

HOW TO PROPERLY RECEIVE A PROPHETIC WORD:

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INTRODUCTION:

In renewalist, Pentecostal, Charismatic circles there are times that you will receive a “word” from God. It may come from a brother or sister in the pew, or from a platform minister speaking in the authority of the prophetic. This is a viable and potent way that God speaks to His people. 1 Corinthians 14 is a great chapter for learning how a prophetic word fits into the body life of the church. One of the important things is to know that a prophecy must be judged, not only by others but most importantly by you. Only you can honestly evaluate the application of any word given over your life because you have to live with the aftermath of whatever decision you make about what is said. With that in mind let’s review a few things about properly receiving a word from God:

STAY OPEN:

Even in the early church the prophetic and personal prophecy was not widely accepted or without controversy. Paul taught his constituents:

(1 Thessalonians 5:20 KJV) - 20 Despise not prophesyings.

There are many reasons for despising a prophecy. They might fail to come to pass. Someone who is not experienced in the prophetic might do a poor job of ministering to you. An immature person might speak harshly over you "in the name of the Lord". Even a seasoned prophet might speak over you a prophecy that doesn't come to pass.

Stay open. Stay humble. Be flexible and forgiving. Blessed are the flexible, they don't get bent out of shape.

JUDGE THE WORD:

Does the word come from a reputable source? That is a tricky one because of the following verse:

(2 Peter 2:16 KJV) - 16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.

Sometimes God uses unlikely messengers to speak the word of the Lord. As for me I often pray, "God, I just want to be the ass that the Lord rides in on!"

DOES THE WORD GIVEN STAND UP TO SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES AND TRUTHS?

This is an important consideration. However, always remember that although a word might contradict your understanding of the scripture, that doesn't mean it truly, contradicts scripture. It has been rightly said "truth heard the first time almost always produces a negative reaction".

DOES THE WORD "BEAR WITNESS TO YOUR SPIRIT"?

(Isaiah 55:12 KJV) - 12 For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace...

That doesn't mean the word is false, but that you should wait for confirmation that gives you the assurance you have heard from the Father.

PROPHECY IS ALMOST ALWAYS CONDITIONAL:

All the promises of God are conditional including prophetic promises, whether stated or not. You should write your prophecy out. You should consider what the prophecy is calling upon you to do. Prophecies are conditional upon factors such as faith, obedience, timing, etc. are very important. Most prophecies fail because the recipient didn't acknowledge, accept or act on the conditions specified in the word.

COOPERATE WITH THE PROPHETIC WORD AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE:

If it is determined that a word is from God, several things can be done to cooperate with God in the fulfillment of the word.

MIX THE WORD WITH FAITH:

(Hebrews 4:2 KJV) - 2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard [it].

War a good warfare with your prophecy: Write the word out, confess it, declare it, remind yourself, your enemy and God himself about the word on a regular basis.

(1 Timothy 1:18 KJV) - 18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

Understand about the issue of prophetic timing:

Remember prophetic words are PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE. So don't discount a word that deals with the past in the present tense. Be patient also for the timing of the promise as it unfolds in days, monthly perhaps many years:

(Psalm 105:19 KJV) - 19 Until the time that his (Joseph's) word came: the word of the LORD tried him.

Conclusion:

The prophetic and the practice of giving and receiving personal prophecy is unduly questioned in the body of Christ. Pastors don't care for it much because they often have to deal with the aftermath of a contaminated word or an errant application of a prophetic word by the person to whom it was given. This is understandable, yet we never want to reject a gifting from God just because it can be inconvenient at times. When someone gives you a word – be patient. That person is just trying to be faithful to what they perceive God is calling on them to do. Hurling charges of false prophecy, etc., is a sign of immaturity and intolerance that does not beautify the body Christ nor benefit the church of God. Take the word, mull it over, pray over it and if it doesn't fit your circumstance, set it aside without shrill denunciations or criticism. If the word resonates – lay hold on it, seek confirmation and know that God loves you so much He want to speak to you even through this imperfect and at times controversial gift in the body of Christ.

