

The Gift of Prophecy (2)

How does God give us a prophetic word?

God is obviously free to do this in any way that He chooses, however, as far as I am aware, He usually uses the same method. It is difficult to put into words, but I would say that He **'drops'** it into our spirit. It is done in an instant and often when we are not expecting it or thinking about it.

How do we know that it is from God?

This is something we are better able to judge the more often we step out and do something about it. I can only say that it **'feels'** different from our normal thoughts. I have found that the way that it is given spontaneously and unexpectedly is a good guidance as to its authenticity. Following on in **Growing Strong – 8** is a guide about judging prophecy and the things that are noted will help us to discern if the prophetic words given by others are genuine or false, but also they will help to clarify what God gives to us personally and help us to decide if what we have been given is from God.

What do we see and hear?

There are several ways in which God may show us what He wants to say.

- 1) Actual words are given for a person to speak. No pictures or illustrations.
- 2) A sort of moving action picture is given. This will be followed by the person being given the gist of what God is saying. Sometimes there will be the addition of a sentence or a couple of sentences in precise words and given very clearly.
- 3) A still picture like a photograph. Often either from something that is happening at the time or from something that has happened that day. A sense of what God is saying will be given. Again there is also sometimes the addition of some words.

I have noticed that God seems to give His Word in the same way each time with each individual. We have someone in the Church who always gives words only as in 1). A picture is never mentioned. There is one person who is usually given what I call an moving action picture as in 2). She describes what happens in the picture that she has seen, then goes on to what she feels God is telling us by His illustration. This person is always given these moving action pictures and never uses 1) or 3). For myself God uses 3) – Still photograph type illustrations of something that I am either doing at the time or that has occurred during that day. I always get a sense of what God is saying, but do not always get the addition of actual words. Up to the present time God has never used 1) or 2) with me.

How do we present this to others?

One thing that we have to be very careful about if we are given a Word and that is to make sure that we give out **only** what God wishes to say and do not add our own thoughts. If we add our own thoughts to what we have seen and heard, then we are introducing into the prophecy something that is not from God. We are stepping past the boundary of what God has given to us. I feel that this is most important as I have found from personal experience that our own thoughts may not be what God wishes to add. He is quite capable of saying something that is absolutely complete without the addition of our 'two penneth'! This is sometimes done out of enthusiasm, boastfulness or not being certain where that boundary lies. We need to try and remember **exactly** only what God showed us or said. It

might be helpful to make a note of what was seen and heard so that it can be referred back to if necessary.

An example concerning God's boundaries

I think that it might be helpful to give the following example that concerns stepping beyond our God-intended boundaries, which takes us out of our operating in the Spirit to operating under our own will.

1) I was given a still picture of a mug of water on my kitchen unit. No sense of meaning or words given.

2) I was then given a second still picture where the mug had accidentally been knocked over and the water had spread out over the unit. At this point I was given the sense that God was saying that the mug containing the water was like we, as Christians, have the life of Jesus inside us and that God does not wish that knowledge of salvation to be contained by us but wants it to spread out so that others will be saved and come to know Jesus as their Saviour and Lord.

3) I was then given a third still picture and the water had run over the edge of the unit onto the floor. There was no explanation or words with this third picture.

4) I did not know what to do about the third picture. I waited to see if there was more but received nothing else. I then started to think that maybe God was trying to say that the message of salvation goes beyond people we know. Was He saying to do more about spreading the gospel? Had I missed seeing something in the pictures or not heard things properly as things seemed to be incomplete?

5) I realized that when I had moved to 4) I had moved beyond the boundary of what God intended for me. I had moved out of operating in the Spirit and moved into working through my own thoughts and ideas.

6) Why did God leave the third picture incomplete? This then took me back to thinking much more deeply about the first two pictures that He had given to me. I was immediately filled with a fresh desire to tell others about Jesus and about His salvation. Had I not had the third incomplete picture I would not have been stimulated to the same extent. In addition to this, had I proceeded to add on my own thoughts I would have detracted from the main aim of God, which was to stimulate deeper thoughts about telling others of the salvation of Jesus.

For whom is the prophecy intended?

When we have received a prophetic word we then have to decide who is intended to be the recipient. We do not have to jump to the conclusion that every Word that we receive is intended for the whole of the congregation. There are a number of possibilities:-

One particular individual – In which case we share it with them at a convenient time for them, which is not when they are about to play in the worship group or dash off home! It may have to wait a while.

It might be for a Christian friend who does not attend the same church as yourself.

It could be intended for the whole of the Church meeting, either for a group of individuals, such as in bereavement, or for the church as a whole.

Maybe God is trying to say something specific to you personally, which of course, does not necessarily have to be shared with anyone else.

It is God's wishes we need to follow not our own intentions.

Growing Strong – 8 will be the third and final one on prophecy and will be looking at judgement/discernment of a prophetic word. I pray that you are finding these **Growing Strong** writings helpful, inspiring and challenging!