

I. PRACTICAL GUIDELINES TO TEST PROPHETIC WORDS:

- A. Prophecy is one part of God's heart that is revealed to you. Prophecy is great! But it's not everything. It is just one part. Prophecy needs to be tested and put in its proper context of the whole of God's heart and revelation (including God's eternal Word/Scriptures).

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

- B. Does the message line up with the teaching & principles of Scripture? (Col. 3:16; 2 Tim 3:16-17)

- C. Does the word exalt and glorify Jesus? (John 16:13-14; Rev. 19:10)

- D. Does the word edify the church?

But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men (1 Cor. 14:3)

- E. What is the long-term fruit that results? Does it result in a life that is transformed into the image of Jesus Christ? (1 Cor. 13:1-2; Acts 5:38-39). Use this to judge spiritual experiences.

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

- F. Do other spiritual leaders (those with experience with prophetic words and those grounded in the Scriptures) confirm the word? Wait for confirmations.

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

By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established. (2 Cor. 13:1)

- G. Is there a "witness" in your spirit? Is there a "check" in your spirit?

1. This is not the same as having doubts about spiritual gifts, etc...

2. The Holy Spirit will confirm to your spirit of the things of God (Rom. 8:16)

Rom. 8:16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

3. It is possible for the word to be tainted. E.g. interpretation or application can be wrong. Our biases and presuppositions can lead us to misinterpret the word. Or, people can prophesy out of their own heart (Eze. 13:2; Jer. 23:16). Be sure that friendships, loyalties (to anyone other than God), control/manipulation are not tainting the "message/word."

Ezek. 14:4 ..Everyone of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the LORD will answer him who comes, according to the multitude of his idols.

1 Thes. 5:19-21 Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies. ²¹ Test all things; hold fast what is good.

4. God sometimes allows false or misguided people to speak to test and humble you (2 Chron. 18). They may speak of great things. How will your heart respond? God sometimes even allows true prophets to give a purposely misleading word (Psa. 18:26). Lay it all down at the altar instantly. If they are true and meant to be, the Lord will give it back to you in due time. The Lord is more interested in whether we will stand in humility, obedience, and loyalty than whether we accomplish great things in the world.
5. If unsure, put it on the shelf and wait on the Lord. In the mean time, live in faith, obedience, patience, meekness and submission. E.g. David, Joseph. Don't let the prophetic word elevate your flesh. Humble yourself (Heb. 5:8).
Luke 2:19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.
6. God reveals Himself in the mundane things of everyday life. We desire the dramatic, but the visitations of God throughout history are in the midst of menial tasks.

II. APPLICATION: WHAT CAN YOU DO TO INCREASE YOUR SENSITIVITY TO GOD'S VOICE?

- A. Expect to hear from the Lord. God will not force it on you.
Acts 2:17-18 And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. ¹⁸ And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.
Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with Tongues (1 Cor 14:39)
- B. Listen. Pay attention to God. Put up your spiritual antennas. Stop and listen. Then you will hear (1 Sam. 3:10). Get rid of distractions. Make space so that you can listen to God. Be still and know (Ps. 46:10).
Now the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears." (1 Sam 3:10)
- C. Value God's eternal Word. His eternal, unchanging voice. Expect the Lord to speak to you through the Bible (words of the verse, or the "address"). Heb. 4:12.
- D. Get around people who hear God. Prophets and people with prophetic gifts are given by Jesus to the church to help people hear from the Lord (Eph. 4:11-12).
- E. Be filled with God's love (1 Cor. 14:1)
Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy (1 Cor. 14:1)
- F. Grow in faith. Start where you are. Don't be afraid to take a risk. You must grow in the grace that God release to you. Don't let the process of growth discourage you. Your faith will increase. Start small. It will grow.
Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith (Rom 12:6)