“He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying. Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?” (1 Cor. 14:1-6).

The Old Testament Prophet:

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Second Peter tells us:

1. True Scripture did not come from any private interpretation. The word “interpretation” can be translated “ingenuity.” Scripture did not come from the mind of any man.

2. True Scripture was not contrived by the will of any man.
3. True Scripture came from the Holy Spirit.

The Old Testament had several names for the Old Testament prophet: seer, man of God, and the servant of the LORD. Each was endowed and called by God to foretell future events. Each were moved, or carried along, by the Holy Spirit to speak and write God's words of warning.

The Old Testament prophets included:

Writing Prophets:

Jonah
Amos
Hosea
Isaiah
Micah
Nahum
Jeremiah
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Daniel
Joel
Ezekiel
Obadiah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

Oral Prophets:

Enoch
Noah
Abraham
Moses
Miriam and Aaron
Balaam
Joshua
Deborah
Samuel
Gad
Nathan
David
Ahijah
Shemaiah
Iddo
Azariah
Hanani
Jehu
Elijah
Micaiah
Jahaziel
Eliezer
Elisha
Zechariah
Oded
Huldah
Urijah

* Several unnamed prophets are also cited in the Old Testament.

The Role of the Old Testament Prophet: The role of the Old Testament prophet was to call people back to God through proclaiming God's Word. Their message included calls to repent of actions and return to God; foretelling the judgments of God upon the Gentile nations; foretelling the judgments of God on the nation of Israel and coming captivities, and foretelling the coming Messiah and his future kingdom.

Schools of Prophets: God used the schools of the prophets to prepare his servants for their role as prophets. These schools were located in: Ramah (1 Samuel 19:18), Bethel (2 Kings 2:3), Jericho (2 Kings 2:5) and Gilgal (2 Kings 4:38).

Validation: Discerning between the true prophets of God and false prophets was a simple process. Those who claim to prophesy in the name of God had to have

been 100% accurate. A failure in any part of the prophecy would be the telling sign that a false prophet has tried to deceive the people of God by claiming to speak in behalf of God. The penalty for falsely prophesying in the name of God was death. It was a capital offense to be a false prophet and execution was the penalty.

“But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him” (Deut. 18:20-22).

The Message: As stated prior, the Old Testament's prophet's message included both a foretelling of future events and God's warning of unrepentant sin (idolatry, sexual sin, intermarriage with the surrounding nations, etc.). However, the greatest prophetic message was the foretelling of the coming Messiah. Theologians proclaim there are hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament that speak of the coming Messiah, his birth, his life and his death.

Jesus testified in the Word of God that he fulfilled all of the Old Testament Messianic prophecies (prophecies regarding the coming Messiah:

“Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39).

Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself (Luke 24:25-27).

And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening (Acts 28:23).

The New Testament Prophet:

“Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. **But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort**” (1 Cor 14:1-3).

Dr. Larry Gilbert, CEO and founder of Ephesians Four Ministries, defines the gift of prophecy as “the Spirit-given capacity and desire to serve God by proclaiming God's truth.” In today's vernacular, the prophet is typically described as the hell-fire brimstone preacher who points out sin.

John the Baptist was the last of the Old Testament prophets. He was the last prophet to prophesy of the coming of the Messiah. However, other prophets in

the New Testament foretold coming event. This included prophecies regarding the Apostle Paul's imprisonment, the coming destruction of Jerusalem, the coming rapture of the church, the seven-year tribulation period, and the coming millennial period.

However, with the death of the Apostle John, the last of the living apostles, and the completion of God's inspired Word, the gift of foretelling prophecy took on a different role of forthtelling God's Word.

"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

God is not writing any more Scripture. The Bible is complete as is. The canon of Scripture is closed. Joseph Smith did not receive revelation to write the book of Mormon; the Koran is not a divinely inspired book, Confucius, Buddha, the Dali Lama, Krishna, Jim Jones and the multitude of other deceivers, liars and false prophets who Satan has used to deceive untold millions of people never received Divine Revelation. All must beware of the warning in the last chapter of the last book in the Bible:

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. 22:18-19).

Does God still speak to man? Of course he does. The Holy Spirit leads, guides, directs, reveals and empowers us. Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

However, God's leading in our life will never contradict his written Word. God will never lead a young girl to have premarital relations simply because she is in love with a young man. God will never lead a man to divorce his wife because they are no longer compatible. And, God is not going to unveil a new doctrine/a new revelation that violates his written Word, the Bible.

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-9).

Paul makes it clear in Galatians 1:6-9 that anyone who perverts the gospel of Christ is to be accursed, literally damned to Hell. God so values his revealed

written Word, that those who add or subtract from it will be forever damned (Rev. 22:18-19; Gal. 1:6-9).

Believers do not need additional revelation to know God's will or to know God better. Rather, we need to be more concerned with understanding and applying the revelation he has given in the Bible. People are so consumed with obtaining additional revelation from God that they neglect the revealed revelation found in the Bible.

Today's prophet explains and makes clear the revelation found in the Bible, forthtelling rather than foretelling God's Word, expounding God's Word to "edify, exhort, and comfort" others as instructed 1 Corinthians 14:1-3.

CHAPTER 2

The Passion and Privilege of Serving on God's Team

There is no greater privilege for the believer than to serve the Lord. In Romans 12:1-2, he calls it our reasonable service.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:1-2).

It is reasonable to expect those whom have been given so much should, in turn, give back to him. It is reasonable to expect those who received so great a sacrifice to sacrifice as well. We are called to serve.

The great lie in the church is that serving Christ is optional; that God somehow saved us to sit us in a pew. That is simply not true. Satan has marginalized the church by enlisting believers to be bystanders instead of active participants in the service of Christ.

Ephesians chapter four reveals God's Master plan for the spiritual and numerical growth of his church. The tools he has given to accomplish his will in and through the church are his spiritual gifts. Paul states that Jesus equipped his followers, you and I, with the spiritual gifts necessary to bring unity and maturity to the body of Christ.

God has given every church the gifts needed to fulfill his purposes and plans for this church. If a church is not fulfilling its God-given plan and purpose, its members are not using their spiritual gifts as effectively as they are called to do.

"It is better to burn out than to rust out," replied George Whitefield, primary leader of the Great Awakening, when people encouraged him to slow down. He was committed to serving. Every believer is called to serve.

Every believer is called to serve:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:8-10).

Grace is defined as God's unmerited (unearned) favor upon sinful man.

Believers are saved apart from any good thing they think they may have done. Salvation is by grace through faith. The Apostle John describes salvation as a gift. John 3:16 tells us, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only

begotten Son..." We cannot earn it, cannot repay it; we can only receive and appreciate it. Grace teaches that God did for us what we could not do for ourselves. He sent Jesus to satisfy our sin debt that if we put our faith and trust in him, we will be saved.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

However, we are saved to do good works. We have been saved apart from good works, but unto good works. We all have a mission, a purpose, something to accomplish while we are on this earth. Paul wrote:

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13).

He did not say that we needed to work for our salvation, but work out our salvation. James said it this way:

"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead" (James 2:18-20).

Paul and James are saying the same thing: salvation ALWAYS reveals itself through our works or how we live. If we reject God's Word, if we reject God's house, if we reject God's people, if we reject God's standard, if we have no interest in the things of God or serving him, WE ARE NOT REALLY SAVED. It is simply a profession without possession. A person's life will reflect his or her salvation, if he or she is truly saved.

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

The word workmanship is interpreted as "masterpiece." When Jesus saved you, he made you a priceless masterpiece created to serve him. There are no mistakes, no rejects, no failures in the kingdom of God. Every believer is the masterpiece of God, perfectly created by Christ to serve him. He made you just the way he wanted you to be.

Personal benefits of serving:

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen" (2 Peter 3:18).

A. Spiritual Rewards

The spiritual rewards for the believer are immense. The more we give the more we get. This is true of the tithe and it is true of our time and talent as well. If we don't give then we don't get. Growth comes when we make ourselves available to help others grow in Christ.

B. Eternal Rewards

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10).

There are two eternal judgments after death: one for nonbelievers, those who failed to accept and trust Jesus as their personal Savior, and one for believers, those who accepted Jesus as their personal Savior.

Those who fail to trust Jesus as their personal Savior will be judged at The Great White Throne of Judgment. Their fate has already been sealed. They have rejected salvation and they will spend eternity in the fires of Hell. Their works will be judged; not on the basis of salvation but on the degree of punishment.

There are degrees of punishment in Hell. God is a just God and the degree of punishment will be based on how unbelievers lived their life. Make no mistake about it, Hell is Hell. But, there are degrees of punishment based upon the life of the unbeliever. The Great White Throne of Judgment is for those who are not saved, who have not accepted Jesus Christ as Savior.

However, believers will stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ. This judgment will not be on the basis of salvation; rather on the degree of reward. Our sin debt has already been paid by Jesus on the Cross.

When believers stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, the things we have done for Christ on earth will be rewarded. What we do here matters to God. And, what we do here will be rewarded in Heaven.

The Bible tells us that five crowns that will be rewarded to faithful believers. If you are faithful here, God will bless you there.

Incorruptible Crown:

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible” (1 Cor. 9:24-25).

The Incorruptible Crown is given to those who have overcome sin and have mastered their body in order to serve Jesus. They have gotten rid of the weights and sins of this world and lived a pure life.

Crown of Life:

The Crown of Life is known as the “Martyr’s” crown. It is given to those who die for the cause of Christ.

“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have

tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10).

Crown of Glory:

The Crown of Glory is known as the “Pastor’s” Crown. Given to those who have given their life to the teaching and preaching of God’s Word.

“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 5:2-4).

Crown of Righteousness:

The Crown of Righteousness is given to those who have lived their life in light of the imminent rapture of the church. This crown is awarded to those who have worked tirelessly in the service of the Lord with the expectation that Jesus is coming.

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

Crown of Rejoicing:

The Crown of Rejoicing is known as the “Soulwinners” Crown. The Crown of Rejoicing is given to those who win others to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy” (1 Thess. 2:19-20).

C. Earthly Rewards:

Every believer grows through three ways:

1. The Word of God. YOU will never, never, never fulfill God’s plan for your life apart from reading and hearing God’s Word.

2. The Church. You grow through attending church and hearing God’s undershepherd preach and teach God’s Word whenever the church doors are open and the Word is being taught. Other than sickness, vacation or work obligations, God’s children are required to be in the God’s house hearing God’s Word from God’s undershepherd.

3. The Ministry. Why ministry? Because ministry includes accountability, preparation, faithfulness. As you give, God gives to you. As you prepare, God prepares you. The seeds you plant in others are planted in you.

Often shepherds and prophets get more out of the messages they prepare and teach than those who receive the messages. God uses these messages in their lives as much as or more than those who to whom they minister. The principle of sowing and reaping is applicable:

“But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: As it is written, he hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever” (2 Cor. 9:6-9).

God promises when you sow you will reap. As you give you will get. As you help others grow, you will grow. As you help the family of God, God will help your family. As you help the house of God, God will help your house.

If God saved you; God will use you.

Those with the gift of prophecy were given this gift to use for the kingdom of God. There will be no excuse for not utilizing this gift. God has equipped you with everything you need to fulfill his will for your life. How he equipped you gives indication where he desires you to serve. We all have a role to play on God's team.

Former San Francisco 49ers Quarterback, John Brodie, was used by his team to hold the ball for field goals and extra points. A sports reporter asked him why a high-priced player should have to hold the ball for field goals and extra points. “Well,” said Brodie, “if I didn’t, it would fall over.” As Brodie was needed for the game to continue as designed, so every believer is needed for the church to function as God intends.

“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings” (Phil. 2:12-14).

Although saved apart from good works, we are told over and over again that our life in Christ is characterized by good works. Here Paul said, we are to work out our salvation, not work for our salvation. We are to work out our salvation in gratitude for what God has done for us. We are to work out our salvation not to remain saved but as evidence that we are saved.

Imagine you met a man who claimed he played for the Cleveland Browns. However, he never went to the practices, never dressed with the team and never played in the game. As a matter of fact, this man was not even listed on the team roster. Yet he claimed he was a Cleveland Brown. Do you think that he was really a part of the team? NO, of course not. He is either a liar or delusional. Yet, there are many, many, people who claim to be Christian, but never come to the church, never give, never serve... Their lives give no indication they are saved.

Are they Christian? The obvious answer is, no. They are either delusional or living a lie.

Have you stopped to consider whom God chooses to use?

- Moses had a speech impediment and committed murder.
- David committed adultery and murder.
- Rahab was a prostitute and Hosea's wife was a prostitute.
- Solomon was a bigamist. He had 700 wives and 300 concubines.
- Jacob was a deceiver.
- Jonah ran from God.
- Samson went out with wicked women.
- Abraham was a former idolater.
- Paul was a former church persecutor and murderer.
- Timothy had health problems.
- Peter denied the Lord.
- John Mark quit when ministry got too difficult.

What's your excuse for not serving?

- I have a checkered past.
- I have tattoos.
- I had children before I was married.
- I'm divorced.
- I'm not a good public speaker.
- I don't know enough about the Bible.
- I'm too busy.
- I'm...

Every believer is without excuse. You see, none of us are perfect. None of us are really qualified to be used of God. We all fall short of God's glory. Yet, in his sovereignty, mercy and grace he allows us the privilege of serving him.

“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence” (1 Cor. 1:27-29).

If God saved you, God expects to use you.

It was a cool day in Louisiana in a football game that looked like a sure win for the Detroit Lions. With 11 seconds to play, the Lions kicked an 18-yard field goal giving the Lions a 17-16 lead over the Saints. After the kick off, Saints Quarterback Billy Kilmer completed a 17-yard pass and stopped the clock with two seconds to play. The Saints coach called for their field goal kicker.

Out trotted the most unlikely player ever to take a football field. Tom Dempsey had been born without toes on his right foot and no fingers on his right hand. With 2 seconds, the ball was snapped, Tom kicked the ball and the longest field goal ever recorded when through the uprights. The New Orleans Saints won the game. Since 1970, no one has surpassed Tom's 63-yard record. Others have tied the record, but no one has surpassed it (at the time this book was written).

If the Saints could use a man with an obvious physical imparity to set an NFL field goal record that has stood for over four decades, God can surely use you to accomplish his perfect will that will last forever.

CHAPTER THREE

Seven Pitfalls Associated with the Gift of Prophecy

The servant of God must beware of possible pitfalls that can befall those who possess their gift. This applies to all spiritual gifts, including the gift of prophecy. Satan can take what God purposed for good and turn it into evil. The gift of prophecy is fraught with landmines that can destroy a ministry. Be aware and stand guard against these snares.

1. Elevating oneself over others.

Spiritual gifts are given by God to serve the church (Ephesians 4). Therefore, like all spiritually gifted, those with the gift of prophecy are servants of Jesus Christ and are subject to his call. The prophet did not do anything to receive the gift, it was simply given by the grace of God for his glory.

The gift of prophecy is important, but is no more important to the body of Christ than any of the other spiritual gifts. When used properly, the gift of prophecy brings glory to God as the people of God grow in Christ.

“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

“To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

“But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

“For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it

hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body?" (1 Cor 12:3-19).

Every gift has a purpose that fits into the family of God. No one gift is more important than another. Therefore, the prophet must not have a false sense of superiority that would cause them to look down on others.

2. Falsely condemning others.

The prophet must know and understand God's Word in order to effectively proclaim God's Word. The prophet should have a goal to know God's Word and to correctly warn others of the consequences of rejecting salvation and violating his Word.

However, the prophet must be careful not to use the position and calling to condemn things the God's Word does not condemn. Many conservative churches have lost their testimonies condemning women wearing pants, men with hair longer than the arbitrary standard they have set, the type of worship music that some churches prefer, etc.

Our calling does not give us the right to condemn things that God does not condemn. I remember listening to a pastor's conference on tape a number of years ago. In the middle of an excellent message, the speaker stopped mid-sentence to verbally abuse one of the attendees, a pastor, for having hair longer than he personally thought was suitable for a Christian man. This was not an appropriate use of the speaker's gift and position.

Personal preferences can cloud the message of the Gospel. Let the Holy Spirit correct and guide believers through the sanctification process in those things that are not specifically sited in God's Word. And, like Paul's admonition to his protege Timothy,

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:1-2).

3. Falsifying prophetic messages from God.

Pride is a subtle sin. It can creep into our life and we can become addicted to the accolades that often come with speaking gifts. Some have prostituted the gift of prophesy to claim special revelation from God into matters not found in the God's Word. Many of these fantastic claims are blasphemous. Many of these so-called "prophecies" disagree with God's written Word.

"If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:1-8).

God certainly continues to speak to us through the Holy Spirit, through his written Word, and through others. However, God never violates his written Word. Any one who teaches otherwise is a liar.

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8-9).

“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 10-11).

The goal of every gift is to bring glory to God as we proclaim the written Word of God. The prophet does not need to cleverly invent stories. The ends do not justify the means. You cannot justify lies in order to preach God’s Word.

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:12-13).

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

4. Becoming legalistic.

Legalism is a strict adherence to or the overzealous enforcement of a theological truth. The gift of prophecy naturally lends itself to the legalistic interpretation of and the legalistic observance of the tenants of the faith. While God expects all believers to walk in obedience and truth, we all fall short of that on a daily basis (Rom. 3:23). Before we were saved we were sinners condemned to Hell, and after we received Jesus as our Savior, we became saved sinners bound for Heaven. The grace of God that saved us is the grace that continues to sustain us.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8-9).

As the hell-fire-brimstone preacher, the prophet has a tendency to de-emphasize the power of God’s forgiveness and grace in our life. Grace is

defined as, “God’s unmerited favor upon sinful man.” Sanctification is the process by which a believer is gradually conformed into the image of Christ.

The doctrine of Justification explains our position in Christ. Through the blood of Christ, God sees believers just as if they have never sinned. But, in practicality, we are still sinners.

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:5-7).

The prophet must boldly proclaim God’s Word emphasizing repentance and obedience, while emphasizing the grace of God. While our sin can certainly hinder our relationship with Christ, our relationship in the family of God is secure. While God saves us through by faith through grace, he continues to sustain us by grace as well.

Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, states that how we communicate is vital in reaching the lost. Our speech is to be full of grace, the favor of God making people thirsty for the saving grace of God.

“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Col. 4:5-6).

5. Lacking compassion and love for the lost.

First Corinthians 13 has been aptly identified as the “love chapter.” It has been used in thousands of weddings, love songs, poetry, etc. It certainly gives us the biblical definition of love. And it states that spiritual gifts should be measured by the grid of love. In other words, unless your spiritual gift is administered in love, you have gained nothing.

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing” (1 Cor. 13:1-2).

The greatest of all qualities is not necessarily a spiritual gift, rather it is found in the application of love in our life. Dr. John Maxwell has correctly stated, “people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” And, people don’t care how polished and refined your spiritual gift may be, unless they see it administered in love.

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity (1 Cor. 13:13).

I believe many conservative churches have lost their effectiveness in the world because the love and grace of God is masked behind the unloving

application of their spiritual gift. Every gift, especially the gift of prophecy, must be administered in love or its effectiveness is lost.

The Apostle John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. But, few recognize the following few verses: For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:16-17).

Jesus did not come to condemn the world, but to bring salvation to mankind. And, as Jesus presented his message in love, so we must follow his example. The gospel is good news. We have good news to proclaim to this world: God loves them!

God sent his only begotten Son, Jesus, to be born of a virgin, live a sinless life and to pay the penalty for their sin on the Cross. Jesus was buried, resurrected from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God the Father.

Every person who puts his/her faith and trust in Jesus for salvation is no longer condemned to Hell but becomes part of the family of God.

That is good news! Salvation has come into the world through faith in Jesus. If you have ever visited a prison, you do not have to keep telling that them that they are convicted criminals. They already know that. John 3:17 tells us that people, like the criminal, already know that they are condemned. What they need to know is the gospel, that God loves them, and that the penalty of for their sin has been paid, if they chose to receive it.

Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. (Jude 21-23)

6. Becoming “Puffed-Up.”

“And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another” (1 Cor. 4:6).”

One of the pitfalls of the prophet is becoming arrogant. As a proclaimer of the God’s Word, prophets can be tempted to believe they are the sole authority for interpreting right and wrong, biblical orthodoxy and heresy, and the correct lifestyles of the faithful and unfaithful. Prophets can see themselves as self-important, the sole authority of the church.

“But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble” (Titus 3:5-7).

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up”
(James 4:10).

“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time” (1 Peter 5:5-6).

None of us have reason to think more highly of ourselves than we should. All that we have and all that we are was given to us by the grace of God. Therefore, all that we are and all that we do should bring glory to the Lord, not to ourselves. The servant of the Lord does his Lord’s bidding. The servant is to bring glory to his Master, not to himself.

Humility is the hallmark of aa believers, regardless of their spiritual gift or position in the kingdom of God. It is our responsibility to humble ourselves before God and man. It is God’s responsibility to lift us up in his perfect timing and will.

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith”
(Rom. 12:3).

Jesus said it this way:

“...But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Matt. 23:8-12).

7. Becoming prideful:

Pride is an inordinate opinion of one’s self or ability. Pride caused Satan to rebel against God (Isaiah 14); pride caused Korah to rebel against Moses’ leadership (Numbers 16); pride caused Babel to build the tower (Genesis 11); pride caused Nebuchadnezzar to proclaim his own glory over God’s (Daniel 4); pride caused Ananias and Sapphira to lie about funds given to the church (Acts 5); pride caused Herod the Great to be was eaten by worms because he received the praise due to God (Acts 12); and pride will ruin your ministry if you do not understand your position in Christ.

“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov 16:18).

“A man’s pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit” (Prov. 29:23).

Proverbs 8:13 tells us that the antidote to pride is to have fear or reverence for the Lord. “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.”

Relationship is key in combating pride in our lives.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. (John 15:5-7)

If ye love me, keep my commandments. (John 14:15)

If you are struggling with pride in your life, if you are seeking praise or appreciation for the things that you do, then pride may have a foothold in your life.

Ways to Combat Pride:

1. Spend time in God's Word daily.

"With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:10-11).

God's servant cannot fulfill God's will without committing himself or herself to study God's Word on a daily basis. This is Christianity 101. It is the foundation on which the successful Christian life is built.

2. Spend time in prayer with God daily.

"Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5:17-19).

Our moment-by-moment connectedness to God is essential to gaining the power of God in our lives. We should certainly have a set time of prayer everyday. However, that is not enough. We are to pray continuously. Pray as we drive down the road, pray as we pay our bills, pray as we write out our tithe check, pray as we put our children to bed, etc.

We have an electric outlet in our home that does not hold the plug to our iron very well. If I am not careful, the plug will slip out while I'm ironing my shirts and the iron, that was once hot, will become cold. Now the interesting thing is that I will continue to go through the motions of ironing my shirt never realizing that the iron has disconnected from its power source. Many times, as believers our prayer life suffers and we go through the motions of our Christian life never realizing that we are not connected to the source of our power. Prayer keeps us connected to God, it keeps us humble before God, and it provides the power of God in our life.

3. Attend church faithfully.

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some

is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:24-25).

Church growth experts tell us that fewer than 25% of those who claim to be Christian will attend church on any given Sunday. Believers have the misconception that church attendance, like most things in life, is optional. This is a lie of Satan. Hebrews clearly tells us that we are not to forsake church attendance. Church attendance is not optional for the believer, it is mandatory.

Those with the gift of prophecy, like all believers, are accountable to the local church, specifically to their pastor. Any believers who forsake the church, who fail to faithfully attend church, who fail to sit under the man of God as he presents the Word of God, who fail to honor God with his/her tithes and offerings, etc. are in rebellion. They are in sin. Every believer has the responsibility to be actively involved in the local church. This includes, I believe, being active not only on Sunday morning, but also Sunday night and the mid-week service as well, if applicable.

4. Humble yourself.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up (James 4:10).

“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Peter 5:5-7).

Humility is one of the keys to spiritual success. We are all servants in the kingdom of our Lord and Savior. We are to go where he sends. We are to serve as he directs. We are to worship the one who deserves all honor and praise.

In this life, our horizontal walk often reflects the level of our vertical relationship. We cannot say that we love God and hate the people of God. We cannot say that we serve God and expect others to serve us. We are called to serve, not to be served.

We live in a world where we feel its necessary to proclaim how smart we are, how much education we have, what our financial status is. We believe that if we don't proclaim our greatness no one will know just how great we are.

James 4:10 tells us that exaltation belongs to the Lord, it is his responsibility, not ours. Our responsibility is to humble ourselves, God will exalt us in his perfect timing.

Prophets, as with all spiritually gifted, are accountable to their pastor. Therefore, prophets must submit themselves to the pastor and use their gift to fulfill God's will for their lives through their local church.

In addition, all believers, including the prophet, are called to examine their own hearts and motives while confronting others' sin. We who have been given grace ought to extend grace to others. Therefore, we are to meekly and lovingly restore others in the spirit of Christ.

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Gal. 6:1).

5. Find an accountability partner.

“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).

Every believer needs someone they can confide in. This person must have the moral fortitude to be honest with you and call you into account if the sin of pride, or any sin, begins to take root in your life.

Your accountability partner:

- A. Must be of the same gender as you. No man should ever confide in a woman who is not his spouse, and no woman should confide in a man who is not her spouse. This will lower inhibitions and could lead to sexual immorality. We are to flee from the appearance of sin. “Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Thess. 5:22).
- B. Must be a mature believer. You do not want to burden someone to keep you accountable if they are spiritually incapable of handling it.
- C. Must be trustworthy. He or she must be able to keep in confidence what is shared.

CHAPTER FOUR

How to Enhance Your Gift

Enhancing your spiritual gift is essential to maximizing your effectiveness in the work of Christ. No believer is saved and automatically spiritually mature in the usage of their gift. Everyone must exercise their gift; use it, research it and develop it. Some options for developing your gift include:

Seminary Training

There are five references in 1 Kings and 2 Kings that theologians believe refer to a school for the prophets; a place where those who possessed the Old Testament gift of prophecy could gather together and develop their giftedness.

“And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan; And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over. And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him” (2 Kings 2:11-15).

If there was a need for those Old Testament prophets to meet together and hone their gift, how much more valuable is it for you to develop your giftedness?

There has been no other time in the history of the world where anyone can further their education either on a college campus or in the confines of their home. College courses are offered online, through DVDs and correspondence, on cable and, of course, on campus. Degrees can be earned in a matter of a few short years.

On-campus degrees have their distinct advantages and disadvantages. The advantages include: being able to converse with the professors in-person, making lifelong friendships with fellow students, being able to take advantage of the on-campus resources: the library, guest lectures, apprenticeships, career planning, etc.

However, an on-campus education can be costly. The older you are, the sacrifice of an on-campus degree is possible, but it is certainly more difficult. Leaving your job, uprooting your family, moving to another location across the state or across the country, finding a new job and residence, etc. can be very prohibitive. Additionally, most colleges charge a higher tuition rate for out-of-state students.

Opportunities abound for an off-campus education. Today, there is no longer the stigma of an off-campus, non-traditional education. Be sure to do your research before applying to a non-traditional school to be sure the school is accredited by a regional accrediting association and is eligible to receive federal financial aid.

I encourage you to select a non-traditional school that is connected to an accredited traditional school. Such schools include: Liberty University, Southern Seminary, Indiana Wesleyan, Fuller Seminary, etc. This will allow you to take advantage of some of their on-campus resources including their library, ministry placement, financial aid office, and career counseling services.

Non-traditional schools generally allow you to keep your current lifestyle (residence, job, church, etc.). Typical non-traditional schools only require a few weeks of on-campus residency. You do not have to move. You do not have to leave your job. You can schedule your classes around your current schedule. The tuition is generally lower than their on-campus counterparts. If the school is accredited, you receive the same degree as the on-campus school.

Most denominations have associated colleges and seminaries. Some offer tuition discounts to their associated churches. This will aid you in finding apprenticeships and full-time work within your denomination, after graduation.

Whether you choose a traditional or non-traditional school, you will need to pursue a course of study that will enhance your knowledge of God's. You may want to choose pastoral studies, theological studies, biblical counseling, etc.

I am convinced that you can never get too much education. You may already possess a vast amount of theology, and you may be the best preacher in the country but, if you do not have a Bible degree, many will discount your ministry. Your college degree will give you credibility and will enhance your gift.

Pastoral Mentorship

Most pastors are encouraged when someone asks comes to them requesting help in developing their spiritual gift. Before you approach your pastor, be sure that you are committed to receiving the pastor's instruction, correction, and leadership. Check your schedule to see how much time and what days you are going to dedicate to the mentorship. You will need to look at the mentorship like a second job. If you are going to ask your pastor to mentor you, you need to honor the pastor's time by being where you are supposed to be when you are supposed to be there.

Your mentorship should be organized and professional. You will need a clear set of goals, a clear set of objectives, a clear set of expectations, a clear time when you will meet and a clear time when the mentorship will end.

Remember, your pastor's time is valuable and limited. You need to honor and respect the time invested in you.

Your mentorship should include: Bible training, practical pastoral training and practical pastoral ministry opportunities (Sunday school, nursing homes,

visitation, counseling, outreach/soulwinning, preaching opportunities, hospital visitation, etc.). Ask the pastor to evaluate your growth and productivity so that you are able to refine your giftedness.

Seminars/Pastoral Conferences

A number of seminar organizations and pastoral conferences will help you enhance your spiritual gift. You will want to research on the Internet the locations, prices and dates for the seminars and conferences. Many denominations and seminaries host pastoral conferences. These conferences will be great sources of encouragement as you refine your gift.

Ask your pastor for conference recommendations. As an investment in your ministry, your church may want to sponsor your tuition or the entire trip. Examples of such conferences include Moody Pastoral Conference, Super Conference, Southern Baptist Convention Pastor's Conference, etc.

Reference Materials

Someone has aptly stated, "Leaders are readers and readers are leaders." Every effective servant of Christ must be committed to lifelong learning. In addition to the reading the Bible, he/she should actively read periodicals and books that will enhance his/her theological knowledge and Christian walk.

The development of your spiritual gift is a lifelong commitment of study, reading, preparation and research. A prophet must understand the necessity of developing a personal study schedule in order to be an effective communicator of God's Word. In addition, the prophet should develop a resource library that will become an invaluable asset in preparing to teach, instruct, and counsel others. Ask your pastor to recommend books that will help you develop your gift. The money and time you spend in developing your personal library is a worthy investment in an invaluable asset to aid you in developing your gift.

Among other things, your personal resource library should include:

- A good study Bible
- A concordance
- A Bible dictionary
- A guide to the Bible
- Bible commentaries on the books you are studying

A number of computer programs and Internet sites will prove useful in your personal study and teaching preparation. Myriads of books, websites, and other resources are available to help you in your lesson preparation. However, many contain theological errors. Therefore, all men and women of God who desire to teach the Bible must show discernment in the resources they use.

Many years ago I attended the National Booksellers Convention. This is an annual convention which allows book publishers to promote their books, music, CDs, DVDs, etc. to Christian bookstores and other distributors. It is a wonderful

time of music concerts, autograph signing, book giveaways, etc. As I walked through the huge convention floor, I noticed a line of people who were waiting for an autograph that stretched halfway around the convention center. Curious, I wanted to see who would command the attention of so many people for so long a time. I was disappointed to see that the author these people waited in line for, was a noted “faith healer” who was signing a book that contained many theological errors. I was somewhat discouraged at the theological ignorance of so many Christian bookstore owners.

You cannot trust the content of a book simply because someone slaps the name Christian on it. Ask your pastor to recommend authors, books and publishers. When choosing study resources, a wise teacher should ask:

A. Who is the author?

A simple check on the Internet will help you answer the following questions:

- What are their doctrinal beliefs?
- What other things have they written?
- What education do they have?
- From what college or seminary did they graduate?
- Where do they attend church?

B. Who is the publisher?

A simple check on the Internet will help you answer the following questions:

- What other books have they published?
- With which denomination are they closely associated?
- Who are their other authors?

C. Does the resource contain the information that I’m looking for?

As with all resources, a quick look at the back of the book jacket and the table of contents should assist you in ensuring that the book contains the information you need for your studies.

Other resources you should consider are Dr. Doug Porter’s *How to Develop and Use the Gift of Teaching* and Dr. Marvin Osborn’s *How to Develop and Use the Gift of Shepherding*, both published by Church Growth Institute. These resources will assist you in developing your ability to preach and teach God’s Word.

The Prophet and Authority

God is a God of order. He set order in the universe, he set order in nature, he set order in the home and he set order in the church. First, and foremost, Jesus Christ is the Head of the church:

“Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:20-23).

As the Head and Chief Shepherd of the church, Jesus placed his undershepherds to care for the church.

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 5:1-4).

As with all spiritual gifted, those with the gift of prophecy, are accountable to the pastor of their church. It is the way God ordained it. As stated prior, God set order in the universe, order in the government, order in the home and order in the church. To violate that order is to violate God's will and is to be out God's will.

Therefore, every prophet should submit to the authority of the pastor. You will, therefore, need to meet with your pastor or pastoral designate on a regular basis, perhaps monthly or quarterly.

For the church to fulfill its vision, every facet of the church must be moving in the same direction. Meeting with the pastor will allow you to understand your progress in fulfilling God's vision for the church. This will also afford you the opportunity to share your heart and concerns with the pastor. Communication, communication, communication is the key to your success in fulfilling your part of God's vision for your church.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Role of the Prophet in the End Times

Jesus said, "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Mark 13:32-33).

Eschatology is the study of the Last Days. This includes studying the prophecies leading up to the Rapture, the Seven-Year Tribulation, the Millennium, Heaven, etc.

Prophets must sound the warning that the Rapture of the church is imminent and that unbelievers must receive salvation before the Rapture or enter into the Seven-Year Tribulation period.

Prophets can sound the warning to believers to repent of their sin and reach as many people for Christ before it is too late.

I once drove from Virginia to Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida. After many, many hours of driving, I finally hit the Florida state line. And I thought I had almost arrived, but I was wrong. I still had another three hours of driving. As I neared my destination, the highway signs indicated how close I was getting. I was prepared and excitedly looked forward to reaching my destination.

Likewise, we travel through life, searching and listening to God's Word, watching for signs along the way. The Bible seems to indicate that nine signs indicate we are living in the last days, the days before the Rapture of the church, and the beginning of the Seven-Year Tribulation period.

Much like my trip to Orlando, the closer I got the more signs indicated how close I was getting. The same is true with the signs of the coming Rapture, Tribulation, Christ's return, etc. They all indicate how close we really are to the end of the world as we know it.

Each of the nine signs are prophecies, given by God, to warn the church and the world to prepare for his imminent return. Prophets can be used tremendously by God to prepare the church and the world for the coming Rapture and Tribulation period. Note while there are different views on the chronological order of the Rapture of the church and the Seven-Year Tribulation, theologians agree that both are coming...and we need to be ready.

The Nine Signs of the End Times

Sign #1: Israel Becoming a Nation in 1948

"Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all

these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matt. 24:32-35).

Sign #2: The Increase of Knowledge and Travel

"But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase" (Dan. 12:4).

Sign #3: Movement toward the One-World Economy

"Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon...He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: his number is 666" (Rev. 13:11-18).

Sign #4: Movement toward a One-World Government

"Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name" (Rev. 13:1-2).

Sign #5: Rampant Apostasy

"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts" (2 Tim. 3:1-6).

Sign #6: Rampant Wickedness

"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3:1-8).

Sign #7: Increase in Natural Disasters

“For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matt. 24:7-8).

Sign #8: Rise of the One-World Church

“Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed” (Rev. 13:11-15).

Sign #9: Rise of Scoffers

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water” (2 Peter 3:3-5).

All nine signs have been fulfilled or are currently being fulfilled before our eyes. No other signs or prophecies need to be fulfilled before the rapture of the church and the Seven-Year Tribulation can take place. The Rapture is imminent. It can occur at any time.

As such, the prophet can be greatly used to warn the world of the pending judgment. The world needs to know what is about to occur. The world must be warned.

“Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul” (Ezek. 3:17-19).

The prophet, as well as all believers, are responsible to warn the world, to warn our unsaved friends, relatives, associates and neighbors about the coming Tribulation and about Hell so that they can have the opportunity to receive Christ as Savior.

Ways to Warn Others about the Coming Judgment

1. Rebuke the Scoffers

A scoffer is one who mocks God, God's Word, and God's people. Specifically, in reference to the end times, they will mock the promise of Christ's return. We live in an era where the only group that anyone can mock without recourse are Christians.

Prophets can rebuke scoffers through:

Editorials: Write editorials rebuking and correcting scoffers. Editorials can be published in newspapers, your Facebook page, blogs, etc.

Debates: A seasoned, well-educated public speaker can debate scoffers in open or closed forums. The purpose of the debate is to accurately present God's Word and to rebuke the ignorant. The obvious goals of debating is to glorify God and to lead someone to Jesus Christ as Savior.

Person-to-Person Rebukes: Writing letters, responding in the comment section on the Internet, and speaking to scoffers face-to-face are effective ways to rebuke scoffers, as long as it is done with a Christ-like attitude.

2. Warn the Apostates

Apostates are those who have willingly walked away from the truths of God's Word for the love of the world. Paul said that Demas was such a man:

"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia" (2 Tim. 4:10).

Today, we are raising the most biblically illiterate generation this country has ever known. Though we have more resources (books, Internet, television and radio preachers, Christian bookstores, Christian radio stations, and the freedom to attend church as much as we desire), those who identify themselves as Christian know less, as a whole, than any other generation. As someone once stated, Christianity in America is a mile wide and only an inch deep. We have no depth, no firm foundation, no roots.

Statistics indicate that the majority of Christian adults received Christ as Savior before the age of 18. However, recent trends indicate that the number of Bible-believing Christian teenagers will soon reach an alarming 4 percent of the teenage population. We are in danger of losing the next generation for Christ.

Additionally, far too many churches have forsaken the preaching of the whole counsel of God's Word for a "feel good" psychology, health and wealth philosophy that is poisoning the church. And Christendom swallowed this false doctrine placebo hook, line and sinker. This anything goes, guilt-free lifestyle is nothing more than heresy. Christians have forgotten how to be ashamed of their sin. They have forgotten how to repent. They have simply lost their "blush." They continue to wallow in sin without repentance because pastors have abandoned God and his Word, and Christians are too lazy to study the Word themselves..

“Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the Lord” (Jer. 8:12).

The apostate church and its apostate followers will be judged. Prophets must sound the alarm and warn the apostate church to repent and to return to God and his Word.

Prophets can be used by God to rebuke the apostates through preaching local church revivals, youth camps, youth rallies, seminars, study groups, etc.

3. Preach End-Times Revivals

Many pastors do not possess the confidence or the knowledge to preach and teach about the nine signs of the coming Rapture, the Millennium, Heaven, Hell, etc. If God so leads, prophets can prove to be assets to the Body of Christ by encouraging readiness on behalf of the church. Every church and every Christian must be told and warned so:

- A. They can be sure they are truly saved.
- B. They can repent of their sin and turn back to Christ.
- C. They can become motivated to reach their lost friends, relatives, associates and neighbors with the Gospel.
- D. They can become faithful in their obedience and service to Christ and his church.

As stated prior, prophets should meet with their pastor to seek the pastor’s blessing and advice in preparing the materials needed for the end-times presentations. Be sure that you are confident in your understanding of the end-time prophecies and in your presentation skills. A periphery knowledge will not suffice. Diligent study is necessary.

CHAPTER SIX

Using the Gift of Prophecy in Love

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing” (1 Cor. 13:1-2).

The thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians unveils the driving force of all of Christendom, love. The Apostle Paul tells us although we may give, serve, evangelize, help the poor, teach, preach, be salt and light in the world, etc. our actions mean nothing unless done in love. He goes on to tell us that all we can possess all spiritual traits, make every spiritual sacrifice, and fulfill every spiritual task, yet if we do not show love, it means absolutely nothing.

Love is the grid by which we will make an eternal impact this world. All of life and ministry must be measured in the greatest of all human traits, love.

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (1 Cor. 13:13).

Jesus, who possessed all the gifts of the Spirit, always modeled love. Yet, his love did not negate his responsibility to rebuke sin, to chastise errant religious leaders or to correct his followers when they were in error. Jesus lovingly corrected Martha when she was upset that Mary was listening to Jesus instead of working with her. Jesus lovingly corrected Peter when he denied him. He lovingly chastened James and John when they wanted to call down fire from Heaven to destroy those who opposed Jesus. You could even make the case that Jesus lovingly drove the moneychangers out of the temple because it kept them from receiving a more severe punishment from God the Father if they had continued to defile the temple.

Love, as so many people have misinterpreted, does not mean that we are soft on sin. It does not mean that the church should condone sin. As Jesus so aptly demonstrated, love entails correction and discipline.

“For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth” (Prov 3:12).

“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons” (Heb. 12:6-8).

God corrects those he loves. His correction is an indication that you are his child. No earthly father has the responsibility nor the right to discipline someone else's child. I have been in a store or some other public space where an unruly child was causing quite a disturbance and the parents seemed oblivious to what

was occurring. I wished I had the authority to lovingly correct that child but, I did not have that authority. Hebrews 12:6-8 tells us that God's discipline is an indication of his love and care for his children.

Love is not an excuse not to discipline or correct someone. Rather, love is the reason why we discipline or correct someone. Love does not mean that we are soft on sin. Love is not a reason to excuse sin. Love does not mean that we don't correct errant believers when they fall into sin. It's really the opposite. Because we love we preach the whole counsel of God's Word. Because we love warn of the consequences of sin. Because we love we correct the errant believer.

Love compels us to warn people of the dangers of sin and the eternal consequences of our actions. Love compels and love is the method of how we are to fulfill God's will in the church and in our individual lives.

Love is foundational. Correction must be done in love. And, as Jesus did not come to condemn the world, so we must be careful to do the same. I am constantly amazed when religious groups picket public events with signs damning homosexuals to Hell. Now, don't get me wrong, homosexuality, like adultery, like gossip, like fornication, like so many other things, is a sin that must be repented of. Homosexuality is an affront to the sexual and marital mandates cited in Scripture. It is an abomination.

However, where is the love in that sign? Where is the love in their hate-filled rhetoric? How many people are drawn to the gospel of Christ by their actions? As a forth-teller of God's Word, there is a tendency for the prophet to condemn without love. In Ephesians 4:15 the Apostle Paul said that he spoke the truth in love so that the church would grow in Christ. We, too, need to speak the truth in love so that unbeliever see Jesus and receive salvation and fellow believers will repent of their sin and change their current errant direction.

"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 21-23).

Those who have experienced the marvelous love and mercy of God ought to compassionately extend the love of God to the unsaved and the backslidden by proclaiming the love of God in the gospel of Christ.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Using Your Gift on God's Team

Effectively using one's spiritual gift is one of life's greatest joys. We are told by sociologists that the two greatest questions man can ask is:

1. *Who am I?*
2. *Why am I here?*

Both of those questions are answered in our relationship with Christ. If you have trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you are a child of God.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God (Rom. 8:16).

And, you are joint-heirs with Jesus Christ:

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Rom. 8:17).

You are saved by God's grace through faith, apart from any works; however, you are saved unto good works.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:8-10).

Every child of God has a purpose to fulfill while on this earth. Each one is expected to use his/her God-given spiritual gift to fulfill God's will for his/her life. The Apostle Paul, in Philippians 2:12-13, tells us:

“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

He is not inferring that we work for our salvation, rather we are to exhibit the evidences of our salvation, which is a life of obedience and a life of serving Jesus. Although saved apart from good works, a believer's life after receiving Christ as Savior is characterized by good works.

“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Peter 2:11-12).

First Peter 2:11-12 states that the life of a believer should be so full of good works that unbelievers may be won to Christ. We are not saved by good works,

because in and of ourselves we are incapable of producing anything worthy of the description of “good.”

“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (Isa. 64:6).

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

However, we are saved to serve. How we live and how we serve are indicators of our spiritual condition.

God has gifted you to serve him. He has given you the giftedness to fulfill his will in your life. If you possess the gift of prophecy, God expects you to use this gift in his service (Eph. 4). With the gift of prophecy, for telling the truth and explaining the truths of God’s Word, you are likely hard-working, devoted, able to discern people’s motives and character, and willing to stand up for what is right.

Here are a few areas you may want to consider praying about (you will likely think of some other outlets for your gift also):

1. Church Revival Ministries

The spiritual gift of prophecy naturally lends itself to revival ministries. Considerable education and training will be needed in order successfully fulfill this ministry. You may want to meet with your pastor for advice in how to implement this gift in your church and community.

Some ideas to consider:

- A. Pray for guidance and anointing, and perhaps ask your pastor to help you develop a message or a series of revival messages.
- B. Practice your sermon delivery. Video record yourself as you practice your sermon delivery. Watch the video and critique your delivery. Make the necessary changes and record again. Continue to do this until you are satisfied with your sermon content and delivery. You may want to have your pastor critique your video presentation for content and presentation.
- C. Ask your pastor for an opportunity to preach one of the services in the church.
- D. Contact your regional denominational leadership representative to submit your name to fill pulpits while pastors are sick, are on vacation or to serve as an interim pastor. You will also want to let them know that you are available for revival services and end-time prophecy conferences.

You will need to prepare a ministry resume, a DVD or CD to give out to interested churches, and a written recommendation by your pastor.

2. Writing Ministry

Writing is a great opportunity to expand your personal ministry and to invest into something that will outlive you. Writing takes a great deal of research, time and skill. If you have never written anything more than a term paper for school, you may want to take a college course or seminar in writing.

Several publishing opportunities are available for new writers. The most effective and popular method is submitting your written manuscript or writing proposal to well-established publishers. Because of the high expense associated with editing, printing, and advertising any written work, most publishers tend to contract more established, already published authors. Although not impossible, this avenue is improbable.

Self-publishing is a viable method for selling your work. The difference between self-publishing and going with a book publisher lies in the costs and distribution of the books. With self-publishing, you will incur all of the upfront writing, editing, illustration, and printing costs. Recuperation of your upfront costs will come from the sales of your books.

Distribution of your self-published books can come from a variety of means. Internet book distributors, like Amazon, offer smaller publishers and self-publishers the opportunity to sell their wares on their site. Other opportunities include: book sales during your speaking engagements, denominational publishers /distributors, local bookstores, your own web site, etc.

It is important to note that most self-publishers rarely recoup their costs. Therefore, if you choose to use your spiritual gift of prophecy in writing, you will need to understand that this ministry will not only require a time investment but also a monetary investment as well.

Another avenue for distributing your written work is through blogging and your own Internet website. If your main motivation is to help fellow believers grow, then consider providing your written works free of charge or for a donation.

3. Local Church Evangelism

A great ministry for prophets to get involved with is outreach through their local church. Pastors are always looking for people who have a heart for the lost and the availability to get involved in outreach efforts. Many churches have organized weekly visitation days, follow-up visits or phone calls with guests, hospital visitation, visitation of church members, door-to-door outreach, special evangelistic days at church, yearly church-wide evangelistic services, etc.

Whether you choose to lead or follow the direction of other leaders in the church, your input and investment in this ministry will not only help others come to know Christ as Savior, but will help you fulfill your calling and help your church continue to grow.

A number of evangelism programs will further your knowledge of how to lead someone to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Gifted prophets may want to go through Evangelism Explosion, TEAM Evangelism or other training programs through your local church. Meet with your pastor to obtain guidance and direction when seeking evangelistic training.

4. Pastoral Ministry

Prophets need to consider the calling of God on their life. Is God calling you to serve him in full-time Christian service? Are you called to be a pastor? Before you decide to enter the pastorate, it is important that you pray and ask God:

- A. Am I called to be a pastor? How do I know?
- B. Am I qualified to be a pastor (see qualifications for being a pastor in First Timothy 3)?
- C. Do others (spouse, friends, parents, etc.) feel I am called to be a pastor?
- D. Does my pastor think I am called to be a pastor?
- E. Have I been ordained into the pastorate by my church?

The pastorate is the most difficult job in the world. Every pastor faces the daily struggle of preparing biblically sound messages, counseling, planning, committee meetings, budgets, financial planning, staff and volunteer management, outreach, hospital visitation, benevolence, worship planning, etc. In addition, every pastor faces the undue stress of not meeting the expectations of every member of that church. Therefore, no one should enter the pastorate unless they are specifically called by God to do so.

It is essential that every pastor receive Bible and pastoral training prior to becoming a pastor. Many well-meaning but biblically illiterate pastors have caused damage to the cause of Christ and have hurt the people of God simply because they do not know enough about God's Word to help the church of God. As stated in chapter 4, How to Enhance the Spiritual Gift of Prophecy, a number of avenues are available to assist you in furthering your knowledge of God's Word.

Meet with your pastor to see if you might be allowed to serve as a pastoral intern, or if the pastor will mentor you, prior to taking steps to become a pastor.

Whether you become a full-time pastor, a bi-vocational pastor or serve a lay pastor in your church, God will effectively use you if he has called you in that capacity. However, it is essential that you receive the blessing of your spouse and your pastor, and obtain the necessary training prior to stepping into that role.

5. Nursing Home Ministry

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).

Caring for the needs of our elderly is a valuable ministry for every church. Nursing homes provide a great opportunity for the prophet to “pastor” a group of people who will appreciate the time and energy invested in their spiritual care. Nursing home ministries also allow you to polish your preaching and teaching skills.

Remember, you are accountable to Jesus Christ, and your local church through your pastor. Therefore, you need to meet with your pastor or pastoral designate to receive endorsement and advice in starting this ministry. Periodic updates should be scheduled to ensure that the ministry is progressing in accordance with the vision of the church.

6. Hospice/Hospital Chaplain

Hospice is a powerful ministry for prophets. By definition, every hospice patient is terminal, meaning they are all going to die within days or months of being accepted into the hospice program. Therefore, you will have the opportunity to minister to the dying, as well as their grieving family and friends.

In most cases, hospice chaplains as well as hospital chaplains are required to have a four-year degree from an accredited college, a seminary degree and chaplaincy credentials. Without a degree, you may still be able to volunteer to assist patients and families in the hospice program. Local hospices often provide training for those who wish to volunteer. However, you may be limited in exercising your gift of prophecy as a volunteer.

Numerous web sites are available to help you identify and apply for chaplain jobs. Good sources include: Monster.com, Indeed.com, and your local hospitals and hospices.

7. College Chaplain

Campus Crusade for Christ is an international ministry dedicated to reaching and assisting in the spiritual growth of college students. Prophets will thrive under the ministry of this highly effective campus ministry. This ministry certainly entails evangelism, but it also includes spiritual counseling, praying over the sick, tutoring, etc. For more information about Campus Crusade for Christ, see: www.campuscrusade.com or www.cru.org.

8. Prison Ministry

Most prisons welcome religious and secular organizations that will come into their institution and provide a positive message for their inmates. Prison ministry allows prophets to hone their preaching and teaching skills. Many jails will allow a pastor to visit their inmates as many times as they wish

during the week. However, you will be required to fill out an application, complete with your pastoral credentials.

A good source for resources regarding how to start a prison ministry, how to get involved in a prison ministry, or how to meet the needs of the families of the incarcerated is Prison Fellowship. See www.prisonfellowship.org.

9. Teaching Ministry

Use your gift of prophecy to teach God's Word in Sunday school or other small groups. A study of the end times would be of special interest in today's times. The church may even want to host an informational class or seminar for the community in which your church is located. What a great opportunity for prophets to expound God's Word and reach people for Christ through current and forthcoming events! Consider following up with a question and answer session and pray with those who attend.

10. Support Group Leader/Victim Advocate

Gifted prophets are passionate about what they believe in, including special causes. Depending on your second most dominant gift, you may serve well as one who initiates action, mediates, counsels, encourages, helps obtain aid, and stands up for those who need a helping hand. This may include abused or neglected children and adults, victims of crimes, people who have faced tragedies, those who have paid the price for their crimes and are trying to start fresh, the unemployed or underemployed, the homeless, people with disabilities, people suffering from broken homes or damaged relationships, the elderly, etc.

You may enjoy leading a support group where people can confidentially discuss their problems and offer solutions. In such groups, you could offer a spiritual element of prayer and devotions, a brief message giving biblical perspective on specific issues related to those in the group, and a place where people feel safe. Remember, whatever personal information individuals share these groups should remain confidential. You might also contact area agencies and organizations to determine various types of assistance that may be available for the different needs you uncover.

Going further, there may be an opportunity for you to provide assistance as a victim advocate in your local court system. Some area court systems recruit and train volunteers for such a task.

You may develop your counseling or leadership skills through studying the written works of accredited Christian counselors and experts in leadership training, through online or correspondence courses, or through local college courses and conferences. One source of resources is the American Association of Christian Counselors at aacc.net. Seek prayer and approval from your pastor or appropriate church staff for starting a support group ministry based in your local church.

11. Prayer and Accountability Partner

Many people need or desire an accountability partner. This is useful in any situation, but particularly for those who are recovering from addictions such as alcohol, drugs, pornography, sex, physical control/abuse, overeating, gambling, cheating/stealing, overspending/shopping/materialism, etc. As an accountability partner, you would pray regularly for and with a person. You would call or meet with the person regularly (perhaps weekly) for prayer, support, discussion of how the person's progress for the week, suggestions for avoiding the behavior, sharing helpful Scripture, etc. and be available to receive calls from the person any time in their moments of temptation and need for prayer and encouragement in their struggle. Since as a gifted prophet you are grieved by the wrong actions of others and want to point out the error of their ways, this ministry presents an opportunity to go beyond that to help them up as they seek to change.

12. Mediator

Conflicts arise in personal and church families. Sometimes a mediator can help sort out the problem and help find a common ground solution. Your gift of prophecy probably indicates you are a person who gets to the point and can come up with a plan of action based on what is right. As a mediator, you would help people within the church seeking resolution of a conflict by providing a listening ear and biblical instruction. You would guide the discussion of ways to resolve the issue and come to agreement through prayer and biblical instruction, finding out what each person feels and wants, and helping the people develop steps to a sensible solution, which likely involves some compromise on each person's behalf.

13. Speaker and Fundraiser for Humanitarian Missions Projects

Because you know God wants his people to care for the needy, giving a "cup of cold water" in his name and showing his love to others, and because you are passionate about God's instruction, you may serve well as one who speaks out for and raises funds for humanitarian and missions projects. You would do well by explaining how God's Word instructs us to act, why the outreach project is worthy of support, and telling what others can do to help. Let the need be known, motivate others to action, raise the funds, insure accountability and transparency, assist with carrying out the project, or any of these much-needed steps for a successful biblical outreach project. The projects can range from helping people within your congregation, to reaching out to those in your community, to touching those across the world. You could be involved with projects to help the widows and fatherless, the unemployed and/or poor, those affected by natural catastrophes or physical illness. The list is endless. Projects can be seasonal, special occasions or ongoing ministries. Find out what your pastoral staff and/or denomination may be planning and share your own ideas for approval through your church. Be sure the project includes plenty of prayer and that the recipients know it is through God's love and provision that your church is able to help.

14. Missions Team Member

Whether the mission team is going out into the highway and hedges on their homeland or traveling overseas for a special missions trip, your gift of prophecy will be valuable. You will be able to explain God's Word to others and help lead them to a saving knowledge of the Lord.

Become familiar with the culture of those you seek to reach and teach. This will help you relate to them as you clearly teach and illustrate God's Word in a way they may understand best, and will help prevent you from turning others away through an unintended insult due to misunderstanding the culture. Remember that while you are committed to the truth of God's Word, you must not be judgmental of those you seek to reach. Your goal is to reach others for Jesus Christ – to invite them to the Savior, not judge their sin and turn them away. Be prepared by praying and studying God's Word diligently, preparing a Gospel presentation, meeting with the mission team to discuss the planned trip and goals, and working as a team member. Together everyone accomplishes more.

APPENDIX ONE

Identifying the Gift of Prophecy

The gift of prophecy may be one of the most misunderstood gifts in the church today among the various Team Ministry gifts. Far too many gifted prophets serve in the wrong places or are stuck not knowing how to use their gift. While today's prophet does not foretell what will happen as in days past, today's prophet is gifted to tell forth, clearly explain, the Word God has given us. Gifted prophets have important roles to fill in standing for what is true and sharing the truth of God's Word.

How can I know if I am indeed a gifted prophet? There are at least three ways to determine if you have the gift of prophecy.

First, complete the *Team Ministry Spiritual Gifts Inventory* (or revised and expanded version *Your Gifts Spiritual Gifts Survey*) by Dr. Larry Gilbert, published by ChurchGrowth.org, to help you in your spiritual gifts discovery and determine probable areas of giftedness.

Second, look at your own ministry passion (what you prefer doing). What are you passionate about? Are you passionate about God's Word? Are you passionate about reaching people for Christ? Are you passionate about teaching people the Word of God?

Third, compare yourself with a standard profile of a gifted prophet to note important areas of similarity or difference.

Using the Spiritual Gift Survey

Your dominant area of giftedness will tend to impact the way you think and feel about things much as other influences such as family or educational background also contribute to the person you are. The *Team Ministry Spiritual Gifts Inventory* (and *Your Gifts Spiritual Gifts Survey*) has helped many people discover their spiritual gift(s) by matching certain attitudinal statements to probable areas of giftedness. Those who have the gift of prophecy tend to identify closely with the following statements

1. I believe I am very discerning (perceptive) of other people's motives.
2. When I speak, I desire to stir other people's consciences (make them think, convict them to act).
3. I can spot (discern, point out, recognize) sin when other people cannot.
4. I feel a great need to expose the sin I see in others.
5. I am grieved (bothered, troubled, disturbed, upset) with the wrong actions of others.
6. I am disorganized and must depend on others to keep me on schedule.

7. I must verbalize (speak) my message; I would never be content to only write it.
8. I always express urgency and want others to make quick decisions.
9. I enjoy speaking in public, and doing it with boldness.
10. I am burdened (have a strong desire/conviction, am moved) to memorize Scripture.
11. You must “prove” me wrong before I will go along with you.
12. Studying is too time-consuming; I rely on others to do my background work for me.

Confirming Your Analysis Results

While the *Team Ministry Spiritual Gifts Inventory (Your Gifts Spiritual Gifts Survey)* has proven an effective tool in helping people identify their dominant area of giftedness, be careful about coming to conclusions too quickly on the basis of a single test. In the Old Testament, a matter could not be legally confirmed without two or three witnesses who agreed. When you evaluate your response to the any spiritual gifts survey, apply this Law of Two or Three Witnesses to your results by asking the following questions:

1. Is this conclusion consistent with what I know about this gift? Something in your background or even the way you felt as you completed the inventory may have colored your answers slightly, results in false conclusion.
2. Do other Christians who know me see evidence of this gift in me? If you possess this gift, it should be apparent at least in embryonic form to more mature and spiritual Christians who know you.
3. Is the exercise of the gift effective in ministry? When you use your spiritual gift, you will tend to experience maximum effectiveness with minimum effort.

Gifts, Passions and Learned Abilities

Some Christians confuse their spiritual giftedness with a passion for ministry and/or learned abilities they have acquired. Normally, God also gives his people a passion to serve him in some area related to that in which they are uniquely gifted. As Christians begin using their gift in ministry, they find that other abilities they have acquired over the years can be used to open ministry doors or enhance the effectiveness of their gift. Therefore, the challenge of gift stewardship involves determining how to use your gifts and learned abilities in a ministry for which you have a passion. When this balance is achieved, you will realize your maximum effectiveness in ministry and greatest sense of personal fulfillment.

As you look for an opportunity to use your gift in ministry, ask yourself, “If I could serve in a ministry in my church, which would I choose?” This will help you identify your passion for ministry. If you have difficulty deciding between several options, determine what these ministries have in common that makes them

attractive to you. For example, the Christian who has difficulty choosing between a summer day camp ministry to children or accompanying the youth group on their winter retreat may have a passion for a camping ministry rather than children's or youth ministry.

Once you have identified your ministry passion, begin investigating opportunities within that ministry area that would enable you to use your gift(s). This will probably involve talking with others currently involved in that ministry. In some cases, you may need to do some creative thinking to help others see how your unique giftedness could contribute to the effectiveness of the ministry team. In other situations, God may give you a passion to use your gift in a ministry that is not yet established in your church. Many pastors and church leaders are waiting for people like that to begin much-needed new ministries in the church.

Having determined a role for your gift(s) in the area of your passion, the third step in gift stewardship involves using your learned abilities to enhance your ministry effectiveness. Some of our learned abilities (perhaps most of them) may not readily lend themselves to the ministry we have chosen. Others may only contribute slightly to enhancing your effectiveness. Still others may open significant doors of ministry that may have otherwise remained closed.

Practicing Gift Stewardship

God has uniquely gifted each of us for effective ministry in our church. He is the giver of the gifts, but as the recipients of his gifts we have a stewardship responsibility (1) to discover our spiritual gifts, then (2) to demonstrate those gifts in ministry, and finally (3) to develop the potential of our spiritual gifts.

A Profile of the Prophet

Gifted prophets have the Spirit-given capacity and desire to serve God by proclaiming God's truth. They tend to be hell-fire-brimstone preachers or teachers who point out sin, clearly and profoundly explaining God's Word and urging others to action. They are the ones who stand for truth in any situation.

Because of their strong desire for truth and following God's instruction, gifted prophets may struggle with having compassion and understanding for those who fall short in their Christian living. When tempered with the love God intends for Christians to have for others, prophets can do much to influence others for good. They can bring souls into the kingdom, inspire others to action, encourage godly living and spiritual growth, contribute to the strength of the church, and glorify God through their ministry. Gift profile is based on *How to Find Meaning and Fulfillment through Understanding the Spiritual Gifts within You*, which was revised and updated to *YOUR GIFTS: Discover God's Unique Design for You* by Larry Gilbert (for individuals/small groups) and *TEAM MINISTRY: Gifted to Serve* (for pastors/church leaders), Forest, Virginia: ChurchGrowth.org, 2015.

Characteristics of the Prophet

1. Is not very patient, especially with people and their problems.
2. Is disorganized and depends on others to keep him/her on schedule.

3. Is very discerning.
4. Is usually much more pleasant when not speaking or preaching.
5. Has a strong self-image and is individualistic.
6. Has a strong sense of duty, not caring what others think about what he/she does.
7. Is very opinionated.
8. Is more likely to be depressed and serious than lighthearted about life.
9. Desires to be alone frequently.
10. Is not usually inhibited, but is usually expressive.
11. Is more interested in his/her own aims and desires than others'.
12. Is more likely to be authoritative, especially about Scripture.
13. Is dominant, not submissive.

Burdens, Strengths and Desires of the Prophet

1. Is burdened to expose sin in others.
2. Must preach–wouldn't be content just writing.
3. Wants to make all the “softies” in the church stronger.
4. Speaks with urgency and presses for rapid decisions.
5. Desires to see a world without sin–wants to see revival.
6. Wants to stir your conscience.
7. Preaches and teaches for conviction.
8. Enjoys speaking publicly and does it with boldness.
9. Is more likely to be hostile than tolerant, especially about sin.
10. Is usually a disciplinarian who wants things done right.
11. Is able to make quick decisions; is seldom indecisive.
12. Is sometimes less discerning than he/she believes he/she is.
13. Sees problems where others do not.
14. Is idealistic.

Special Needs and Weaknesses of the Prophet

1. Does not like to study–relies on others to do background work. Has a poor memory for details.
2. Does not relate well one-on-one and is not concerned about being gracious.
3. Over-categorizes. Mostly, sometimes, often, and 80% are words the prophet replaces with “all.”

4. Tries to convict rather than letting the Spirit convict.
5. Judges others quickly.
6. Jumps to conclusions and makes decisions before all the facts are available and does not analyze the details.
7. Tends to look at the negative side of things.
8. Does not make or follow through with long-range goals and plans.
9. Tends to be selfish.
10. Uses sarcasm and teasing to get points across, is not tactful.
11. Is bossy and impatient; has little tolerance for mistakes; wants things done “my” way now.
12. Is likely to stir up trouble.
13. Is suspicious by nature and cautious about making friends.
14. Is able to hold the audience’s attention.

How the Prophet Is Misunderstood by Others

Others think the prophet...

1. Is not understanding.
2. Looks at a congregation as all bad.
3. Makes some people doubt their salvation.
4. Is insensitive and cold and has no love for people.
5. Is a poor listener.
6. Is too self-disciplined and can’t have a good time.
7. Receives joy in hurting the other people’s feelings.
8. Is too demanding.

How Satan Attacks the Gift of Prophecy

1. Causes lack of compassion.
2. Causes pride and self-righteousness over lack of certain sins.
3. Causes anger and bitterness.
4. Causes lack of forgiveness.
5. Causes discouragement because of unrepentant attitude by others.
6. Causes prophet to sometimes fall into the very sins he/she teaches against.
7. Causes prophet to never say, “I’m sorry.”
8. Causes a pessimistic attitude.

Where to Use the Gift of Prophecy

1. In revival speaking.
2. In pastoring when the prophet has supporting gifts suitable for pastoring.
3. In problem solving for a church with a sin problem or members needing a mediator.
4. In counseling to help point out sin in a person's life and determine steps for improvement.
5. In preaching on gospel teams.
6. In prison ministry.
7. In migrant ministry.
8. In providing spiritual accountability for a person or support group.
9. In missions projects, as a speaker or fundraiser.
10. In chaplaincy at a college, hospital, prison, military branch...
11. In writing ministry.

APPENDIX TWO

A Two-Year Plan to Begin Thinking Like a Prophet

One of the things Jesus accomplished when he ascended into heaven to grant spiritual gifts to all Christians to use in the ministry (Eph. 4:8). Specific spiritual gifts are identified by different names in Scripture. When the various biblical lists of spiritual gifts are examined, there appear to be three kinds of spiritual gifts. One group may be described as miraculous gifts or “signs and wonders.” This group includes gifts such as speaking in tongues and gifts of healing. Then there are four enabling gifts that each Christian appears to have to some degree. These include spiritual discernment, faith, knowledge, and wisdom. These four gifts enhance a third group, the task-oriented spiritual gifts (TEAM gifts). These task-oriented gifts are tools for effectiveness as part of the ministry team. Each of these nine tools for ministry is the subject of one of the books in this series on spiritual gifts.

Spiritual gifts are given to Christians for several reasons. They equip Christians with tools for effective outreach ministries (Eph. 4:12). These same tools equip Christians with the ability to edify, encourage, and care for fellow believers (Eph. 4:12). They also enable each Christian to contribute practically to the unity of the church (Eph. 4:13). Spiritual gifts provide the means by which Christians can experience their greatest personal fulfillment, that which comes from using their gifts in ministry to others (Rom. 12:4-8).

While the focus of this and other books in this series is spiritual gifts, it is important to remember that all gifts are given by the same Giver who distributes those gifts “to each one individually as He wills” (1 Cor. 12:11). When churches develop a gift-orientation to ministry, they recognize Christ’s authority as the head of their church to determine the nature of their ministry. Ultimately, the key to an effective gift-oriented ministry is not the gift, but the Giver. He determines who gets which gift and in doing so, he also designs the unique gift mix within each congregation to accomplish the specific ministry he intends for that church. That is why, despite the failings of the Corinthian church in many respects, Paul could affirm with confidence that they came “short in no gift” (1 Cor. 1:7). God gave them and us every gift we need to accomplish the ministry he wants us to accomplish.

Looking at Spiritual Gifts from the Perspective of the Prophet

When Paul addressed the Corinthians on the subject of spiritual gifts, he used five different Greek words to describe the nature of these gifts (1 Cor. 12:1-7). Each term tends to emphasize a different aspect of our spiritual giftedness. Paul used the word *pneumatikon*, which is translated “spiritual” (1 Cor. 12:1). This adjective describes the character of these gifts as spiritual. The second Greek word used was *charismata*, which is usually translated “gifts” (1 Cor. 12:4). This

term emphasizes gifts as God's free and gracious gifts. The word *diakonia* is the third term used to describe gifts. This word is translated "ministries" (1 Cor. 12:5) and reveals gifts as opportunities for ministry. Fourth, the word *energema*, translated "activities" (1 Cor. 12:6), suggests that gifts are an endowment of God's power or energy. The fifth the word used by Paul, *phanerosis*, translated "manifestation" (1 Cor. 12:7), means that gifts are evidence of God working through us.

That last word creates a problem for many Christians. If my spiritual gift is a manifestation of God working through me, it will be frustrated unless I get out of the way. God and the people he made have two different ways of thinking. Speaking on behalf of God, the prophet Isaiah wrote, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways' says the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts'" (Isa. 55:8-9). At some point in the development of our spiritual gifts, we need to begin thinking like the Giver of our gifts.

Paul understood this principle. Just before discussing spiritual gifts in his epistle to the Romans, he wrote, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2). The key to that renewing of your mind is found in saturating your mind with the Word of God. Paul urged the Colossians, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly with all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). The psalmist wrote, "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Ps. 119:9-11).

A Two-Year Strategy to Begin Thinking Like God about Your Gift

In our hurry-up world many people look for quick solutions to fix problems, but learning to think like the mercy-shower is a challenge bigger than can be accomplished in a weekend seminar or by reading a book or taking a course. The gap between our way of thinking and God's way of thinking is so great it could take a lifetime to bridge. Even then we may discover we still have more to learn. But the more we allow God's word to saturate our thinking process, the more inclined we will be to begin thinking like him.

As you strive to begin thinking like God about your spiritual gift two spiritual disciplines will help you accomplish that goal. The first is the discipline of reading through the Bible. Christians who depend exclusively on the ministry of their pastor to teach them the Scriptures often end up with a piece-meal understanding of the Scriptures. If a pastor preached on a different chapter each week, it would take him 1189 weeks to preach through the Bible (about twenty-three years and five months). Of course some chapters might take several weeks to preach through and sometimes the pastor may choose to preach on some doctrine, problem, social issue or other topic. Most people don't stay in the same

church long enough to understand their Bible using this approach exclusively. But despite the size and scope of the Bible, you can read it through your self in a year by devoting fifteen minutes daily to personal Bible reading. There are many “through the Bible” Bible reading guides published as tracts or special edition Bibles to help you accomplish this goal.

The second spiritual discipline to help you begin thinking about your gift from God’s perspective is Scripture memory. While most people believe they cannot memorize, throughout history, this has been the most often used means of teaching the Scriptures. Even those who cannot read can memorize the Scriptures because it involves only two steps, repetition and review. To learn a new verse, continually repeat the verse until you can say it without error. Then to remember the verse, review it often on a regular basis. In the Old Testament, parents were encouraged to review the principles of the law they memorized with their children four times each day, “when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up” (Deut. 6:7). Regardless of our lifestyle we can still find time to repeat and review the Scriptures during our wait time and commute time and when we go to sleep and wake up each day.

Key Verses on Prophecy

To help you get started in your own personal spiritual gift development plan, the following list identifies key verses related to prophecy. Don’t let the list overwhelm you and don’t try to memorize them all this evening. Instead, take the first verse and read it over until it becomes familiar. Set a goal to memorize that verse this week and begin thinking about how that verse relates to your prophecy ministry. Then review that verse daily for the next month, even as you begin learning the next verse on the list next week. At the end of the month, set the verse aside to be reviewed monthly so you don’t forget it.

The following list does not include every verse related to your gift, but it will help you get started and develop this discipline over the next two years. You may come across other verses to add to the list as you read your Bible daily. In addition to changing the way you think about your gift, this plan will also help you experience accelerated spiritual growth. Peter understood the link between the Scriptures and spiritual growth when he wrote, “as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby” (1 Pet. 2:2). As you mature in Christ and begin thinking like God about your spiritual gifts you will find yourself using your gift with greater effectiveness in ministry. In doing so you will also experience a greater sense of personal fulfillment as you serve God the way he designed you to serve him.

Following are key verses on prophecy, followed by helpful verses for the prophet.

1. “If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto

- the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deut.13:1-3).
2. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matt. 23:37-39).
 3. “And he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled. And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some. Having yet therefore one son, his well beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard” (Mark 12:1-8).
 4. “Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God” (Luke 3:1-6).
 5. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Luke 13:34-35).

6. "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:17-19).
7. "And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles" (Acts 21:10-11).
8. "And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Acts 28:25-27).
9. "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith" (Rom. 12:6).
10. "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues" (1 Cor. 12:8-10).
11. "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2).
12. "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:37-40).
13. "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience" (James 5:9-10).

14. "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (1 Tim. 4:14).
15. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1:10-11).
16. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:19-21).
17. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3).
18. "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them" (Rev. 11:4-7).
19. "And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy" (Rev. 16:5-6).
20. "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10).
21. "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (Rev. 22:18-21).

22. "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put my words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him" (Deut. 18:18).
23. "But the prophet who shall presume to speak a word in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or who shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die" (Deut. 18:20).
24. "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deut. 34:10).
25. "And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord because of the Midianites, that the Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, who said unto them, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out from before you, and gave you their land" (Judges 6:7-9).
26. "And when the prophet who brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, "It is the man of God who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord. Therefore the Lord hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him and slain him, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke unto him" (1 Kings 13:26).
27. "And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, 'There is a king in Judah!' And now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together" (Neh. 6:7).
28. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jer. 1:5).
29. "And the Lord hath sent unto you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear" (Jer. 25:4).
30. Nevertheless, I sent unto you all My servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, 'Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate" (Jer. 44:4).
31. "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15).
32. "For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John" (Matt. 11:13).

33. "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways" (Luke 1:76).
34. "For I say unto you, among those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he that is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he" (Luke 7:28).
35. "The Law and the Prophets were until John. Since that time the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Luke 16:16).
36. "Then He shall send Jesus Christ, who before was preached unto you, whom Heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:20-21).
37. "And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging, to whom he expounded and testified the Kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses and out of the Prophets, from morning until evening" (Acts 28:23).
38. "And God hath set some in the church: first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracle workers, then those with gifts of healing, helpers, administrators, and those with diversity of tongues" (1 Cor. 12:28).
39. "Whereby when ye read this, ye may understand my knowledge of the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel" (Eph. 3:4-6).
40. "And He gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph 4:11-12).
41. "And he swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer, but that in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets" (Rev. 10:6-7).
42. "...saying, 'We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, who art, and wast, and art to come, because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry; and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints and them that

- fear Thy name, small and great, and shouldest destroy them that destroy the earth' ” (Rev. 11:17-18).
43. “And I, John, saw these things and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then said he unto me, ‘See that thou do it not, for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them that keep the sayings of this book. Worship God!’ And he said unto me, ‘Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand’ ” (Rev. 22:8-10).
 44. “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You” (Ps. 119:11).
 45. “As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby” (1 Pet. 2:2).
 46. “And these words, which I command you today, shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up” (Deut. 6:6-7).
 47. “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all” (1 Thess. 5:14).
 48. “Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another” (Rom. 15:14).
 49. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16).
 50. “These things I command you, that you love one another” (John 15:17).
 51. “Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father” (Gal. 1:4).
 52. “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1).
 53. “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Rom. 5:12).
 54. “Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let

him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isa. 55:6-7).

55. “Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth” (Prov. 27:1).
56. “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mark 8:36).
57. “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).
58. “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out” (John 6:37).
59. “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19).
60. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9).
61. “There is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin” (Eccl. 7:20).
62. “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim. 2:5, 6).
63. “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me’ ” (John 14:6).
64. “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).
65. “Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:12).
66. “ ‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the LORD, ‘though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool’ ” (Isa. 1:18).
67. “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins might live for righteousness – by whose stripes you were healed” (1 Pet. 2:24).
68. “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’)” (Gal. 3:13).

69. "Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight – that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge" (Ps. 51:4).
70. "But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Isa. 64:6).
71. "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit" (1 Pet. 3:18).
72. "So then each of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12).
73. "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God' " (John 3:3).
74. "If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O LORD, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared" (Ps. 130:3, 4).
75. "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5, 6).
76. "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27:1).
77. "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36).
78. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).
79. "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out" (John 6:37).
80. "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).
81. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? (Jer. 17:9).
82. "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns – broken cisterns that can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13).
83. "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:4, 5).

84. "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10).
85. "For your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my iniquity, for it is great" (Ps. 25:11).
86. "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4).
87. "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17).
88. "For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:9).
89. "In the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel" (Rom. 2:16).
90. "But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out" (Num. 33:23).
91. "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account" (Heb. 4:13).
92. "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28).
93. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).
94. "Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience" (Col. 3:6).
95. "Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (James 4:14).
96. "In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1 John 4:9).
97. " 'There is no peace,' says my God, 'for the wicked' " (Isa. 57:21).
98. "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Prov. 3:5, 6).
99. "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18).

100. "I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, and like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you" (Isa. 44:22).
101. "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).
102. "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19).
103. "Let my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as the dew, as raindrops on the tender herb, and as showers on the grass" (Deut. 32:2).
104. "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye" (Ps. 32:8).
105. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20).
106. "My son, keep your father's command, and do not forsake the law of your mother. Bind them continually upon your heart; tie them around your neck. When you roam, they will lead you; when you sleep, they will keep you; and when you awake, they will speak with you" (Prov. 6:20-22).
107. "Receive my instruction, and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold; for wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things one may desire cannot be compared with her" (Prov. 8:10-11).
108. "Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid" (Prov. 12:1).
109. "Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You" (Ps. 51:13).
110. "O God, You have taught me from my youth; and to this day I declare Your wondrous works" (Ps. 71:17).
111. "Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breast? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little" (Isa. 28:9-10).
112. "I have taught you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in right paths. When you walk, your steps will not be hindered, and when you run, you will not stumble. Take firm hold of instruction, do not let go; keep her, for she is your life" (Prov. 4:11-13).

113. "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring your remembrance all things that I said to you" (John 14:26).
114. "The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit" (Ps. 34:18).
115. "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:28-29).
116. "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).
117. "That at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12).
118. "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matt. 7:13-14).
119. "And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 2:13).
120. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).
121. "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:12).
122. "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13).
123. "He shall regard the prayer of the destitute, and shall not despise their prayer" (Ps. 102:17).
124. "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy" (Prov. 28:13).
125. "And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15).
126. "I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins" (Isa. 43:25).

127. "He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Prov. 29:1).
128. "Therefore, to him who knows to do god and does not do it, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).
129. "He will not always strive with us, nor will he keep His anger forever" (Ps. 103:9).
130. "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6).
131. "They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work" (Tit. 1:16).
132. "But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart' " (1 Sam. 16:7).
133. "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).
134. "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5).
135. "Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue" it (1 Pet. 3:11).
136. "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. 1:13).
137. "Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict" (Titus 1:9).
138. "Again,when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die. Because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezek. 3:20-22).
139. "Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation" (Jude 1:3).
140. "But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 1:17).

141. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And on some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 1:21-23).
142. "And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15).
143. "I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His Kingdom: preach the Word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (1 Tim. 4:1-2).
144. "Salt is good, but if the salt has lost his saltness, with what will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another" (Mark 9:50).