

How to Stay Humble in Prophetic Ministry

Maintaining an attitude of humility is essential in the prophetic ministry. Otherwise, elitism creeps in and grows up to characterize prophetic individuals and groups. Experiencing supernatural revelation can be “heady wine,” and people too often begin to think of themselves more highly than they ought after having drunk it over a period of time.

A subtle temptation comes to people who have been blessed with spiritual gifts. After they become used to the gifts’ presence and operation, it is easy to take them for granted and even subconsciously start to entertain the idea that God originally gave them on the basis of merit. This allows a mentality of superiority to be set up within that person or group. Paul addressed this issue with the Corinthians:

“For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?” (1 Cor. 4:7, NIV).

The apostle needed to remind these gifted believers about the basis of God’s grace, which was the source of their spiritual abilities. The “pride of grace” and “religious pride” may be the most obnoxious forms of pride that exist. We must vigilantly guard against allowing these a place in our hearts.

Another application of humility in the prophetic has to do with the importance of listening. We mustn’t forget that listening, not speaking, is the basis of the prophetic. It is first of all listening to God: “The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught” (Is. 50:4).

The instructed tongue is informed by the grace of God, which

opens the ear of the teachable. But listening to God is just the first part. We must also seek to listen to people if we are going to be effective in the prophetic ministry.

The Scripture says that we should be “swift to hear, slow to speak” (James 1:19). This is good advice for anyone who wants to learn to prophesy.

The art of listening has fallen on hard times in our day of self-absorption and impatience. If we will discipline ourselves to listen to people, we may in the process hear the very voice of God speaking to us.