

I. PURSUING THE PROPHETIC

- A. The Scripture challenges us to pursue the gifts of the Spirit and puts a special emphasis on the prophetic. If we are called to seek after those gifts, then it's clear that we will end up with less if we don't.

¹ Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. (1 Cor 14:1)

- B. While every Spirit-filled believer can prophecy as a general grace God gave to the entire Church (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:15-18; 1 Cor 14:31), the measure we experience the prophetic and are able to walk in it is determined by our hunger. If we can live without it, we most likely will.
- C. While pursuing the prophetic includes many different aspects like praying for it (Mt 7:7-8; James 4:2), opening our hearts to it, joining a community that actively desires increase of the prophetic, and positioning ourselves to receive more from Jesus, I want to focus on the practical aspect of exercise here.
- D. Paul exhorts us to test every prophecy which includes the possibility of failure. Prophecy in the New Testament is different to the Old Testament in the way that it not only knows the difference between true and false prophets, but also true and false prophecies. While now every believer can flow in a general grace of the prophetic, we certainly don't walk in the same authority or demand of infallibility. Almost everyone has had a situation where we believed that God spoke to us and later we found out that He didn't. So even a person operating in a divine gift of prophecy can sometimes simply mess things up. Paul tells us to be aware of that. But it doesn't make you a false prophet (who are most notably defined by sinful motives, ungodly character and bad fruit). Notice that Paul wants us to test everything, not everyone.

²⁰ Do not treat prophecies with contempt. ²¹ Test everything. Hold on to the good. (1 Thess 5:20-21)

- E. To distinguish true and false prophecies, we have the written Word of God, the gift of discernment (not the gift of suspicion), but also exercise. Although this might seem unspiritual to some, it's a biblical concept. We mature in discernment by training our senses through exercise (by simply using the gift). We get to know the voice of a friend simply by hearing it and will eventually be able to recognize this one voice even when there are many others at the same time. That is what we intend when we talk about prophetic activations: getting to know the gentle voice of God more and thus being able to discern it from all other voices more easily. We truly need to "learn" how to tune in to God.

¹⁴ ... who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. (Hebr 5:14)

- F. For more information on the prophetic please also check out my article ["Introduction to Ministering in the Prophetic"](#).

II. WHAT ARE PROPHETIC ACTIVATION EXERCISES?

- A. Prophetic activation exercises are small group activities with the primary purpose of practicing to hear God's voice and to grow in the prophetic by ministering prophetically to one another. They focus on equipping through practice, although short teachings and responses to questions will definitely be an irreplaceable part of them. Since no or only basic background knowledge is necessary, they are suitable for beginners as well as the advanced in the prophetic.
- B. Practice in small groups creates a place where such things become normal. We can grow in

confidence and experience aspects of God's kingdom that are not always a reality in our home church. Therefore, they are a good way to establish a prophetic culture.

- C. Positive prophetic experiences in a safe environment cause our faith to grow and equip us to walk in our gifts in other places with the expectancy that God is going to move through us.
- D. Often we fail to hear God's voice because we do not know how God is speaking to us. Prophetic activities broaden our understanding and sensitivities to the way God uses to talk to us.
- E. Prophetic activation exercises are meant to equip with practical tools for hearing the voice of God. Eventually you will be able to utilize those tools in every sort of situations: during ministry time at your local church, in everyday life conversations with others, while writing emails or simply praying for others in your private time with the Lord. They will help you flow in the prophetic in your everyday life.
- F. Most importantly, prophetic activation groups provide a place where you can hear the voice of a loving God who so desires to share His love with us. In those places, we experience how much He loves us while we minister to others and others minister to us. This will tremendously refresh and deepen our personal relationship with God. Becoming a friend of God, being able to hear His voice and having real conversations with Him – that is what it is all about.

III. BASIC ACTIVATION EXERCISES – ACTIVATING THE PROPHETIC

- A. This is a list of some basic activation exercises which are good to start with. They also resemble the most common channels through which God talks to us.
- B. The majority of those exercises focus on one specific channel of how God talks to us. We need to realize that by doing so in practice we are not limiting God but sensitizing ourselves to specific ways in order to grow more comfortable and confident in them. Still we don't want to pick our favorite way long-term. Although for a season God may use one or another way more, limiting ourselves to our favorite method will eventually cause us to miss much of what He has to say. In His creativity, God likes to use all kinds of ways to talk to us.
- C. **Using Item** – Choose a certain theme as a guideline for this group exercise (color, season, room, movie-character, comic-character, bible-character, book of the bible, form of water, ...) and tell it to the group. Then everyone asks God what specific item within this topic the person on their right represents (for instance color → red) and then ask Him why (prophetic interpretation).
 1. Basically we ask: 1) Jesus, what color is the other person like? 2) Why? What does that mean?
 2. I found that this is the easiest way to get started in the prophetic for those who are completely new because it already limits the options down to a few. Often we don't hear God's voice because we don't tune in. Limiting the options helps us to know what to tune in to and what we can expect God to talk to us. However, reducing the choices for the first step does not at all narrow down what God eventually says in the second step.
 3. This is not manipulating God. It's taking the first steps. A toddler is still walking even though he is holding onto the hand of the father. It's completely the same here. It's a sort of prophetic “walking aid” and God knows we need it especially in the beginning.
- D. **Scripture** – Ask God that He would give you a Bible verse for the other person. Then ask Him for one specific aspect/word/part of this verse that He highlights for the one you are ministering too. Then ask Him what He wants to tell the other person through it.

1. One of the pitfalls with this option is that people start to preach the Word. We don't want to explain the other person what the Bible verse means but what God wants to say through this verse to the other person. It's a prophetic exercise in which we want to hear the personal message that is on God's heart right now specifically for the one we are ministering to.
- E. **Picture** – Ask God to give you an inner picture (or vision = animated picture) for another person. Ask Him what He wants to tell them through it.
- F. **Emotional Feeling** – Ask God to let you feel a certain emotion. Then ask God what it means for the other person, what exactly He wants to say through that.
- G. **Physical Sensation** – Ask God for a physical sensation and then what it means.
1. God often uses this way to highlight body parts that He wants to heal in the one we are praying over. We might for instance feel a sudden light stinging pain in our left knee while praying for someone. God might want us to pray for the left knee of the other person. As you simply share it don't be surprised when they confirms that they have complications with this specific body part. This happens very often because God likes to raise our faith through such an occasion.
- H. **Word of Knowledge** – This means we want God to give us a specific word or phrase for the other person – like a word suddenly popping into our minds. This can be anything and talk about anything (for example a street name, a number, one single word, a sentence, even a song). In a second step ask God what He wants to tell the other person through it.
1. Don't forget that it can have literal and/or symbolic meaning.
 2. God can refer to past, present and/or future.
 3. Sometimes it can be enough to share what we got and the person we are ministering to will directly understand what it means, especially if we simply don't seem to get an interpretation.
 4. Even though God likes symbolism and enjoys speaking even through very strange things, don't get weird here.

IV. INTERMEDIATE ACTIVATION EXERCISES – IMPROVING THE PROPHETIC

- A. The purpose of these intermediate exercises is to progress in the use of the prophetic. They are based on the basic methods we have learned in the previous chapter but intend to help us improve specific areas of the prophetic (which is underlined in each description).
- B. **Any Way** – Here simply all of the above methods (the basics) are applicable. The purpose of this exercise is to help us stay sensitive to multiply channels at the same time as we eventually don't want limit our focus to one single way while ministering prophetically.
- C. **Favorite Way Excluded** – This exercise is very similar to the last one, but here everyone is asked to purposefully exclude the channel through which they hear God speak most easily. As mentioned earlier we all are tempted to pick our favorite method. This exercise is supposed to avoid that by encouraging us to grow more comfortable in the ways different to those we prefer. It will help us to be more attentive to the variety of the ways God talks to us.
- D. **Journaling** – Ask God for a short prophetic sentence, message, just one sentence with no more than 20 words. Write it down. Then ask God to highlight one single word of this sentence and ask God for more understanding of this word. Integrate those meanings into the start-sentence. The purpose of this exercise is to pursue deeper understanding of what God shows us, rather than just delivering the

message right away. We want to value what God shows us and seek Him for more understanding of what He speaks before we move on to something new. By doing this we increase accuracy and impact of the one prophetic word we give.

1. This exercise can be repeated with the same beginning sentence.
- E. **Meditation in Silence** – This exercise is very similar to the last but a bit more advanced in that it skips the writing down part. We ask God for a prophetic message, picture or whatever and then meditate on it for 5 or 10 minutes. We don't give it right away. We explore it with Jesus by asking Him to show us more about every single aspect of what He initially showed us. The purpose of that is to help you stay focused on one prophetic word for a longer time and to go deeper in it. You will be surprised about how comprehensive your prophecy will be after 5 or 10 minutes.
- F. **"God, what do You think of me?"** – Everyone takes a sheet of paper and a pen. We start with writing down a personal question (a very good one is "God, what do You think/feel when You look at me?") and then we get quiet, listen and write down everything that comes to our minds. The purpose of this exercise is to grow more comfortable hearing God for ourselves which will tremendously enrich our private time and relationship with Him.
1. One of the biggest challenges in hearing God's voice is to discern it from our own thoughts. This is what God's voice sounds most similar to because the Holy Spirit dwells within us and so He speaks from the same direction that our own thoughts come from.
 2. Many will hardly write down anything because they constantly think it's their own thoughts. They block themselves. A much better approach is to write down EVERYTHING that comes to our mind after asking Jesus the question. Don't try to discern right away, just write it all down. Don't look at the paper for a day or two and then read it again. It will be much clearer to you now what was really God and what He was not.
- G. **Unknown Person** – Often we are tempted to prophesy out of our knowing and what we see. Especially among friends, prophesying can be a tough thing because we already know them so well. This exercise is meant to avoid this pitfall and to help us get comfortable in using the prophetic without knowing the person.
1. **Method 1** – The leader will secretly assign one person in the group as the target for prophetic ministry. However, the leader won't tell anyone who he or she picked. Then the group begins to prophesy over person xyz not knowing who they are actually ministering to. Only at the end the leader will reveal who was chosen. However, often the assigned person will have already realized by that point that they were prophesying over him or her.
 2. **Method 2** – This is just another method for the last exercise: In an even-numbered group let everyone draw a lot with a number that they will keep a secret. This will be their number. Then collect the lots and let everyone draw another number. This will be the number they will prophesy over. (Repeat if someone drew their own number.) Now everyone has time to ask God for a prophecy for the second number they drew. When sharing, let one after another say first the number and then give the prophecy (without the addressed number revealing that it's them). Only when everyone finished, let people reveal which number they were and how accurate the prophetic word was they received.

V. ADVANCED ACTIVATION EXERCISES – GROWING IN THE PROPHETIC

- A. This collection contains exercises that are best done with a group that has already had some experience in the prophetic as these exercises combine aspects of the basic and intermediate

activations. They tend to be much closer to prophetic ministry as it may occur in a group or even congregational context and will empower us to flow with others in corporate settings.

- B. **Building on Prophecies / Team Ministry** – The previous exercises were primarily done in groups of 2. However, you can open them up for team ministry. Out of the group of two, the partner publicly gives a prophetic word for the other person. After that, it will be open for everyone to build on that specific word by adding meaning, depth, interpretation, application and so on. This will help grow in ministering prophetically as a team to one person.
- C. **Receiving Corporate Words** – Instead of ministering to individuals, this activation is about speaking to an entire group. This can also include that the word is addressed to individuals within the group but is primarily focused on the group as a whole. It's similar to when a pastor gives a word of knowledge from the front and then invites people to come up for prayer. Here the prophetic word can be instructions to pray for a certain person in the group (or anything else), a certain corporate word of wisdom regarding the group, or even a specific word addressed to a person within the group (even when it's not clear yet who it is). This exercise is designed to help us make the step from ministering to individuals to ministering to a group or entire congregation.
- D. **Prophetic Prayer** – Form groups of two (at best people who don't know each other so well). One person is praying the other is receiving. The praying person gets silent and listens to what God is saying. Then, without the other person having said anything, you just pray what you feel God is showing to you over the other person. Take time to focus again, be silent and hear again during the time of prayer. It's ok if there is silence for some time. Do this for 5 minutes, then switch. This is less about prophesying than about growing in prophetic intercession (= praying what God tells us to pray), which will enable us to pray over others more powerfully.
- E. **Focus on "How"** - Deliver a prophetic word and watch the way you deliver it, try to do it as integratively as possible (voice, face expressions, gestures and so on). The purpose of this exercise is increasing coherence of what we say and how we say it, thus making it easier for people to receive our prophecy and decreasing doubt and distraction. We don't only want to deliver a message, but also the heart of God (feelings, hope, mercy, love, ...) that He carries towards this person.
- F. **Free Prophetic Ministry to Volunteers** – You are going to prophesy as a team of 3 or 4. Previously, find people outside of your group and ask them if they would volunteer for your group for 10 minutes and in return receive a blessing. As a team minister prophetically to the volunteer for 10 minutes, while all the volunteer has to do is sit and listen. Place specific emphasis on flowing together as a team and building on each others' prophecy as long as the Spirit speaks. Pray before the session and after it. Give the volunteer the ability to give feedback and ask questions if necessary.
 - 1. For reasons of memory, ease, later testing and accountability it is recommended to have one person in your group write down the main points and hand it to the volunteer at the end. Even better is to record the whole session and send the audio file to them.
 - 2. It needs good preparation and empathy as you begin to minister to people who perhaps have never experienced prophetic ministry before. Shortly explain what you are going to do and the biblical foundation for it. Reduce prejudices and make them feel comfortable.
 - 3. Please review the [basic principles and values for prophetic ministry](#) before you take steps outside of the safe boundaries of your practice group.