

Need a Word From God? Seek It the Right Way

I meet many people who tell me they need a word from God. I've seen Christians line up in front of prophets, hoping for a quick solution to their problem. I've also seen those same Christians stand in line a second time in front of the same prophets because they didn't like the word they received the first time! I call these people "prophecy chasers."

Don't abuse or misuse the precious gift of prophecy. God loves to speak to His people, and I believe He has a fresh word for all of us at the right time. But there is a right way and a wrong way to seek God for His prophetic direction. Here are some guidelines that will help you:

1. **Read God's Word regularly.** Many Christians crave a "direct" word from God, yet they refuse to spend time reading the Bible. They may even consider reading Scripture religious or boring—yet they love the thrill of getting a prophetic word in a public meeting. Carnal Christians aren't willing to be disciplined students; they want their prophetic words handed to them on a silver platter.

You will never become a mature Christian if you don't learn to hear from God on your own through His Word. And if you don't read Scripture regularly you won't know the difference between a true prophecy and a fake one—because prophecy never contradicts the Bible.

2. **Look to God for direction, not man.** I seek God daily for direction. I don't chase prophets to tell me what to do or to show me my spiritual purpose. God can certainly use a prophet to speak to me—prophets are gifts to the body of Christ—but my focus is on God, not on the men or women He uses. If you ever start looking to a human

being as your source of divine guidance, you are heading toward unhealthy idolatry.

People who have the gift of prophecy must be careful they don't allow people to put them on pedestals. We are not mediums who read people's fortunes, and prophets should never allow themselves to be put in such a position.

- 3. Stop looking for the sensational.** We've all heard of charismatic prophets who provide phone numbers or addresses in their prophetic words to confirm a message from God. It's true that God has the power to reveal such personal information, but in some such cases the "prophets" were actually con artists who preyed on the gullible. Beware of prophets who use sensational means to bring a word to you. In all my years of ministry, the most solid prophets were humble men and women who never drew attention to themselves.

The apostle Paul told us that true prophecy is about three things: encouragement, comfort and exhortation (see 1 Cor. 14:3). True prophecy strengthens us, confirms God's promises and propels us into our divine destiny. Beware of words that create goosebumps or draw people's attention to the messenger.

- 4. Don't be impatient when seeking prophetic guidance.** I've talked with Christians who were desperate for a word from God, but they informed me they were on a deadline. They needed instant spiritual gratification. Sometimes they even seemed to be threatening God—as in, "If I don't hear from God by tomorrow, I quit!"

Don't allow impatience to derail your Christian journey. God moves according to His sovereign calendar, not yours. Don't throw a tantrum; mature disciples must learn to wait for God's word. Waiting will require you to adjust your timetable to God's.

Sometimes God deliberately pushes the mute button. If His

voice is not clear right now, it may be because He is leading you into a quiet wilderness season. You must learn to trust Him even when He's quiet. Wait on the Lord, and let your roots grow deep.

5. **Make sure your heart is willing to obey.** Many people are eager to hear a word from God, especially if it tells them they will have a worldwide ministry or that they are going to become independently wealthy. But God's Word is never sent to puff us up, flatter us or stroke our egos. A true word from God cuts deep to our core; it requires surrender and demands holiness.

Make sure you are willing to embrace a true word from God before you ask for it. Henry Blackaby once wrote: "Our difficulty is not that we don't know God's will. Our discomfort comes from the fact that we do know His will, but we do not want to do it."

It is pointless to ask for God's prophetic word if we are not fully yielded. I'm concerned that we've encouraged a culture of prophecy chasing. Before you seek a word from God, lift your hands and be willing to obey what He says. The best way to welcome God's prophetic message to you is with an attitude of unconditional surrender. {eoa}