

The Do's and Don'ts of Prophetic Ministry

If you have a prophetic gift, or any gift for that matter, it's important to understand that you don't have to force, manipulate or be opportunistic in any way. When you do, the results can be disastrous. People can receive a prophetic word that gets them off track from God's path. The Lord is faithful and will guide them back, but often at the cost of time and unnecessary pain. In addition, a false or ill-timed word can give them a skewed view of God, especially if they are a non-believer or a new believer without a firm foundation in the Scriptures.

A person can be quite sincere and still be quite wrong. This is why as prophetic ministers we should always be a little reluctant and move forward with caution. Not fear, but caution. Typically, but not always, when wrong words are spoken, the person giving the prophecy may be sincere but still have wrong or unclear motives. What I mean is, they may really want to encourage you, but they are also looking for affirmation of their gift or the prestige that comes with it. In some cases, they also may want to control you and feel that saying, "Thus says the Lord" gives them more power.

My experience has been that true prophetic ministers are usually a bit reluctant, cautious and take the approach that they are simply delivering the mail and then they remove themselves, letting the Holy Spirit take over. If you are truly called to the prophetic, you don't have to force it or try to make things happen. Your gift will make room for you. Proverbs 18:16 tells us, "A man's gift makes room for him, And brings him before great men." You don't have to force or manipulate your way. If it's God, He will make a way.

What 'NOT' to Do

We must be careful to maintain strong, healthy boundaries as we appropriate our giftings, using wisdom to discern motives. Those who force their own gift will use you. This next story is an example of what not to do. It's a lesson in boundaries.

Whenever you're a guest at a church or someone's home, it is common courtesy to ask permission before doing any prophetic ministry. Personally, I always try to be respectful and obey the house rules when visiting a church or home. I don't want to do anything to disrupt the established order. One time I went to see a pastor friend who was speaking at a church, and while I was there he introduced me to one of his spiritual sons. We'll call him John. My pastor friend suggested John and I should hang out together since we were both prophetic, so we exchanged numbers and then a few texts.

My wife, Vicki, and I were planning a worship gathering at our home, so we invited John over. The plan was for him to stay overnight since we did not know when the occasion would end. He arrived early and helped us get things in order before our guests arrived. Everything was fine until the guests started to arrive. The doorbell rang and as I started to go to the door, John raced ahead of me to open it. As the people walked in John led them to the living room, sat them down and started to prophesy to them.

I was stunned. Unsure how to react, I just went with it thinking if it was God's will, I didn't want to judge him. Maybe he was led by the Holy Spirit for those particular people. About 10 minutes later the doorbell rang again, and John did the same thing. He raced to the door, led the couple to the living room and started to prophesy to them. *What is going on?* I thought, starting to get a bit concerned, but once again instead of reacting, I did nothing.

As John finished talking to that couple the doorbell rang. This time I was standing near the door, so I opened it first and greeted my friends. I politely introduced John to them and

he immediately instructed them to follow him to the living room where he then directed them to sit down, and he started to prophesy to them. Now I was really feeling uneasy. After all, this was my home and these were my guests. I was responsible.

When John was done, I told him we needed to talk. He said, "OK" and the two of us went into another room.

"John, do you have prophetic words for everyone who comes through the door?" I asked.

"I dunno," he replied.

"If you are certain the Lord is instructing you then it is fine, but don't you think you should let the guests come in first and at least take off their jackets? We have house rules and it's just common courtesy."

John looked at me with a blank expression on his face, not knowing how to respond. Apparently, that had never occurred to him.

I continued, "I don't really know you and I'm not sure how accurate your gift is yet. This is not common practice, so don't you think you should ask the hosts if it's OK to minister to their guests since you are also a guest?"

He nodded but didn't seem to agree.

"If you can't follow the rules then you can leave," I said. "If you want to minister to anyone, please let me know first and then we can do it together."

"OK," he said reluctantly, and we went out of the room.

Later, I asked some of the guests John prophesied to how accurate he was. They responded that some of his words were "off," and other parts were ambiguous and could apply to a range of things or people, but nothing specific enough to

apply to them personally. An example of this would be to tell someone they have financial issues. Well, whether rich or poor, in debt or debt free, everyone has financial issues. Another example is a “God is moving in your life” type of generic prophecy. This basically applies to everyone.

Authentic, Spirit-led prophetic ministry is specific to an individual’s situation and calling. Usually, prophecies from God are spot-on with pinpoint details leaving no doubt that they came from Him and there was no way the person delivering the message could have known those details. No matter how nice a person seems to be, the Scriptures teach that we must, “Test all things; hold fast what is good” (1 Thess. 5:21, NKJV). Commentaries on this verse suggest that this testing applies to words prophesied or preached. They should always be examined by Scripture and judged for accuracy.

What ‘TO’ Do

One of my biggest fears when I started my prophetic journey was that I did not want to disappoint the Lord. I took it seriously and was extremely cautious to listen and follow His lead when administering the gift. The fear of falling short and misrepresenting the Lord always bothered me, as it should all authentic prophetic ministers.

I was once attending a conference called “The Bridge Summit” and was ministering to other people who were attending. As the conference was going on the Lord would highlight certain people to me and I would watch for the right time to speak to them. I was careful to stay within the boundaries of the conference order and would always wait until an intermission or break. When the Holy Spirit opened the door I would walk up to them and speak. Of course, my insecurities were flaring up because the conference was scheduled for three days and I knew if something went wrong, I would most likely see these people again and that would be awkward.

During those three days the Holy Spirit had me busy tapping people and ministering to them. One of the people I had a prophetic word for was a conference worker named Gretchen Campbell. She was in the lobby when the Lord had me speak to her. Gretchen seemed receptive to the word and the next day she came into the conference and approached me. She tapped me on the shoulder and said, "My sister would like to speak to you in her office." My first thought was I must have done something wrong. I said, "OK" and started to follow her. I felt like a sixth-grader being marched by his teacher to the principal's office. Surely, this was not going to be good. Did I not follow the house rules? Are they going to throw me out? It was embarrassing to be taken out of the conference while it was going on.

We arrived at a door and Gretchen opened it and smiled. I walked in and there was a woman sitting at a desk. She stood up and reached out her hand and said, "Hi, I am Courtney Wright." I was still unsure as to why I was summoned to her office. Courtney smiled and said, "I've been watching what you have been doing at the conference." She paused.

My mind raced, *Oh no, here it comes.*

She continued, "I have been seeing the effect it has had on the individuals and it is great. What you are doing is unique and out-of-the-box thinking."

"Thank you," I said, breathing a sigh of relief.

"The prophetic word touched Gretchen, who is my sister, and I just wanted to meet you and say thank you."

I said it was great to be there and thanked her for the excellent job she and her team were doing at the conference. Everything was perfect with all the logistics.

A few months passed and I received a phone call from Wright. She said they were having an event for pastors called "The

Capacity Conference,” hosted by Bishop Dale Bronner’s church, and she wanted to invite me to it. Courtney said she was thinking “out of the box” and wanted me to attend, not as a speaker but as an attendee. I wasn’t quite sure what she wanted so I asked her, “You want me to come and not speak but wander around like I did at the Bridge Summit when we met?”

“Yes,” she replied. “We would like the prophetic to be present at the conference.”

I told her I would pray about it and get back to her. I thought it was an unusual request and a great idea, but I still had to pray about it first. I spent the next few days praying about it and the Lord said yes, so I called Courtney and accepted the invitation. I wasn’t sure how all this was going to work but I usually just show up and the Holy Spirit takes it from there.

I wasn’t exactly sure how I would fit in since I wasn’t a pastor and it was a pastor’s conference, but I have learned to be pliable, which is something I’ve had to continually work on.

I arrived at the conference and as I began wandering and moving in the prophetic, word spread, and people were now starting to approach me during the breaks, a lot of people. I still wasn’t sure how it was all going to work. Early on, I met a guy from Mississippi and we hit it off. I knew it was a divine appointment, but I wasn’t sure what it was all about yet. When he saw what was going on, he decided to jump in and help. He made sure I was attended to when I needed anything. He stayed with me the whole conference. Unlike John, he wasn’t out to use me, but to be a life-giver and helper to me. I never even asked for help, but he jumped in and started to serve. One time when I was taking a break, we had time to chat and he said when he saw what was going on the Lord told him to help me, so he did. It was that simple. His humility, quiet confidence and spirit of servanthood touched me deeply.

As the conference went on, I hardly stopped ministering. The days became a blur due to the constant ministering, but it was all great! I ministered up until the moment it was time to leave. I got home exhausted and poured out, but knew God's purpose had been accomplished. Courtney called to give me some praise reports that people gave her. As I sat and listened to all the good reports, it was humbling to know He used me as a vessel to help so many people.

And the story doesn't end here. God gave me great favor with Bronner and Courtney, such that they decided to use my first book, *Tales of a Wandering Prophet*, as a textbook for a prophecy class they were teaching and invited me as a guest speaker. Later I was invited back to another Capacity Conference to wander around and do what I do.

God will open the doors for you to administer your prophetic gift in the unique way He created you to minister. God will use your one act of obedience to lead you to another open door of opportunity and then another without any need for forced entry or self-promotion on your end.

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