

Hearing God & Handling Prophecy Well

Dr. John Carmichael

[Joe 2:28 NASB95] 28 "It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.

[1Co 14:1 NASB95] 1 Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual [gifts,] but especially that you may prophesy.

[1Co 14:39 NASB95] 39 Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues.

- Here is the tension: Many desire prophecy; Few understand how to handle it well
- And when prophecy is mishandled, it creates confusion, harm, or immaturity.
- Joel prophesied (Joel 2:28)
- That promise didn't stay in Joel, it exploded into reality in Acts 2 and continues today.
- Paul then commands the church: (1 Corinthians 14:1) (1 Corinthians 14:39)
- So, this is not optional, it is essential.

If God is speaking, how do we rightly receive, interpret, and steward prophetic words so they produce life, not confusion?

Let me give you four biblical guidelines for operating in and responding to the gift of prophecy.

I. God Desires to Speak

- a. 1 Corinthians 14:24–25 – God reveals secrets of the heart [1Co 14:24-25 NASB95] 24 But if all prophecy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; 25 the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.
- b. 1 Corinthians 12:28–31 – Gifts placed in the church [1Co 12:28-31 NASB95] 28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, [various] kinds of tongues. 29 All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not [workers of] miracles, are they? 30 All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? 31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.
- c. John 10:27 – “My sheep hear My voice...” [Jhn 10:27 NASB95] 27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;
- d. God is not silent. He is actively communicating with His people.
- e. Prophecy is not about elite voices. It's about a speaking God and a hearing people.
- f. Application: Cultivate expectation: “God, speak to me.” Stay rooted in Scripture which is God's primary voice. Create space (prayer, worship, tongues) for God to speak to you.
- g. Guardrail: Not every impression is God. Discernment matters ([1Th 5:20-21 NASB95] 20 do not despise prophetic utterances. 21 But examine everything [carefully;] hold fast to that which is good;)

II. The Process of New Testament Prophecy

- a. Revelation – What Did God Say?

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- i. [Jer 23:28 NASB95] 28 "The prophet who has a dream may relate [his] dream, but let him who has My word speak My word in truth. What does straw have [in common] with grain?" declares the LORD.
 - ii. [Deu 4:2 NASB95] 2 "You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.
 - iii. [Rev 22:18-19 NASB95] 18 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.
 - iv. This is the raw content: the impression, vision, scripture, or inner witness.
 - v. Don't exaggerate or embellish.
 - vi. Say only what you receive; no more, no less.
- b. Interpretation – What Does It Mean?
- i. [Gen 40:8 NASB95] 8 Then they said to him, "We have had a dream and there is no one to interpret it." Then Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell [it] to me, please."
 - ii. [Dan 2:27-28 NASB95] 27 Daniel answered before the king and said, "As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians [nor] diviners are able to declare [it] to the king. 28 "However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind [while] on your bed.
 - iii. [1Co 13:9, 12 NASB95] 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part; ... 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.
 - iv. Revelation is perfect. Our interpretation is not.
 - v. Walk in humility: "This is what I sense..."
 - vi. Avoid dogmatic language unless it's crystal clear. Invite confirmation.
- c. Application – What Do I Do With It?
- i. [Luk 2:19 NASB95] 19 But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.
 - ii. [Hab 2:2-3 NASB95] 2 Then the LORD answered me and said, "Record the vision And inscribe [it] on tablets, That the one who reads it may run. 3 "For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay.
 - iii. Not every prophetic word is for immediate action nor for public release.
 - iv. Pray over the word. Seek counsel. Timing matters
 - v. Wisdom: Maturity knows what to say, when to say it, and what to keep quiet
- d. Understanding this process of handling the word of prophecy will produce life.

III. The Function of Prophecy

- a. [1Co 14:3 NASB95] 3 But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation.
 - i. Edification (Build Up) Strengthens faith. Speak life, not fear.
 - ii. Exhortation (Stir Forward) Calls people higher. Challenge with grace, not control.
 - iii. Consolation (Strengthen the Heart) Brings healing and reassurance. Let prophecy reflect the heart of the Father.
- b. New Testament prophecy is primarily strengthening, not condemning.

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IV. The Responsibility of Prophecy

a. You Must Steward the Word

- i. 1 Kings 11:38 – Promise to Jeroboam [1Ki 11:38 NASB95] 38 'Then it will be, that if you listen to all that I command you and walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight by observing My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build you an enduring house as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you.
- ii. 1 Kings 14:14 – Lost outcome [1Ki 14:14 NASB95] 14 "Moreover, the LORD will raise up for Himself a king over Israel who will cut off the house of Jeroboam this day and from now on.
- iii. A prophetic word is an invitation, not a guarantee
- iv. Obedience sustains prophecy. Character carries calling.

b. You Must War Over the Word

- i. [1Ti 1:18 NASB95] 18 This command I entrust to you, Timothy, [my] son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight,
- ii. Prophetic words often face opposition
- iii. Pray in the Spirit. Declare the word. Stand in faith when circumstances contradict it.

c. You Must Judge Prophecy

- i. [1Co 14:29 NASB95] 29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment.
- ii. [1Jo 4:1 NASB95] 1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.
- iii. Not everything spoken is from God
- iv. Test it by: Scripture, Spirit, Fruit, Peace

- **God desires to speak to His people, but we must learn to discern, steward, and respond to prophetic words with humility, wisdom, and obedience.**
- God is speaking in this hour. Not just through platforms but through people.
- This conference is not about hype. It's about alignment with the voice of God.
- If we will: Hear clearly, Interpret humbly, Apply wisely, Steward faithfully
- Then prophecy will not produce confusion. It will produce transformation.
- God is speaking! Let's be the kind of people who not only hear His voice, but handle His word in a way that brings life, clarity, and power.
- Hunger, healing, activation, alignment.