

Prophecy is when the Spirit of God impresses upon an individual to speak God's mind and counsel to another individual.

Receiving prophetic ministry can be both exciting and challenging, even though at times we may not fully understand all that is taking place.

God wants to speak

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

God always wants to speak to people (JOHN 10:3-4, 16), but He does not always say what we "want" to hear. Instead, God will tell us what we "need" to hear in order to make our lives right with Him, to encourage us in our relationships with others and to guide us in our lives, but again—it may not be the "prophetic" word we were looking for or expecting.

"Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left." (ISAIAH 30:21)

Who does God speak through?

God may speak through well-established Christians, or He may choose individuals who have little biblical understanding or perhaps even those who are unaware of spiritual things, biblical prophecy or the Bible.

Many times God will speak clear direction through others, though not in the form of prophetic words; such direction may come through pastoral counselling, preaching, etc., as given by a church pastor or volunteer leader.

Evaluating what is said

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

Prophetic words are to be judged by other mature leaders and by whether what is said lines up to the Word of God (ISAIAH 8:20; HEBREWS 12:4; 1 TIMOTHY 6:3-4). In general, prophetic words are to be evaluated for their accuracy, to help individuals process the words spoken, or to help equip and enable the individual to apply the words spoken. Usually this is done by other church leaders in the context of a church or a small group ministry within a church.

When God uses humans to speak and minister, it is natural for the characteristics and mannerisms of the individual to come forth, even though they are ministering under

the prompting and leading of God's Spirit. As humans we "know in part and prophesy in part" (1 CORINTHIANS 13:9).

God's part in prophecy is perfect, but the human part of interpretation and application may have error or misdirection. Therefore, it is important to evaluate the words spoken.

Encouragement via prophecy

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

Prophecy is meant to encourage and strengthen. Nothing of what is shared should be for the purpose of condemning, criticizing, exposing, judging or harming you. God's only desire is to build up, clarify, comfort and draw us closer to Him.

At times God may reveal past situations or events so that the revelation of this meaningful information can give confidence and assurance to the one to whom the prophetic words apply. Ex. "Since God knows and talked about that past event as described to me, and this revelation is accurate, therefore this must be God giving direction and so I can trust and step out in the parts (pertaining to the present and future) that are more difficult to believe."

“And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.”
(1 CORINTHIANS 14:25)

Your response

If God speaks about present or future events or situations, you should only follow His direction if you feel that what is said “bears witness” within your own heart, i.e. that you feel within yourself that what was spoken is proper and to be acted upon (not just because you have a prophetic word that was spoken to you and you feel obliged to obey God).

No “prophetic word” should ever remove your free will to make your own decisions, but it should help to confirm and assure a person as they endeavour to walk uprightly in the situations around them.

If it doesn't line up

If certain parts of what is shared do not seem to line up with where you are at, don't discard the whole thing—rather, take what applies and in your mind set aside what doesn't apply.

“Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good.” (1 THESSALONIANS 5:20–21)

Such set-aside portions may be meaningful for encouragement or application in future events.

Not to be confusing

If the words spoken bring confusion or fear, then lay them aside and continue on without them.

“For God is not the author of confusion but of peace...”
(1 CORINTHIANS 14:33)

Patience is needed

Some prophecies take years to be fulfilled: for example, the promised child for Abraham and Sarah took 25 years to come (GENESIS 12:4; 21:5). Don't be discouraged as time passes—rather, be patient and keep praying for the power of God to bring the prophetic words to fulfillment.

Process with mature leaders

As mentioned before, prophetic words should be processed within the structure of your local church and under your local pastor's direction. If you have questions about the prophetic word that was spoken over you, please discuss the concerns and the prophetic word with one of the small group leaders or one of the pastors of the church.

God bless you!

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
ABOUT

PROPHETIC WORDS

Prophecy is when the Spirit of God impresses upon an individual to speak God's mind and counsel to another individual.

“...for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

(2 PETER 1:21)

