

The Danger of Presumptuous Prophets

“Dr. Livingstone, I presume?”

Many of you have heard the story of Henry Stanley, the ambitious American reporter who went to the Dark Continent in search of Dr. David Livingstone, an 19th-century missionary who explored sub-Saharan Africa.

When Stanley finally tracked down the famed **evangelist**, his first words when approaching the only other white man in Ujiji, Africa, were, as the story goes, “Dr. Livingstone, I presume?” The white man’s identity may have seemed like a no-brainer to the young journalist, but if he had been a **prophet**, Stanley’s presumption would have landed him in a heap of trouble. That’s because **presumption** is on God’s blacklist.

What does it literally mean to presume? And what exactly is presumption? Webster defines *presume* as “to form an opinion from little or no evidence” and “to take as true or as fact without actual proof.” *Presumptuous* is defined as “to overstep due bounds” and “to take liberties.” Those definitions outline some critical prophetic dos and don’ts.

First off, there is no room for personal opinion in the prophetic. Our “proof” must come from the **Holy Spirit**, not our own spirits or some other spirit. As mouthpieces for God, others take our words and insights very seriously, and we cannot abuse the grace people perceive on our lives.

We must not fall into the trap of filtering **prophetic** utterances through our own biases and in doing so deceive the hearers. What would cause the prophet to think anyone wants his opinion, anyway? (We’ll get to that in a minute.) The function of the prophet is to reveal the mind and will of God, not the mind and will of the **prophet**.

Second, **prophets** must recognize boundaries and not take the liberty of overstepping their prophetic authority. Yes, where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty, but not the liberty to speak outside our God-given spiritual jurisdiction.

That jurisdiction begins in the local church and expands as the prophet matures. Even the president of the United States, with all his authority, would be presumptuous to issue a decree over another nation. His words would fall to the ground because he would be overstepping his bounds.

Doubtless, God hates **presumption**—and He has good reason. There are several variations of the Greek word *presume*. Typically, the word portrays insolence (insultingly contemptuous speech or conduct), pride, arrogance or audacity (bold or arrogant disregard for normal restraints). Considering that the Lord includes a proud look and a false witness among the seven abominations, presumption is not something to be taken lightly.

In fact, while the **Bible** only mentions the words ***presume***, *presumed*, *presumptuous* and *presumptuously* 11 times, it almost always leads to death. Indeed, there are few things worse than a presumptuous prophet. Deuteronomy 18:20 declares, “The prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die” (NKJV).

Mercy! Of course, we are living in a time of grace and even the most presumptuous prophet probably won’t be struck dead for this sin. But we must ask ourselves: What is happening inside of us, in our spirits, when we presume? Selah.

If you think God likes presumption any better in the New Testament than the Old Testament, then think again—or ask the apostle Peter, who was writing under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost when he revealed that those who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise government

(authority) are presumptuous, self-willed and slanderous (2 Pet. 2:9-10).

After pointing out that these presumptuous ones love to indulge in evil pleasures, revel in deceitfulness, possess an insatiable lust, lure people into sin and train themselves to be greedy, among other sinful qualities, Peter finally connects them with Balaam, the presumptuous prophet.

You remember Balaam. King Balak sent messengers to him with a sinister request and rewards of divination in their hands. Balak offered to pay Balaam to curse the Israelites. Wicked story short, Balaam initially refused to pronounce the curse but eventually helped King Balak defile the Israelites by giving him a strategy involving sexual sin (Num. 31:16). Balaam wound up committing treason (fighting against the Israelites), and his end was death. Listen to how the apostle Peter refers to Balaam's presumption:

"They have wandered off the right road and followed the footsteps of Balaam son of Beor, who loved to earn money by doing wrong. But Balaam was stopped from his mad course when his donkey rebuked him with a human voice. These people [Which people? Presumptuous people!] are as useless as dried-up springs or as mist blown away by the wind. They are doomed to blackest darkness" (2 Pet. 2:15-17, NLT).

Remember our friends, young Stanley and Dr. Livingstone? Livingstone's fascinating books sold in huge numbers all over the world as he pursued his dream to open the continent to make a way for other missionaries to preach the gospel. Stanley, on the other hand, was notorious for changing the facts to suit his purposes—or even making them up—in his books.

Stanley even lied about his heritage. He fought for the South in the American Civil War and then committed treason (like Balaam) and served the North when captured. He later helped

the king of Belgium fulfill his greedy purposes (like Balaam) in Africa. Like Balaam, Stanley's greed and pride caused him to compromise his professional ethics. Stanley eventually became a mass murderer.

It seems the fate of the presumptuous is ultimately the same throughout history. Thank God we have a Savior. We can repent of such sinful works. We need to pray like David. In Psalm 19:13 he cried, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then I shall be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression" (KJV).

You can download a sample chapter of Jennifer's new book, *The Making of a Prophet*, by clicking [here](#).

Jennifer LeClaire is news editor at Charisma. She is also the author of several books, including The Making of a Prophet.

You can email Jennifer at [@](#) or visit her website [here](#). You can also join Jennifer on Facebook or follow her on Twitter.

One Surefire Way to Lose in Spiritual Warfare

God made the Israelites a promise to bring them into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites and the Jebusites—all the "-ites," as some say—into the Promised Land flowing with milk and honey (Ex. 13:5). Fulfilling this **prophetic** promise, then, meant engaging in a battle to dispossess all the so-called "-ites" from the land in which they lived. It meant going to war with the enemies.

Unfortunately, some of the Israelites moved in **presumption**

against the Amorites and felt more than the sting of defeat—they felt the sting of death in the wake of disobedience. As you read this article, remember this: Presumption can be deadly.

In fact, while the King James Version of the **Bible** only mentions the words *presume*, *presumed*, *presumptuous* and *presumptuously* 11 times, it almost always leads to death. So it stands to reason that wisdom cries out against entering into spiritual battle presumptuously. It's not likely that you'll die, but you could get smacked around by the enemy of your soul. So let's learn this lesson from the Israelites and learn it well.

Losing the Battle Begins With Unbelief

The seeds of Israel's defeat took root after Moses sent men to Canaan to spy out the land God promised to give them (Num. 13:1-2). When they returned, they saw that it was just as Moses prophesied—a land flowing with milk and honey. What's more, the Israelites brought back grapes, pomegranates and figs. It must have been a welcome sight after so much manna and quail!

But even in the face of God's prophesied provision, Israel's leaders brought back a bad report. It all started with one negative word: *nevertheless*. "Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan" (vv. 28-29).

As the story goes, only Caleb and Joshua believed God and declared, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it" (v. 30). The Israelites believed the negative naysayers rather than the Spirit-inspired dynamic

duo of faith. They cried. They wept. They complained against Moses and Aaron. They wished to return to Egypt. They even started talking about electing a leader to go back to bondage! Moses and Aaron went into immediate **intercession**, but God pronounced a death sentence on the unbelievers.

Presumption in the Face of God

The men who brought the evil report about the land died in a plague, but others would soon die in their presumption. After mourning the loss of their tribal leaders, the people decided they'd better obey the Lord and take the land. The only problem was they were moving in presumption. God did not tell them to go up against the enemies at that time. Timing is everything in a battle plan.

Moses tried to warn them: "Now why do you transgress the command of the Lord? For this will not succeed. Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the Lord is not among you. For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and you shall fall by the sword; because you have turned away from the Lord, the Lord will not be with you" (Num. 14:41-43).

And then: "They presumed to go up to the mountaintop. Nevertheless, neither the ark of the covenant of the Lord nor Moses departed from the camp. Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down and attacked them, and drove them back as far as Hormah" (vv. 44-45).

As I've said before, there's one question every believer should ask before engaging in spiritual warfare: "Shall I go up?" In other words, we need to be led by the **Holy Spirit** into battle if we want God to lead us into triumph. If we lose a battle, it could very well be that the **Holy Spirit** didn't lead us into the spiritual skirmish in the first place.

Before you run to the battle line, ask the **Holy Spirit**, "Shall I go up?" Then obey what He tells you. It could be He's

assigned someone else to go up and defeat the enemy. It could be that God is taking the battle into His own hands. Or it could be that you aren't yet skilled enough in battle to take on the enemy that's rising up. The reason doesn't matter. What matters is being in the will of God, even in our spiritual warfare. Amen.

Jennifer LeClaire is news editor at Charisma. She is also the author of several books, including The Making of a Prophet. You can email Jennifer at @ or visit her website here. You can also join Jennifer on Facebook or follow her on Twitter.

Admitting Moral Failure, Megachurch Pastor Bob Coy Finds Flood of Grace From Calvary Chapel Members

He was the last guy you ever thought would fall into sexual sin. Pastor Bob Coy confessed to a “moral failing” in his life last week that disqualifies him from leadership of the megachurch he founded.

After stepping down from Calvary Chapel Fort Lauderdale, which reports 20,000 members at its main campus alone, “Pastor Bob” has been met with nasty remarks from heresy hunters—and a flood of grace from members of his church. Here are a few of the gracious reactions from people posting on Charisma News’ story about the fallen pastor:

"It was Pastor Bob who restored my faith in God and got me back into church. I know he went down the wrong path but with redemption and prayer and the forgiveness of family, friends and the church, he will come back to us and teach us the Bible again. My prayers are with him and his family." –Terri Thomas

"Pastor Bob, you are my brother in Christ. I will be praying for you and your family, as well as for all my brothers and sisters who are part of Calvary Chapel Fort Lauderdale." –Cindy Cooper

"If not for Pastor Bob, the staff and all I have learned through Calvary Chapel, I would not have been able to overcome the worst and most difficult times of my life. I am today a strong and confident woman, I live my life with joy and have been able to minister to many because of Calvary Chapel. Our prayers and love for Pastor Bob, his family and Calvary Chapel are unconditional. But we need to pray for those who will use this to attack Pastor Bob, Calvary Chapel and Christianity." –Leida Iris Santana

"Pastor Coy has been my pastor for a really long time. I am a sinner, he is a sinner, you people reading this are sinners. The difference Bob preaches God's word so dynamically, and our church has so many wonderful ministries and outreaches that Satan I am sure doubles or triples his efforts with Bob and Calvary. I know this is a huge, horrible bump in the road, but God will heal these wounds. God gave him such a great salvation when he and our other pastors preach. I love him ... and will pray for Diane and the kids ... God restores our soul. Calvary will stay strong!" –meglvjC

"Pastor Bob needs grace right now. The devil is so bad and so dirty that he will use this opportunity to mess with people's mind, especially those that aren't so strong in Jesus." –Patrick Lima

"I am saved because of Pastor Bob through Jesus Christ and my

life has forever been changed for 10 years now. Pastor Bob is a blessing of a teacher of the Word and he has saved hundreds week after week. Whatever he did, Jesus has already forgiven him. I am heartbroken that he has resigned. We all make mistakes, no one is perfect but Jesus. I am praying for you Pastor Bob and your family wherever The Lord leads you, you will be blessed, a blessing, an amazing man, and certainly not ever forgotten.” –Annie B.

Confessing Moral Failure, Megachurch Pastor Bob Coy Resigns From Calvary Chapel Fort Lauderdale

After confessing to a moral failing in his life that disqualifies him from continuing his leadership, Bob Coy on Sunday resigned as senior pastor of Calvary Chapel Fort Lauderdale in Florida, effective immediately.

Coy has served as senior pastor since the church was founded in 1985. More than 20,000 people call Calvary Chapel Fort Lauderdale their home church. The church has planted sites in Boca Raton, Boynton, Florida Keys, Hollywood, Naples, North Lauderdale, Plantation, the Villages and West Boca.

According to sources familiar with the matter, Coy confessed to key leaders on Wednesday. A board meeting was called on Thursday, in which he confessed and resigned.

“Leadership made every effort to let the staff and church hear directly from leadership rather than rumor by calling meetings

for Sunday,” our source, who asked not to be identified, told Charisma News.

An open church service on Sunday at 4 p.m. included worship, the reading of a letter from Coy and the reading of a statement from the board, followed by honest sharing of a reminder that Jesus is leading and that the church will move forward together. That was followed by more worship. Sources tell Charisma News there was a positive response from the staff and congregation.

Coy and family have spent much of the last few days with pastors and friends in prayer and counseling.

The media ministry, Active Word, that distributes Coy’s Bible teachings through radio, television and digital media has also been suspended, according to a statement from the church board.

“Pastor Bob will be focusing his full attention on his personal relationship with God and with his family. The governing board of the church is providing counselors and ministers who will help guide him through the process of full repentance, cleansing and restoration,” the statement reads.

“Trusting in God’s providence, protection, provision and direction, the staff of Calvary Chapel Fort Lauderdale will continue our mission to ‘make disciples,’ through regular services at all campuses and through myriad other ministries the church has established over the years,” it says.

The statement goes on to say that a team of assistant pastors already on staff will maintain their usual rotating schedule as teaching pastors for all services.

“Recognizing we serve a God of second chances and that our hope is in Him,” the statement concludes, “the leadership, staff and members of Calvary Chapel Fort Lauderdale have

joined together in prayer for Pastor Bob and his family during this time of healing.”

The first Calvary Chapel was started in Costa Mesa, Calif., in the 1960s as a small nondenominational church of 25 members, pastored by Chuck Smith. The Lord blessed that small group, and now Calvary Chapel has grown to a fellowship of approximately 1,400 churches worldwide and has been listed as one of the ten largest Protestant churches in the United States.

At 24 years old, Coy left an executive position in the music industry to serve as an associate pastor at Calvary Chapel Las Vegas. In 1985, Coy and his wife, Diane, moved to South Florida and began Calvary Chapel Fort Lauderdale. As senior pastor, he became well known for his unique style in expounding the Scriptures and relating its truths to everyday life. His teaching style emphasized the highest standards of life application of God’s truth.

Morris Cerullo: God’s Judgment and How to Walk in the Miraculous

After 67 years of sharing the gospel around the world, Morris Cerullo has never seen America like it is today. What’s on his mind?

Charisma magazine editor Marcus Yoars sat down with Cerullo in this pivotal interview. In it, you’ll hear Cerullo’s surprising take on the nation’s spiritual state. You’ll also learn how you can walk in greater power with the

Holy Spirit—regardless of cultural shifts.

Jennifer LeClaire is news editor at *Charisma*. She is also the author of several books, including *The Spiritual Warrior's Guide to Defeating Jezebel* and *The Making of a Prophet*. You can email Jennifer at @ or visit her website at .

This Is the Year of Supernatural Favor

Hear what God said to Kynan Bridges: “This is the year of supernatural favor.” But you must be in right alignment with heaven *and* you must understand how favor operates. Kynan is ready to tell you how.