

If You Have a Prophetic Gift, Watch Out for This Common Trap

Being prophetic can be tricky. When someone grows up with a prophetic gift they will often feel and see things others around them don't. Without good guidance, this can end up leaving the prophetic person feeling they are weird and don't fit in. When they share what they are sensing, others often don't understand and can choose to judge them or avoid them. This can lead to isolation and feelings of rejection.

Suppose someone who lived this dynamic—not feeling accepted, people telling them they are weird, often left out of social interactions—then comes into a church or group that values the prophetic. They finally find the courage to share what they are feeling or seeing, talk about their dreams and visions or communicate what they know is coming. The people around them are excited, encourage them and tell them how gifted they are.

If the community they find themselves in is not mature there may even be a tendency to lift that person up, only talk to them about their experiences, even idolize the gift. In the worst cases, the prophetic person has a fear of rejection and has been wounded by rejection their whole lives. Now they are feeling accepted because of their gift. They perceive the praise of people as the love they have always sought and share more and more of their experiences. They receive more and more praise.

Eventually, the tendency will be for them to make sure everyone is impressed by their gift and experiences because that is what makes them feel loved. When they meet someone, they try to get a word for them or tell them about their latest dream or visitation. Without realizing it, their heart

is crying out, "Notice me! Love me! I need your approval to feel okay about myself."

This is a trap.

Once someone get caught up in this pattern, a little or a lot, they have set themselves up to be rejected. It is very hard to receive someone else's discernment of your revelation when you need them to believe that revelation to feel loved. If a leader questions their conclusions or their experiences. it becomes easy to label that leader as spiritually dull, resistant to the things of the Spirit, or afraid of the prophetic.

What is the solution?

I have seen this narrative play out too often. How do we avoid it? There are two parts to this story that we can have a hand in, the role of the prophetic person and the role of the spiritual community.

The Role of the Spiritual Community

Value people, not gifts.

Spiritual gifts come and go, people are eternal. There will come a time when spiritual gifting ceases (1 Cor. 13) and all that remains will be faith, hope and love. Celebrate those things! Make room for people to use their spiritual gifts and mature in them, but don't allow that to become the definition of maturity. The fruit of the spirit defines a spiritually mature person (Gal. 5:22-23).

Get to know the person, not just their experiences. Avoid the trap of overlooking issues because "God is using them". God used a donkey—that says nothing about the value of the person being used, it speaks of the character of God. Be more concerned with the person's heart than their usefulness to your community.

Create a Culture of Feedback

Make it normal to question people's experiences, not out of criticism but out of honor for the real thing. (1 Cor. 14:29; 1 Thess. 5:22–23). How did that come to you? This part of what you said is accurate, this part is not. This should be a conversation between the one ministering and the one being ministered to, not a sentence being passed down by a judge. It is a normal part of relationships in the kingdom to discuss these things.

The Role of the Prophetic Person

Know the Father's love.

Would you question God's love for you if you never had another dream or vision, knew what was going to happen before it happened or felt a spiritual atmosphere? I hope you said no! God has forever declared His love for you by coming as the Son in the power of the Spirit by the will of the Father to redeem you from sin (John 3:16). You can be confident in that love no matter what happens—good things, bad things or indifferent.

Forgive those who rejected you.

As long as the pain of the rejection you experienced has not been processed, it has the potential to control you in the future. Forgive them. Some didn't know better, but maybe some did. Perhaps they really were malicious. You still must forgive (Col. 3:13). As you forgive those who hurt you, the ability others have to hurt you more lessens. Forgiveness heals the bruise so the next time someone touches the same spot, it is not as sensitive.

Be a human being, not a human doing.

You are not defined by what you do. Your righteousness or wickedness. Your gifting or your lack of ability. Your job, social status, education or any other activity. You are

defined by God. Period! He has formed you, knit you together in secret places (Ps. 139), planned good things for you (Phil. 2:10) and chosen you before the world began (Eph. 1:3–5). You are one who is loved by God because of who He made you to be, not because of what you do.{eoa}

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To learn more about dreams and dream interpretation, check out *Dream Foundations* as well as other resources from John E. Thomas and John Paul Jackson at .

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