

How God Processes His Prophets

Most of the prophets in the Bible seemed to emerge out of nowhere and from humble places.

Moses, for example, left his lavish life in the Egyptian king's palace and lived humbly as a shepherd in the wilderness for 40 years before emerging to deliver Israel. Elijah, in like manner, appeared from the back side of the desert to confront wicked King Ahab (see 1 Kings 17:1-7). And then there was Amos, a lowly shepherd and farmer who was not recognized by the more established prophets (Amos 7:14,15). The unassuming Amos was sent by God to warn all of Israel and call them to repentance with just as much authority as the other prophets.

"Elijah went through a season of testing and preparation, but that process is hidden from us," wrote J. Lee Grady, contributing editor for *Charisma* magazine. He added, "True prophets will go through periods of hiddenness and intense brokenness. God must deal with pride, greed and self-centeredness. The prophet must also learn to live in a place of intimate fellowship with God where the praises of men don't affect him."

It's true that prophets are typically held in obscurity until it's time for their public revealing. In the place of obscurity, it can feel as if you've been worked over in such a manner as to reveal every heart condition you could possibly have, both good and bad.

This processing, which accumulates over a period of many years, is intended to reveal your true character and build integrity. If you miss, ignore or bypass this step, you may start out in your role as prophet, but you will not finish

well. God seems to care more about your heart than your platform and spectacular public ministry.

I remember being severely tested by a group of prophets and pastors who didn't live pure lives. and it seemed as though I were the only one with the guts to address it. Feeling smugly self-righteous, I then found myself in situations that seemed to surface my own impure heart motives and had to learn some real lessons in grace.

Have I mentioned yet the spiritual warfare that prophets endure? This is not the ordinary stuff. It's the kind of warfare that is so personal and ridiculous, one would never talk about it except to just a few, very trusted people.

Prophets are not spared from severe difficulties but seem to have them more than most. With each difficulty, however, there is a divine expectation to overcome, because every victory is the catalyst for spiritual promotion and genuine increase in authority (Rev. 2:26).

Prophets learn to obey the directives of the Spirit of Christ at any cost and even when they don't understand them. Jesus insists on a posture of humility and instant obedience from His prophets.

We speak when He says to speak. We obey when It's not convenient. His dealings with all of His prophets are very personal and intended to hit the heartstrings.

So why would you or anyone endure this? Because it's the only way to experience Him for who He really is and authentically know His ways. A prophet who carries weighty authority does so because they know Him and know Him well.

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