

The Ultimate Guide
to Prophetic Protocol

Love and
Prophecy

Dan McCollam

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Prophetic Protocol

DAN MCCOLLAM

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all those who desire to build a true prophetic community upon New Testament foundations. I believe we can rewrite what the prophetic looks like in our generation.

"They will know we are Christians by our love."

John 13:35

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INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS PROTOCOL?

A few years ago, the Lord challenged our community to explore prophecy as a life skill not just a ministry skill. He asked us the question, "What does prophecy look like in every sphere of influence?" We began the adventure of experimenting with prophecy in business, government, the medical field, etc. We even applied our prophetic gifts to the areas of weather and agriculture.

Our prophetic community is not the only one exploring such things, and as prophecy begins to invade the world in every sphere of society, one of the pioneer

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fields in light of this advancement is the development of protocols.

Protocols are defined as "*a system of rules that explain the correct conduct and procedures to be followed in formal situations.*"¹ As our prophetic community began to work with police departments and government agencies, we had to adjust our language and our presentation. Like the dictionary definition suggests, protocols have the following content:

- Unique procedures
- Unique language
- Unique data or content requests
- Unique rules of conduct

I believe the ultimate prophetic protocol guide is found in an ancient passage that has been spoken more at weddings than at prophetic trainings. I refer to chapter 13 of Paul's letter to the Corinthian church which is often nicknamed "The Love Chapter."

If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I

¹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/protocol>.
7/1/2019.

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am nothing.

I Corinthians 13:2

Prophecy without love is nothing. None of the gifts of the Spirit are in a proper context or protocol without love. This idea is also clear in the book of Galatians.

The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

Galatians 5:6

Our expressions of faith without love don't count. They don't send the message intended by the Master. The challenge is in how a person is to define love. What does love manifest within the gift of prophecy? Scripture answers this question for us. I believe the beautiful and classic description of love penned in the four short verses of the Book of First Corinthians is more properly used in prophetic training than at weddings since the context of this passage is clearly about spiritual gifts. Let's look at God's description of love in the context of spiritual gifts.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always

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hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

We have within these four verses the ultimate guide to prophetic protocol. Our prophetic accuracy and structure are nothing without love. In *Love and Prophecy*, we will take each of these thirteen descriptions of love and form a guide for what prophecy should look like both as a ministry skill and as a life skill.

1

PROPHECY IS PATIENT

Love is patient, so prophecy must be patient. Patience speaks of self-control and the ability to hold your passion. Every sphere of influence requires patience in the prophetic. It would not be appropriate to jump up and interrupt a business meeting or government gathering because you feel like you have a prophetic word. There is a protocol that must be followed. You must have some level of invitation, and you must know the language that effectively communicates truth within that environment.

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One challenge to patience in prophecy is that revelation and inspiration often arrive with a little shot of an adrenaline-like rush. Some people get goose bumps; others feel a heat or internal pressure; there are those who burst over with excitement. God moving on and in people can be an exhilarating experience. It's what Peter the disciple called "joy unspeakable and full of glory."² Peter would know. In the Bible accounts, he often burst out with words or actions that may have been ill-timed. In Luke 9:33, it says of Peter, "Not knowing what to say he said..." In the majority of cases, our exhilarating moments of prophetic inspiration need to be subjected to a protocol of patience and wait for an opportune time.

PATIENCE IN TIMING

Scripture gives a clear protocol of patience for the healthy operation of the prophetic within a church setting. We find this prophetic protocol in the chapter directly following the description of love.

Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first

² 1 Peter 1:8.

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speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets.

1 Corinthians 14:29-32

The instructions in this text include stopping your prophetic utterance, taking turns, and bringing your prophetic unction under the control of the prophet. Being able to hold a prophetic word is just as important as being able to share a prophetic word. The ability to hold a prophetic word is what Scripture calls “bringing your gift into subjection” or prophecy being “under the control of the prophets.” You don’t have to speak everything you see, hear, or feel. Prophecy is meant to function within a protocol of patience that waits for the right time, place, and wording.

The Book of Proverbs doesn’t pull any punches when talking about the lack of wisdom in sharing words in the wrong timing.

Do you see someone who speaks too soon? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

Proverbs 29:20 (CSB)

The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint, and whoever has

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understanding is even-tempered.

Proverbs 17:27

When it comes to delivering prophetic words, we need not only the right word but the right season. Every prophetic word has a timing and a season. When you foresee a thing, it is important to know you are often seeing it out of its proper time. You must patiently wait for the right season to deliver that word. This idea is found in God's instructions to the prophet Habakkuk.

*For the revelation awaits an appointed
time; it speaks of the end and will not
prove false. Though it lingers, wait for it;
it will certainly come and will not delay.*

Habakkuk 2:3

I encourage churches, businesses, and organizations to have clear protocol for how prophecy should operate within their environment. Consider the protocol Nathan the prophet used when speaking to King David in 2 Samuel 12. He didn't come to David confronting him with his sin. Rather, Nathan told him a parable of injustice that stirred the king to action.

At the end of the story, David shouted out, "The man who did this must die!"

Nathan answered, "You are the man!"

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In the New Covenant, we don't use prophecy to confront sin; we use Scripture and relationship. However, we do still have a protocol for approaching kings that is less direct than other environments. You are not in the presence of a government official to just give a word; you are there to help them discover truth.

There also needs to be a clear protocol in churches. At my church, we have a point person to whom members of the congregation can bring prophetic impressions. This point person judges whether to bring what was shared to leadership or not. In our faith community, a word someone receives during a service makes it to the microphone about one time out of every ten.

A word doesn't have to be wrong to not be used. Many times, the word confirms a direction the leaders are already heading, so there is no need to share it publicly; value is still present as it serves the purpose of encouragement.

At other times, a word received in a corporate church setting might speak more directly to the receiver themselves, and the point person will help them recognize and respond to what the LORD is saying to them.

You don't need to have the same protocol as the church I am part of, but you should have clear protocol for your home church. Every sphere of influence has a unique

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prophetic protocol, but all of them must work in love and patience.

PATIENCE FOR CONTEXT

An associate of mine who is an internationally-known prophet was asked by the LORD to not share any word until he had held it in his heart for at least one year. What an amazing paradigm shift for a prophet to go from instantly sharing words with everyone to holding on to words for twelve months or more. Was God teaching him patience? Certainly, but more so God was teaching him how to prophesy in love. Love is patient.

There are many benefits to being patient with a prophecy. Holding a word refines the word. It allows you to meditate on deeper principles and meanings behind what God is communicating. Holding a word empowers you to deliver it in the right season and with a greater depth. So often, we get excited about a revelation and blurt it out before the proper time or season. The word is still true, but it doesn't have its desired impact. Holding a word allows you to gain wisdom for the greater context of the situation. A text is only as powerful as its context. You increase the authority and power of a word when it has a wiser and greater context.

Holding a word allows a prophetic person to identify in a greater way with the person receiving the word and their destiny. The connection that is formed through

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patience with the prophetic ensures that the word is being delivered in love. I'm not saying that a prophetic person must wait on every word, but every word must be delivered in love and patience. Otherwise, as the ultimate protocol says, "...it is nothing."

PATIENCE IN CONTENT

Another form of patience in prophecy is found in the principle Jesus demonstrated: "Love only shares what a person can bear."

I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear.

John 16:12

Jesus had much to share with his disciples, but love only allowed him to communicate what their hearts and understanding could bear. In my travels among prophetic communities, I often witness the error of sharing more than a person can bear. Recently I ministered at a supernatural school on the East Coast of the United States. A young lady stood during testimony time and shared how a homeless person had asked for money. She didn't have money, but she invited the young man to come to the school lecture that night. At some point during their meeting, the young man gave his heart to the LORD. She asked the young man to come forward, and everyone cheered. A spontaneous offering broke out. Without anyone saying a word about giving, people came up and started stuffing

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money in that homeless man's jacket. It was a beautiful and powerful demonstration of love.

Then the young lady began to prophesy a long word over the homeless man. The word spoke of writing books and preaching to large crowds. I was resonating with the accuracy of what she was sharing, but I was also looking at the homeless man's face. He was stunned. An hour ago, he was wandering the streets wondering whether he would eat today. Now, he was a born-again Christian, and these weird people were stuffing his jacket with hundreds of dollars while some lady rifled off words about all that he would someday do. I'm sure it felt surreal, overwhelming, and likely confusing.

The point is, the man wasn't in a disposition to receive a prophetic word of this magnitude. The prophetic word she shared may have been accurate, but it was too big and long for the moment. It was a right word but the wrong time and place. In my opinion, the demonstration of love was the donations not the word.

I met with the young lady after service and thanked her for bringing the man to the meeting. I told her that I resonated with everything she shared but encouraged her next time to look for something in the man's life that would be more of a next step. A "What-should-I-do-next?" word would be more digestible. I explained that if a prophetic person can see ten years out, then they

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can see ten months out. You can focus your prophetic lens to what is bearable for the receiver because that is what prophecy looks like wrapped in love and patience.

TIME LIMITS

In our prophetic activation trainings, we require students to prophesy with a strict time limit. Generally, they have ninety seconds to receive and deliver the prophetic word. Time limits train prophetic students to stir up the gift that is in them³ and to bring the operation and flow of the gift under their control.⁴ They learn how to start and stop a prophetic flow. The restraint of a time limit teaches a protocol of love and patience.

The first step to sharing prophecy in love is to learn to be patient. We need to demonstrate patience for the right word in the right time and season. We need to discern when a word is about content and when it is merely providing a context. I'm not afraid to share a word I don't fully understand in the moment, but I am also willing to hold a word until I possess a greater understanding of what the LORD is saying. As prophetic communities, we choose to share only what a person can bear. We don't speak our whole mind or everything the LORD gives us but rather watch in love for what the

³ 2 Timothy 1:6.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 14:32

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receiver is able to digest. Love is patient, so prophecy must be patient.

Prophetic Protocol #1

Patiently wait for the right time to share a prophetic word and watch for the right way to say it. Love shares only what a person can bear because prophecy is patient.

2

PROPHECY IS KIND

The Greek definition of the word “kind” is “mild, gracious, or easy to be around.” When it comes to most people’s experience with prophecy and prophets, we wouldn’t typically use words like “mild,” “gracious,” or “easy to be around.” But if love is kind, then prophecy must be kind; and kindness is mild, gracious, and easy to be around.

Kindness is a key to building true prophetic communities. There is no sustainable value for prophecy where there is no love protocol. Remember the old adage: “People don’t care what you know until they know that you care.” Let’s look again at the loving foundation of New Testament prophecy.

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But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging, and comfort.

1 Corinthians 14:3

This is the foundation for New Testament prophetic protocol, and it aligns with the love protocol of kindness. I have met so many prophetic people who want to graduate out of kindness. They think a real prophet doesn't have to be loving because prophets in Scripture, especially the Old Testament, sometimes delivered hard or harsh information. From these stories, the unlearned draw the conclusion that "real prophets" are harsh confronters. Prophetic heroes of the Old Testament called down judgment on cities and killed the false prophets. These forefathers demonstrated passion for God, zeal for holiness, and wielded such great power and authority that it is easy to want to emulate their pattern.

The problem with this mindset lies in the fact that today we live under a different covenant than they did. The Old Covenant showed the exceeding sinfulness of sin.⁵ Prophecy in a New Testament context can emulate our Old Testament heroes in their love for God, passion for holiness, and power with authority; but our prophetic ministry today must be encouraging, comforting, and

⁵ Romans 7.

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strengthening. You do not graduate out of love and kindness. Kindness is our covenant and our protocol.

THE RIGHT WORD; THE WRONG HEART

An important piece of the kindness protocol is to deliver the right word with the right heart. The right word with the wrong heart is the wrong word.

Bethany, one of our prophetic trainers, calls prophetic protocol “the rules of the game.” Bethany grew up on the beaches of San Diego, California, where there is a great love and skill for volleyball. When she moved to Northern California to join our team, she invited several of our prophetic community to play a competitive game of grass volleyball with her. She asked only for those who truly knew how to play to participate—this was not a church picnic pickup game. As you might guess where this is going, she was disappointed.

Our self-proclaimed serious players could get the ball over the net and could score a point, but they weren’t playing by the rules of the game. They would carry the ball or extend their reach over the net. These novice players may have practically scored a point, but technically, according to the rules of the game, the point didn’t count.

That’s what prophecy without kindness looks like. It goes over the net and hits its target, but it doesn’t count because it isn’t according to the protocol of love.

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Bethany says, "If you are prophesying from the wrong spirit or outside of the character and nature of God though the prophetic word be true, it's illegal because it is not according to the rules of the game."

Jonah is among the prophetic examples of one who had the right word but a bad attitude.

But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?" "It is," he said, "And I'm so angry I wish I were dead." But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and many animals?"

Jonah 4:9-11

In this account, Jonah was more concerned about his personal comfort and prophetic prejudice than the lives and futures of one hundred and twenty thousand lost people. In an earlier passage, Jonah admitted he was afraid that God might spare the city. This tells us that the prophet knew the character and nature of God was to be merciful and forgiving, but he chose not to include that information in his word. He had truth, but he didn't

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share it in love. Jonah's story reminds me of a New Testament instruction in communication.

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

Ephesians 4:15

Speaking the truth in love is a sign of maturity. Anyone can possess a love for speaking the truth, but is your truth a sword or a surgical knife? The sword kills, but the knife heals. When I was a young minister, I was very passionate about truth and revelation. One day, a kindly minister with more years than mine pulled me aside and said, "Dano, I have noticed that you love to speak the truth." I smiled in agreement. "Yes, it's true. I do love God's truth." Then he looked deep in my eyes and said, "But you don't always speak the truth in love." Those words cut deep into my heart to bring a healing. It's true. I loved speaking the truth more than speaking the truth in love. I made it my goal from that moment forward to always speak the truth wrapped in the love of God.

As the body of Christ, our alignment with Jesus our head requires us to speak the truth in love. I will say it again: People don't care what you know (prophetically) until they know that you care.

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If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and knowledge ...but do not have love, I am nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:2

WATER FROM THE ROCK

The story of Moses bringing water from the rock provides another example of the right prophetic outcome but the wrong heart in delivery. In this account, the children of Israel were once again challenging the authority and wisdom of Moses and Aaron because there was no water in the wilderness for them to drink. The faithful leaders gathered in the tent of meeting and fell face down in the presence of the LORD. The glory of God appeared and gave them strict instructions to "Take the staff... and speak to the rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water."⁶ Moses took the staff as he was commanded, but he said to the people, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?"⁷ Instead of speaking to the rock, Moses then raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the people drank. However, the LORD rebuked Moses for how he delivered the word.

Water from the rock was the right outcome, but the message was delivered the wrong way. Moses's actions

⁶ Numbers 20:8.

⁷ Numbers 20:10.

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came from a place of anger and focused on the people's rebellion rather than the kindness and provision of the LORD. Moses drew attention to himself—"must we bring you water"—and to the people—"listen, you rebels"—rather than carefully following the directions of the LORD. The consequence for this act was that Moses was not permitted to bring the people into their land of promise.⁸

When it comes to prophetic ministry, the end does *not* justify the means. The right word delivered the wrong way or with the wrong heart is the wrong word.

KINDNESS AND REPENTENCE

Prophecy must be kind at heart. Some ask, but how will people repent if we are so warm and fuzzy? Well, to answer this question let us look at God's first and primary method for bringing repentance.

Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

Romans 2:4

God's "Plan A" for repentance is kindness, clear and simple. Is that your primary plan for the prophetic? It

⁸ Number 20:12.

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should be. If you are unconvinced, then look at the verses that precede the words we just featured.

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness...

Romans 2:1-3

Wanting to pass judgment with prophetic words shows a contempt for the riches of God's kindness and patience. It is literally despising the qualities of God's love. Too often I have met prophetic people who want to correct and rebuke others with a prophetic word rather than encourage, strengthen, and comfort them. This desire is not only misusing the prophetic word but also misunderstanding and abusing the written word, the Bible. Examine with me the clear instructions for correction and rebuke.

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All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

2 Timothy 3:16

In order to be biblical and to honor the focus of the written word, we should use relationship and the written word of God to rebuke or correct a person. The prophetic word is to encourage, strengthen, and comfort them; the written Word is for rebuking, correcting, and training. Kindness will not disrupt repentance; it will promote and produce it when functioning in the spirit of New Testament prophecy.

EMPLOYED AND USEFUL

I'm fascinated by another nuance of the Greek definition of the word "kind" as "employed and useful." Through this definition, we come to understand that it is kind to share useful information.

When our prophetic community started working with parents and government agencies to find missing children, a police officer trained us to look for only "actionable data." This phrase became a protocol. The police didn't want to hear the backstory of how we got the information or our interpretation of the information. They only wanted tips that they could prove right or wrong. These agencies wanted names, addresses, license numbers, locations—actionable data. We didn't realize at the time how much pursuing

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prophetic “actionable data” in these missing persons situations would carry over to and benefit the whole of our prophetic culture and experience.

Scripture identifies these same qualities of employable and useful as the focus for all Christian conversation.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Ephesians 4:29

That sounds exactly like this Greek definition of kindness. If kindness must be employable and useful and conversation must be helpful and beneficial, then we have no excuse for delivering negative information in a prophetic word. The verse directly following this instruction to build others up with our words applies the underlying motivation which is present in all our prophetic kindness protocol:

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit...

Ephesians 4:30

Two verses later, the writer spells out the very definition of our kindness protocol.

Be kind and compassionate to one

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another...

Ephesians 4:32

Kindness has been the missing link of prophetic ministry. A lack of kindness in the prophetic grieves Holy Spirit. Maturity chooses to show kindness and share that which is helpful and beneficial to the one who hears it. The prophetic should be mild, gracious, and easy to be around because the prophetic by nature and by protocol is kind.

Prophetic Protocol #2

Our prophetic words are to be soaked with kindness and compassion. Prophecy focuses only on what is helpful for building others up. We speak prophetic words in a way that benefits the listener because prophecy is kind.

3

PROPHECY DOES NOT ENVY AND IS NOT JEALOUS

We can easily imagine how love does not envy, but how would prophecy be connected to envy? By definition, envy is linked to rivalry—competing for what someone else has or trying to be like someone else. Paul talked about this type of envy in one of his letters to the church in Philippi.

It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of good will... The former do so out of selfish ambition...

Philippians 1:15, 17

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We should never prophesy to compete with someone else's prophetic gift or expression. I have a friend who is rather famous for releasing accurate words of knowledge together with prophetic encouragement. He is one of the most loving people I know. This friend shares measurable data such as birth dates, names of family members, addresses, and even bank account numbers. To see the accuracy of these words is impressive and inspiring, and it lifts the level of everyone's faith.

The challenge comes when people see how impressive the man's gift is. They envy it and then want to emulate it without the help of Holy Spirit. Some have been accused of looking up facts on the internet and then sharing them as "words of knowledge" in a public meeting. I can tell you for certain that my friend doesn't do that. Some of the information he receives could not be found on any form of social media. Discovering information by natural means or through research and then presenting it as a word of knowledge or as a prophetic perception is pure deception.

This type of envy and rivalry reminds me of what happened to a man named Simon the Sorcerer in Acts chapter eight.

Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He

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boasted that he was someone great, and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, "This man is rightly called the Great Power of God." They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery. But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

Acts 8:9-13

The story sounds like a wonderful testimony. Simon the Sorcerer is now a believer, and this influential man is following Philip around astonished by real signs and miracles. So far so good. But Simon must have missed the attention and affirmation he once had received from the people. He began to envy the power that was being displayed through the disciples.

When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

Acts 8:18-19

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Peter answered Simon with a scorching rebuke because he perceived that Simon was asking from a place of envy, bitterness, and sin. Asking for greater spiritual gifts is not wrong; in fact, it is commanded that we earnestly desire spiritual gifts.⁹ In this case, Simon's motive was wrong. His desire came from a place of envy.

Here is where the challenge comes in with understanding envy and zeal regarding spiritual gifts. The Greek language in 1 Corinthians 13 says, "Love does not envy." Here "envy" is the Greek word "zeloo." Compare the language in the following chapter that begins with the command, "Follow the way of love, but earnestly desire spiritual gifts, especially that you might prophesy." This instruction of "earnestly desire" is also the Greek word "zeloo" which is defined as "a burning desire." The same word is used in what is forbidden (envy) and what is commanded (earnest desire for greater gifts). So, which is it? Are we supposed to go after what others have or not?

Motive is the key. I think it is clear from the text that it is a good thing to possess a burning desire to flow in the same power and spiritual gifts that we see demonstrated in others if the desire is coming from a heart of love and service. However, if you need attention and affirmation through the operation of your

⁹ 1 Corinthians 14:1.

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spiritual gifts, then it may reveal a selfish or unloving root.

Check your heart. Where is your desire for greater gifts coming from? Competition or service? Identity and approval of others or love? Is this for you or for others? What is your motive? God wants us to have greater gifts that enable us to love and serve others more effectively; but when a gift attaches to your sense of importance or identity, it becomes dangerous to you and to those around you. Love is the key, and service is the protocol.

BE YOURSELF

There is a difference between envy and learning by observation. Observation and imitation are learning methods for all of us. It's not wrong to imitate someone you admire while you are learning their skill. Children learn to speak and to walk by observing and imitating those around them. Great athletes and musicians learn by watching their heroes perform. No one would call that envy. It's wisdom to learn from others. The Apostle Paul encouraged everyone to imitate him.

Therefore, I exhort you, be imitators of me.

1 Corinthians 4:16 (NASB)

Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:1 (NASB)

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Obviously, we can all learn from other people's gifts and presentation styles, but it's also very important to be yourself and to be authentic. Imitation is a valid beginning, but it should not be your endpoint. Don't let envy sway how you prophesy.

God values what you bring to the prophetic equation. I often say the supernatural is God's *super* plus your *natural*. You are part of the message. God has already factored your language and personality into the prophetic revelation he is giving you for someone else. Don't make the mistake of becoming stuck in imitation of others' gifts.

THE KEY OF AUTHENTICITY

I believe that authenticity is a key to seeing a double-portion anointing released in the earth. This lesson was first modeled thousands of years ago when Elisha asked Elijah for a double portion of the spirit that was upon him.¹⁰ The younger prophet was already commissioned to go out and be a prophet to the nation, but Elisha refused to go. He stayed and served the older prophet to the point where other people thought he was merely Elijah's servant or even his water boy.¹¹ Elisha stayed a learner, observer, and student long after he had been commissioned or what others might consider

¹⁰ 2 Kings 2:9.

¹¹ 2 Kings 3:11.

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promoted. He wanted to learn the ways of the experienced prophet.

Elisha's serving the mature prophet was an act of wisdom and humility with great benefits. Later in life, Elisha mirrored every miracle that Elijah ever performed; plus, he did things that Elijah never did. This is the goal of the double-portion spirit. Learn all the ways of those who have gone before you in the LORD, but also do what you are uniquely gifted to do. Their portion plus your portion equals a double portion. Jesus commanded this same pursuit of the double-portion for his followers.

Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

John 14:12

These are powerful words. Jesus promised that we could do the same things that he did, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out devils; but he also promised greater things. Don't stop at imitation and observation. Follow all the ways of Jesus and godly leaders around you then press into what God has uniquely graced and gifted you for through the outpouring of His Holy Spirit. Imitate other followers of Christ, but don't just be an imitation. Your authentic voice and your life are made up of your influences plus

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your innovations. This is how God increases His government and influence in the earth.

COMPETITIVE ENVY

I am a competitive person by personality. I like to say I was created to win. People with my personality type especially need to watch out for any prophetic rivalry that may come from a place of envy. Have you ever been around a person who always tries to one-up anything that is said? Picture this: Your stomach growls and you mention, "Oh, excuse me, I missed breakfast today." This person quickly responds, "Well I've been fasting breakfast for twenty-one days." The response was weird, awkward, and uncalled for. You say, "My wife and I had a wonderful vacation to Hawaii last year." They jump in with, "The beaches in the Bahamas are much better." Competitive banter in normal conversation is usually a sign of insecurity and envy. This practice should never contaminate a prophetic appointment.

Often, our community will minister prophetically in teams of two or three persons. When someone gives a great or accurate word, the next team member should never try to top it with a better or more accurate word. Beware of those who try to be louder and longer than anyone else. Resist any urge to compete for prophetic clarity or content out of a wrong motive. Anything that takes the focus off God's love and encouragement to the individual is inappropriate. Loving others well is the

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focus and serves as our ultimate guide to prophetic protocol.

Prophetic Protocol #3

We don't compete in the prophetic. We won't use a prophetic word to try to outdo the last prophetic testimony or to be better than someone else. The focus of our prophetic ministry is not ourselves but to honor and obey the LORD and to deliver His message in love.
Prophecy does not envy and is not jealous.

4

PROPHECY IS HUMBLE

Prophecy shouldn't be overly self-confident. I've heard prophets challenge leaders because of what the prophet believes they have heard, seen, sensed or perceived. They say things like, "If you only knew what I know or could see what I see..." That prophetic person has forgotten some key spiritual principles. First of all, they have forgotten what they don't know.

*Those who think they know something do
not yet know as they ought to know.*

1 Corinthians 8:2

The second thing they have forgotten is that everyone sees. God has given everyone the ability to see, hear,

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sense, and perceive his messages. Yet, everyone sees only a part.

Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture!

1 Corinthians 13:9 NLT

That is why prophetic community is so important; each of us has a part. Insisting that your part is more accurate or more important than everyone else's comes from a place of arrogance and ignorance in how the body of Christ works. We each have a part of a greater whole.

The prophetic must come from a place of humility. Knowing that we only know and see in part helps us to be humble in our presentation of a prophetic word. One thing that helps us stay in the right spirit is to truly listen to and value the contribution of others and not center on our own prophetic piece.

A prophetic person who pouts or shuns community because they feel unheard or undervalued is usually immature or wounded. If what you see, hear, sense, or perceive causes you to separate and isolate from others, then how can it serve? Humility waits its turn and its time. Humility listens and values others. Humility accepts the fact that we all hold one part of a greater whole.

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AUTHORIZING PROPHETIC WORDS

Humility is demonstrated in our language as well. Have you ever met a person who constantly uses phrases like “God told me this” or “God showed me that”? I don’t doubt that God is speaking to them; God speaks to all His children. But there is something exclusive and divisive in the constant use of this kind of language that can be annoying or internally irritating. I’m not talking about when someone is delivering a prophetic word and they begin by saying, “The LORD says...” Of course, we are representing what God is revealing to us by His Spirit. I am referring to people who use these types of “God said” phrases constantly in regular conversation.

We call the use of this kind of language “authorizing.” To authorize means to “endorse, empower, justify, or permit.”¹² Authorizing language stops anyone else from speaking into the conversation. The language is often subconsciously formed to repel any outside input or judgment or crafted to impress others with how spiritual they are. At its core, authorizing is neither healthy nor humble.

Another problem with this type of language is how it affects prophetic community. If God told you something, then who am I to question? Authorizing language leaves no room for judgment or input; it

¹² <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/authorize>.
July 2, 2019.

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leaves no room for accountability. It communicates that everything you say and do is completely endorsed, empowered, and authorized by heaven. That simply isn't true for any of us. My mentor used to say it this way, "No matter how much you know, you only know a part." We are all one piece of a greater prophetic community where words and impressions from God should be judged and tested with the help of others. Our language should represent His heart and heaven's culture.

In our prophetic community, we attempt to adjust our language to this revelation of only knowing in part by rephrasing our impressions to leave room for the input of others. We might say, "I believe God is saying..." or "I am hearing the LORD say...." The goal in using this type of language is not to communicate or cause uncertainty but to demonstrate humility that leaves room for others to judge and contribute. Humility is a key to healthy prophetic community.

THE YOKE OF JESUS

I think it is safe to say that to prophesy is to be yoked with the thoughts and heart of Jesus. A yoke in biblical times was a wooden crosspiece that fastened over the necks of two animals and attached to something that those under the yoke together pulled. Two oxen could pull a much greater load when yoked together.

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What does it mean to be yoked with Jesus? The yoke of Jesus in Scripture is described as gentle and humble.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Matthew 11:29

Yokes were also used to train younger animals to know when to stop, start, and turn. The yoke allowed the animals to act together and harness a synergy of strength that made the work lighter for both animals. A believer yoked to Jesus in prophecy will know when to start, stop, and turn. It's being yoked to Christ that allows you to do things you could never do on your own. God's prophetic burden is light because He is sharing in the weight. His yoke trains us in His nature of gentleness and humility.

Humility leaves room for the voice and input of other people. Jesus said He was "humble in heart." This type of humility and gentleness are commanded for every believer, especially for those wanting to live by love's protocol. Humility, gentleness, and patience are marks of true Christian community.

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Ephesians 4:2

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Humility is not only a key to honoring Jesus but also a tool for increasing your prophetic gift. Prophecy like all manifestation gifts is a grace gift. If you want to increase in prophecy, you should increase in humility because God gives more grace to the humble.

But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says, "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."

James 4:6

More grace increases your gift. Humility not only manifests grace, it accesses more. When you make humility and gentleness a goal in your prophetic protocol, you can pull greater loads in the prophetic because you are truly yoked with Jesus.

COMPETING WITH YOURSELF

Pride and boasting can also manifest as name dropping or over-emphasizing prophetic testimonies. There was a young man on our prophetic teams who was very graced in prophecy. Every time I saw this young man, he felt like he had to share a testimony of how one of his prophecies had changed someone's life. He shared great and true stories, but it was obvious that he was using prophetic testimonies to build his own self-worth and identity. He was trying to impress others through what Christ was doing in and through him. Testimonies are meant to build faith and impart grace not to build resumes and create unhealthy esteem. His motive

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wasn't evil; he was just insecure. You can share a testimony with confidence and still be humble when you identify as a son or daughter of God is secure.

Another form of the unhealthy practice of competing with yourself is when you try to outdo the last prophetic word you gave. Perhaps the LORD used you to give some very accurate words of knowledge and predictions, and now you feel the pressure to always perform at that level. When you feel under pressure to perform prophetically, fall back into God's pleasure. Prophecy comes from love, so lean back into God's love for you and for the person you are ministering to. Pressure demands performance and perfection; love gently and humbly shares what it has. If I know that I am one piece of a greater puzzle, then I don't submit to the pressure to try to be everyone's best word ever.

LONG ISN'T DEEP; IT'S JUST LONG

Delivering extra-long words or excessively quoting Scripture can be another subtle indicator of the possible presence of pride. Of course, we encourage people to prophesy from the Holy Word, but you can tell when the focus is more on quoting Scripture than on encouraging the receiver. It's not love to try to promote or prove your own spirituality through a prophetic word, and it is a violation of love's protocol of humility.

I have also seen prophetic people drag out their prophecies by repeating the same point over-and-over

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again. I call these “synonym prophecies.” For example, “God is calling you to be an overcomer, a champion, a warrior, a hero in your generation, one who prevails, etc....” and on-and-on they go over the same idea. God sometimes leads us to use synonyms to clarify or deepen what He is saying; we see this a lot in Scripture. But a continual habit of synonym prophecy can be another subtle form of attempting to impress others through a prophetic word. More innocently, it could also indicate a form of external processing or thinking out loud. All of this can be tricky because we are translating spiritual impressions and vision into practical and helpful prophetic words. I’m not trying to make a person overly self-conscious as they prophesy, I’m just helping them see that it is not usually wise to think with your mouth open. Take a quick moment to process things in your heart with Holy Spirit. Even this type of processing can happen in one second. When God speaks to you or gives you an impression, say what you have been given and leave it at that.

Long prophecies delivered as an attempt to impress others reminds me of the prayers of the Pharisees.

And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full... And when you pray, do not keep on

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babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

Matthew 6:7

"To be seen" or "to be heard" in prophecy is more the yeast of the Pharisees than the yoke of Jesus. Some of the most powerful prophetic words in Scripture were very brief. Look at the impact Jesus' word had on Nathaniel.

"How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus said, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel." Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that." He then added, "Very truly I tell you, you will see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

John 1:48-51

Notice the brevity of the word of knowledge and prophetic word Jesus spoke to Nathanael. Each part of this very powerful exchange is no more in length than a single sentence. Even though the words were short, they had life-changing impact. A prophetic word

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doesn't have to be long to be deep. Long isn't necessarily deep; it's often just long.

BRIEF AND AMAZING

I have a friend who prophesies to presidents of multiple countries. He has a strong rapport and relationship with these men and women of influence, yet he is often given only a few minutes to share what the LORD is saying. His words must be brief and amazing.

That's why our prophetic community often trains with time limits. As mentioned earlier, we usually give our team members just ninety seconds to receive and deliver a prophetic word because we are training them to touch influencers whose time is money. If you can't say it in a few minutes, perhaps you should consider holding it for further refinement and understanding.

PRIDE AND FALSE HUMILITY

Pride does not always look ostentatious. It's not always measured by a long flow of words or authorizing statements. Sometimes pride disguises itself as false humility.

For example, when you affirm someone on the accuracy of a prophetic word, false humility might respond by saying, "Oh, it was the LORD; not me." Of course, the one offering the compliment already knew the LORD was involved; nonetheless, the one who delivers the

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prophetic word is always an important part of the equation. Rejecting the congratulations drains you of power and makes the encourager feel stupid or misunderstood. That's not love. When someone compliments you on a prophetic word you gave, it is best to respond to their encouragement and affirmation by saying something like, "Thank you; that's really encouraging. I'm so happy you were blessed."

Some believers try so hard not to be proud that they come off to others as proud. The fear of pride does not produce humility. Fear is an attractor just like faith is. When you fear pride, you are focusing on your fear and giving it power. Trust Jesus. You know that He is the source. You know that every good and perfect gift comes from the Father.¹³ Let people encourage you and learn to receive it graciously. Honor the LORD in your heart, but also honor the encouragement of others. False humility is pride and fear in disguise.

PRIDE AND PARALYZING FEAR

Another subtle form of pride is the paralyzing fear of being wrong. Most hesitation in delivering a prophetic impression is fear-based. Humans fear rejection. We fear being wrong. We fear ineffectiveness. But in the end, remember that prophesying is not about you; it's about that person. The person you are ministering to is worth your taking a risk for. It's not wrong to be afraid, but it is

¹³ James 1:17.

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immature to let your fears dominate you. You are choosing your image over another's encouragement, and that is a subtle form of pride.

Pride in the form of fear will keep you from risks of faith and obedience. When I need approval, acceptance, or confirmation from my prophetic word, it is difficult to deliver it in love. Don't focus on your fears; trust God's love for you and the person you are speaking to. Fear will block your flow; love and humility will open it wider. Always choose faith over fear. Choose love over pride. Choose humility. God has chosen to use you to encourage, strengthen, and comfort the people and the world around you. Humble yourself and receive His grace and gifts with faith and gratitude. Prophecy is humble.

Prophetic Protocol #4

We speak prophetic words in a way that regards, honors, and leaves room for the input of others. We don't allow the fulfillment of a prophetic word to inflate our egos or attach to our identities because prophetic words are His words, and our greatest identity is as His sons and daughters. Prophecy does not brag and is not proud or arrogant; prophecy is humble.

5

PROPHECY HONORS OTHERS

Prophecy is not meant to uncover what is not honorable but to find buried treasure. When I was new to prophecy, I often attended meetings where the speakers would use the prophetic to publicly expose sin or personal weaknesses. I admit that this created fear in the room but not a reverential fear of the awesomeness of God. Rather, it was a fear of being publicly exposed. Many people justify this type of dishonoring others through a misinterpreting of 1 Corinthians 14:24-25. Let's look at the passage.

But if an unbeliever or an inquirer comes in while everyone is prophesying, they are convicted of sin and are brought under

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judgment by all, as the secrets of their hearts are laid bare. So, they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"

1 Corinthians 14:24-25

When we see the words, “convicted of sin” and “brought under judgment,” it certainly appears like you could justify using prophecy to publicly point out or uncover someone’s sin to bring them to a place of repentance. People who insist on doing so claim this is some form of “tough love.” They believe you confront people prophetically with the truth of their sin, and they will repent and worship God. It sounds defensible from the English translation of this Scripture, but let’s look carefully at the original text.

CONVICTED OF UNBELIEF

The Greek word translated “convicted” carries the meaning of “convict, refute, confute generally with a suggestion of shame of the person convicted.”¹⁴ Once again, that sounds consistent with the view that prophecy should be used to expose sin. However, my conviction from the study of Scripture and the greater context of love is that this passage is talking about the greatest sin of all—the sin of unbelief. Let’s look at

¹⁴ "G1651 - elegchō - Strong's Greek Lexicon (NIV)." Blue Letter Bible. Web. 6 Jul, 2019.

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another key passage in Scripture where the exact same Greek word is used for the word “convict”:

When he comes, he will prove (convict) the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because people do not believe in me...

John 16:8-9

It's clear in this context that the sin Holy Spirit is convicting the whole world about is the sin of unbelief because the verse explains “people do not believe in me.” The greatest sin in the world—the one that keeps people from relationship with God and the reality of heaven—is to not believe in Christ. Everyone comes to the Kingdom by moving from unbelief to faith. If you do not believe upon Christ as Lord and Savior, you will not see or taste of the kingdom of God.

It's true that through the prophetic, we can see a person's sin, but that is not the focus of our assignment nor our message. We don't use the prophetic to point out sin or to share what is dishonoring about others, but the gift of prophecy does possess the power to confront the universal sin of unbelief. Unbelief is indirectly challenged in every prophetic exchange because you are being confronted with how God sees and knows you.

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FEELING KNOWN AND SEEN

Let's address another phrase from the Corinthian passage: "brought under judgment by all." Again, this sounds like it is endorsing the idea of exposing personal sin publicly through prophetic utterances. The Greek word translated "judgment" here is "anakrino," and it means "to investigate, examine, enquire, scrutinize, sift, question."¹⁵ "Brought under judgment" is perhaps a poor translation from a modern understanding of judgment because it certainly is not connected to the actual meaning of the text. We are not judging people, passing sentence on them, nor speaking judgments through prophecy. A prophetic appointment should not end with the receiver experiencing a sense of judgement, shame, or disgrace. How could that be prophecy working through love as commanded in Scripture? Judgment here as its original definition reveals is speaking about the receiver of a prophetic word feeling known and seen.

The focus of the prophetic is not exposing sin but uncovering the secret treasures of the heart—things that no one else could know. There is no implication in the passage of secret sins being uncovered. The ultimate prophetic protocol of love does not use the prophetic to dishonor others. Love does not dishonor others. The secrets mentioned in the passage about

¹⁵ "G350 - anakrinō - Strong's Greek Lexicon (NIV)." Blue Letter Bible. Web. 6 Jul, 2019.

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public prophetic ministry are treasures of the heart not sins of the soul. Treasures can include dreams, experiences, gifts, callings, relationships, and even things that the individual has forgotten. Secrets of the heart can be gifts or treasures that you did or did not recognize about yourself. When these are uncovered, there is no dishonor, rather there is excitement and an opportunity for faith. The receiver feels known and seen by God and the people. It is an honorable exchange.

Once while out to lunch with a pastor friend and his wife, I complimented the waitress on her tattoos. After she told a little of the story behind her choice of body art, the pastor shared a prophetic insight indicating that her tattoos spoke of her noble commitment to protect her daughter from the pains that she had experienced as a child. Our server's eyes flooded with tears. "How could you know that?" she asked. "That's amazing." She felt known, seen, and loved. It was one of the most memorable lunches I've had in years because secrets of the heart were revealed in such an honoring way.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Let's gather the pieces of information we have studied from 1 Corinthians 14 to reconstruct a healthy biblical interpretation. First, prophecy must work through the ultimate protocol of love. Love does not dishonor. It is not honorable to publicly uncover a person's sin through prophecy. The ultimate sin is unbelief. When the treasures of a person's heart are uncovered, the

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receiver feels like people have seen, examined, and investigated parts of them that someone could only know by the Spirit of God. In this way, they have been judged, examined, and seen. They are internally convicted of their unbelief through the kindness and closeness of God. They “fall down and worship God, exclaiming, ‘God is truly among you!’”

IS THE FRUIT REDEMPTIVE?

Scripture tells us that we have been given the ministry of reconciliation.¹⁶ Let’s be practical for a moment. Does the fruit of using public prophecy to expose sin qualify as redemptive or reconciling? On multiple occasions, I have seen prophets use the prophetic word to publicly expose secret sin. Never did I witness the person receiving the word responded with worship. They didn’t fall down and worship God saying, “God is really among you.” Usually, they ran out of the building, hid themselves in shame, and likely never returned to a Christian gathering. The prophetic word was accurate, but it was not truth wrapped in love.¹⁷

I’ve also sat in meetings where prophets were calling out the treasures of the heart of pre-Christians. The response was drastically different. The person responded with a sense of awe and wonder, “How do you people know all this about me?” They felt examined

¹⁶ 2 Corinthians 5:18.

¹⁷ Ephesians 4:15.

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and seen (judged) but not exposed or uncovered. The prophetic drew them in and confronted their unbelief with love, truth, and value. They felt honored to be called out and spoken of in such a positive light.

QUESTIONS FROM THE BOOK OF ACTS

When I share love's protocol for prophecy, people often ask me about three stories from the book of Acts. What about Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:18-24) and Elymas the Sorcerer (Acts 13:8-12)? In the first story, those who lied about an offering were struck dead; in the second story, Peter seemed to curse the sorcerer for trying to buy the Holy Spirit; and in the third story, Elymas the false prophet was struck blind. How do these stories align with a prophetic protocol of love?

When interpreting the Bible, it is important to examine the plain teaching of Scripture alongside of the record of stories and dialogue. However, when there seems to be a discrepancy between our assumptions drawn from stories and the clearly stated instructions of Scripture, we should interpret the former through the clear measure of the latter. We receive what is clearly taught and see how that compares with what we have concluded from the stories.

It is very clear from Bible teaching that prophecy without love is nothing and that love does not dishonor others. How then do we apply love's prophetic protocol

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to our interpretation of these three stories?

First, we understand that each of these stories revealed a direct and public challenge to the authenticity and purity of the Gospel. It appears that the married couple was trying to publicly buy attention or influence through lying about their offerings; Simon publicly attempted to buy power and purchase a grace gift for personal benefit and attention; Elymas the sorcerer and false prophet publicly opposed the preaching of the Gospel and deliberately tried to turn a government leader away from the faith. In each case, the sin was performed in public, and therefore, the trespass was dealt with publicly.

These three narratives certainly represent extreme exceptions to the normal written rule of love's protocol in Scripture. Public sin and direct confrontations to the Gospel may sometimes require a different protocol than the normal use of prophecy.

New Testament prophecy normally pulls treasures from our past, present, and future to propel us toward a greater identity and destiny. It is a God given grace and tool for releasing life on earth as it is in heaven. The normal protocol for prophecy is clearly love. If love does not dishonor others and prophecy must work by love, then prophecy should not normally be used to uncover what is not honorable. Prophecy honors others.

Prophetic Protocol #5

We don't use prophecy in a way that dishonors people. We use prophecy to uncover treasures of the heart in believers and pre-Christians in order that they might better know and worship God.

Prophecy honors others.

6

PROPHECY IS NOT SELF-SEEKING

Prophecy is never centered on self. It should always be centered on the person being ministered to and God's great love for them. In any prophetic appointment and in daily life, I am created to be an expression of God's love.

Two vital components of love are compassion and mercy. I have learned through the years that there is a huge difference between compassion and mercy that is important to the subject of prophecy. Mercy moves down from a higher position to meet someone in their pain or suffering. Compassion lifts a person up from a low position to reveal God's best in the situation. Mercy brought God down from His throne in heaven to live as

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a human in the earth. Compassion lifted man out of his fallen earthly state to partake of the divine nature and seat him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Here is how this difference applies to prophecy. In the past, I often let my mercy mix with my prophetic words. I would let what I personally felt for the person influence what I spoke over them prophetically. Because God speaks to my heart and the emotions were flowing from my heart, I confused my emotions as the voice of God. I unknowingly spoke my heart over them as if it was a word from the LORD.

How do you prevent your emotions influencing the prophetic word? This is where protocol is helpful. We must be willing to recuse ourselves when asked to prophesy in a place where we have pre-conceived ideas or a previous heart connection with the receiver.

RECUSE YOURSELF

Recuse is a judicial term for when a judge, prosecutor, or juror is deemed unqualified to perform legal duties because of a potential conflict of interest or a lack of impartiality. I think this term can serve as a great protocol tool for the prophetic.

Friends or people in my congregation often ask me for a prophetic word when they are thinking about moving or changing jobs. Here is my problem: If the change in direction will take them away from our community,

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then I don't in my heart want them to move. I truly desire what is best for that person, but I am conflicted through my own self-interest. Can I hear through my own opinion? Of course, I can, but it is tricky dividing between your soul and spirit. It's better to recuse myself.

Chances are that if I know this person well, I already have a personal opinion on the situation they are inquiring about. In these cases, I might be tempted to prophesy something that is colored with my own opinions or self-interest. I can't give purely impartial input. God's perceptions often come to the heart, but the heart is also the realm of my soul. It's easy to think that an impression in my heart is the voice of God since that is a familiar meeting place for us.

We train our team members to expect that their impressions are most likely from God because we have surrendered our lives to Him. Yet, love's protocol trumps our principle.

I believe in extracting myself from these types of prophetic requests. If someone asks me for a prophetic word where I have a vested interest in the outcome, then it is my policy to reply, "I think I am too close to the situation to be objective. I would be happy to give you my counsel and my prayers, but I don't think I can give you a clean prophetic word on this issue." I don't leave them without prophetic input. I try to find someone

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who doesn't know them as well to give them a more directional word.

I have personally witnessed meetings where people have prophesied from the pulpit that a certain person in the congregation was to leave what they were doing and to come be part of their business or ministry. That's not right. The speaker has a personal interest in the outcome, and they are using their position and authority from the pulpit to influence the course of another person's life. It is a violation of love's protocol. The speaker should have gone to the senior leader first and shared what they were sensing. Then the speaker should talk to the person individually and not in front of a whole crowd.

The same protocol is true in business or any line of employment. You don't use the prophetic to draw someone away to your business out of self-interest. That is manipulation. Using the spiritual realm to control people for your personal benefit can be a form of witchcraft.

This is where people have gone wrong in the past with directive prophetic words. I shared in my book *Prophetic Company* about my mother's friend who received a prophecy about whom she should marry. Wanting to please God, she married this man whom she did not love or choose. The marriage failed, and she lived the rest of her life alone. If someone tells you in a prophetic

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word that you are supposed to marry them, run for your life because prophecy is not self-seeking.

A GOOD INTENTION IS NOT PROPHETIC

Sometimes we can violate this protocol through a good intention. My heart beats for people who long to be married or long to have a baby. I love them so much and want them to have the desires of their hearts. In my earlier days, I would sometimes give a prophetic encouragement along the lines of, "I feel like your mate is coming." Those words never turned out well for either of us. For me, they were embarrassingly unfulfilled; for the receiver, it was much worse. The receiver had to wrestle with hope deferred, their confidence in the prophetic, and sometimes their trust in God Himself. That's why we must be so careful when self-interest or preconceived ideas are involved.

It was too difficult to separate what I desired for them and what God was actually saying. My want is a wish. My opinions are better expressed as a prayer or a blessing. My desire should not shape my prophetic words because prophecy is not self-seeking. Love's protocol requires me to refrain from giving directional words when I have a personal connection to the outcome.

PROPHETIC PROJECTION

Another way that self can enter a prophetic word is

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when we project what we are going through onto someone else. In my book *Prophetic Company*, I share the story about a lovely team member who prophesied over my wife and me that we would be given a house debt-free. The woman is a powerful lady of prayer and worship who possesses a true prophetic gift. The idea of a debt-free house resonated with the heart of my wife and me since that has been a dream of ours for many years.

A few months went by, and I was doing a little quality control inspection—just listening in on our team members as they ministered prophetically to people. I overheard the same lady giving a similar word to someone else. “That’s interesting,” I thought to myself. But prophetic words are not exclusive. I’ve seen people grab ahold of the grace that was on someone else’s word and apply it to their own lives in much the way that we would do with Scriptures that were not exclusively written to us or our situation. I don’t believe that giving two people a similar word is an abuse of prophecy. Perhaps the same grace was resting on these folks, so I dismissed it and moved on.

Later, I heard the lovely lady giving the same type of word to a different person. “Ok,” I reasoned, “We can’t all be getting free houses. God loves realtors too. He believes in selling houses not just giving them away.” I pulled the woman aside later and talked about my observation of “free house” words. In conversation, I

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discovered that her husband of thirty-some years had left her, and she was in a difficult position with her finances and her home. She was longing for a debt-free house and kept seeing the possibility on other people from the place of her own need and longing. That's not prophecy; that's projection.

Projection is the forecast of a future situation based upon knowledge of a present one. Prophetic projection in a negative sense is when we overlay our own circumstances, good or bad, over someone else's life or situation.

Kris Vallotton compares it to seeing the world and others through scratches or obstructions on the lens of your glasses. Your personal situations, experiences, and ideas affect how you see. None of us are immune to that, but we can be aware when we are going through something and be careful not to project our stuff onto someone else even if it is well-intentioned.

PROPHECY COMES FROM GOD'S LOVE

It's easy to think a word that comes from my love for the person must be a prophetic word delivered in love. As in the case above, couldn't that be considered doing unto others as you would have them do unto you?¹⁸ That's the law of love, and we are to prophesy from love, right? But prophecy must come from God's love for that

¹⁸ Luke 6:31.

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person not just mine. I must be mature enough in the prophetic to know the difference, or I will hurt people with my wishes shaped as prophecies. Prophecies that are not fulfilled shatter hopes and damage faith. We cause people to despise and disbelieve prophetic words when we prophesy from the desires of our own soul even if the words are well-intentioned.

Practice maturity and true love in this matter; don't speak into issues where you have a strong self-interest or pre-conceived idea. Recuse yourself from prophetic ministry when you have self-interest or when the situation might mirror too closely to your own. At the very least, give a strong disclaimer admitting how your word might be colored by your own desire for them and request that the receiver judge more carefully. Healthy prophetic ministry avoids any area that is self-seeking because prophecy does not seek its own.

Prophetic Protocol #6

The focus of the prophetic is God's great love for the person we are ministering to. We recuse ourselves from situations where we have a strong soul connection or a vested interest in the outcome. We don't prophesy when our words are contaminated with self-interest. Prophecy is not self-seeking.

7

PROPHECY IS NOT EASILY ANGERED

Many prophetic people are tempted to classify their anger as “holy.” While they are burning with this “holy anger,” they prophesy destruction and disaster over cities, regions, and nations. They feel justified in doing so because of their grief over a certain sin or act of wickedness. I’m not saying you shouldn’t be angry or grieved when people are hurting, mistreating, and abusing others. When we hear of cities that harbor sex trafficking, are riddled with racial hate crimes, or whose leaders practice genocide, it should grieve our hearts. I am also not saying you can’t prophesy over that city; I’m only saying that we should not prophesy from a place of anger.

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My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.

James 1:19-20

In the last chapter, we learned to recuse ourselves when we were too emotionally attached to the outcome. In the same way, it is not a good idea to prophesy when you are angry. The above Scripture applies to everyone. Listen to the LORD first. Don't speak angrily from a human reaction and think it is prophetic. We must remember that there is nothing righteous or desirable in human anger.

SONS OF THUNDER

Prophetic people often respond to hurt or offense like the Sons of Thunder did. I'm referring, of course, to the biblical account where Jesus entered a village in Samaria, and the people there would not receive Him. James and John, the Sons of Thunder, were offended on Jesus' behalf. They asked Jesus, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them just as Elijah did?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of."¹⁹ This is what I see in so many prophets of judgment today. They get provoked or

¹⁹ Luke 9:53-55.

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offended on Jesus' behalf, and it makes them angry. From that place of anger, their first response is retaliation through a prophetic declaration of destruction. They want to call down fire like Elijah did.

The temptation is to justify prophetic anger through identification with an Old Testament prophet. Prophets and prophetic people do the same thing by identifying with the "woes" and "warnings" Jesus spoke against those who knowingly rejected the New Covenant. But notice Jesus' answer to the zeal of these Sons of Thunder: "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of."

"You don't know..." When we prophesy from a place of anger, irritation, or provocation, we don't know how much is coming from ourselves and how much is God. "Human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires."²⁰ The ultimate protocol for the prophetic is love, and love is not easily angered.

KNOW YOUR SOUL CONDITION

Prophesying from a healthy soul reminds me of a core life principle for people seeking direction. The principle is to know your soul condition. As much as possible, a person should try not to make a major life decision when sick, sleep deprived, or hurting. It's hard to make good decisions when your body, mind, or soul are in a

²⁰ James 1:20.

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bad place. Sometimes we must make life decisions while in this place because the situation demands an immediate answer, but wisdom waits if it is at all possible.

The same principle is true of prophetic words. Know the condition of your soul when prophesying. Don't sanctify your anger. If you were irritated by something your kids said or did before you left for work, then don't prophesy over someone else's kids. Your anger may transfer. Are you having a problem with your boss at work, then don't prophesy about someone else's work situation until yours has a resolution. You are much more likely to project your feelings or situation upon another person when your soul is provoked. It can feel like an empathy connection, but it is usually an emotional projection. Don't mix human anger and frustration with the spirit of prophecy.

SLOW TO ANGER

I'm not saying that prophetic ministers have to be in a perfect place to prophesy. You should not need to question or recuse yourself every time you have a bad day. Everyone can press through their own stuff and be a blessing to others; but if you are harboring rejection, hurt, irritation, or provocation in your heart, then you should be much more careful with your prophetic content and demeanor.

Prophecy is not easily angered. God our Father is slow

Prophecy Is Not Easily Angered

to anger. At least nine passages in the Old Testament describe his nature as “slow to anger and abounding in love.” Do you see the connection between slow to anger and abounding in love?

When reading the woes and warnings of the New Testament in accounts like Matthew chapter twenty-three, it may appear that Jesus was more quick-tempered than slow to anger. It looks like Jesus lost his temper, so one might reason, “Why can’t we?” If Jesus expressed holy anger in prophetic declarations, how can we say that we should not do the same? Of course, this is a short-sighted view of what Jesus was saying. Jesus had been dealing with generational unbelief and stubbornness for hundreds of years. Yes, hundreds. Look with me at this generational connection found in the Book of Luke.

Jesus replied, “And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them. Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets and it was your ancestors who killed them. So you testify that you approve of what your ancestors did, they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs... Therefore, this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has

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been shed since the beginning of the world."

Luke 11:46-50

This is certainly harsh preaching, and some people view it as prophecy. Either way, it must, at the very least, be taken in its greater generational context. God had been dealing with stubbornness and unbelief from this people group for hundreds of years. In this situation, the eternal answer to everything man needed stood in front of them—Jesus Christ. The experts in the law were those who should have known better, yet they were once again rejecting God's answer. It's important to notice that these words were spoken to those spiritually and governmentally responsible for their own generation. The recipients of these woes were leaders of the people and experts in the law. We know that leaders have a higher accountability for how and where they lead people.²¹

Our purpose in looking at this passage is to show that Jesus was speaking to a rebellious root that was hundreds of years old. Waiting hundreds of years to respond is truly slow to anger. We can't claim the same right unless we take the same responsibility for being appropriately slow to anger.

As our text in James 1:20 said, "Human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires." Love is

²¹ James 3:1.

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not easily angered, so slow down, take a breath, and don't prophesy from a place of human anger, thinking that it is holy. Prophecy is not easily angered.

Prophetic Protocol #7

We prophesy carefully when we are angry, irritated, or provoked. We don't take on the offenses of others and respond with prophetic retaliation.

Prophecy is not easily angered.

8

PROPHECY KEEPS NO RECORD OF WRONGS

I love how God does not keep records of wrongs. He doesn't deal with people like dirty rotten sinners. He is totally optimistic and hopeful for the very best outcome in our lives. Let's examine a passage that reveals how God thinks.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Philippians 4:8

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It's reasonable to assume that if God asks us to think this way, then it must be how God thinks. Thinking in such a positive light reminds me of sports news replays. When you watch a sports recap on television, you don't see the whole game; you only see the very best plays. This is called a highlight reel. God sees us through a highlight reel. He focuses on the very best in us. God most relates to the part of man that reflects His own character and nature. He wants us to see ourselves and others through His highlight reel. He wants us to see life and people the way that He does. Seeing like God sees is the very definition of prophetic ministry.

I was doing public prophetic ministry in a church service one time when I invited a couple to stand and receive a prophetic word. I prophesied an encouragement over the woman and then turned to the husband. I suddenly had a perception that he had been beating his wife. It made me so mad, shocked, and offended that I couldn't tap into any good prophetic words for him. In my heart, I wanted to expose him or turn him over to authorities. It may sound like my reaction was justified, but it doesn't match the ultimate protocol.

There are several problems with how I felt. The perception of wife-beating may or may not have been actual, factual, or current. We know and prophesy from partial information, and we understand that seeing from eternity sometimes does strange things to time perceptions. Those perceptions could have been a

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heart condition towards his wife but not an actual action. This husband may have felt anger or hatred in his heart but had never acted on it. I also may have picked up something from the past. Perhaps this husband had been an abuser in a past season, or perhaps he himself was abused or had observed this behavior in a parent. It's partial information.

Still, in that moment I didn't know such things. I was so overwhelmed by the impression of evil that I could not tap into any treasure for him. It was a very awkward encounter, and I ended up just sending the husband back to his seat without any prophetic encouragement.

Romans chapter twelve is a passage that combines teachings on spiritual gifts with how we should treat one another. It tells us to not be overcome by evil.

*Do not be overcome by evil but overcome
evil with good.*

Romans 12:21

In that moment, I needed to overcome evil with good. I let the awkwardness separate me from this husband rather than draw me to him. A better love protocol would have been to approach him in love and gentleness after the service and privately ask him a few questions that could frame a better understanding around my perceptions.

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That encounter might have looked something like this:
“Excuse me, I’m sorry I didn’t have a word for you earlier.
Can I ask you a few personal questions?”

Then I might share a little from my impressions: “When I was praying over you, I picked up on something that was unclear to me. Maybe you could help me with that.”

I would once again look for his permission to continue: “I had the impression that there were some anger struggles in a marriage. Do you know who that might apply to?”

If he dismissed the comments, then I might let it go; if he opened his heart, then I would minister to him. If the man denied any such activity and the impressions kept nagging at me, I might ask the woman in private if she felt safe at home.

I’m not saying that we should overlook evil and not deal with it. I’m not saying we pour flowery expression of destiny on people who are hurting others. I am saying that even though evil can exist in people, we must not be overcome by evil. Anyone can see sin in a sinner, but it takes the Spirit of God to see the treasure in someone who is broken.

In a New Testament context, we may accurately perceive evil in a person, but we should not use it as the basis for a prophetic word. You can address your

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concerns in a private conversation and use the written word for correction and rebuke. The purpose of the prophetic is encouragement and comfort, and love's protocol does not keep a record of wrongs.

PROPHECY IN PRISON

Years ago, I was invited to minister in a maximum-security prison in the Midwestern United States. The night before the meeting, I had a prophetic dream where I was laying on a metal bed in a prison cell. A man pounded on the door to the cell trying to break in to sexually abuse me. I woke up startled. The next day, I walked into the prison and sitting right there in front of me was the man I saw in my dream the night before. I followed love's protocol and pulled him aside after the meeting.

I started a conversation with him, "I had a strange dream last night, and I think you were in it." He looked at me in surprise but also appeared intrigued, so I continued. "I dreamt that someone was trying to press into my room to abuse me, and I wonder if anything like that has ever happened to you?" He looked up into my eyes and began to tear up. "No," he replied. I pressed a little farther. "Have you ever done that to someone else?" There was a moment of silence, and then he began to cry, "That's why I'm in prison."

I continued, "That's why God showed me this dream. You have been haunted by the terrible things you did in

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the past, but you can be forgiven and clean. God loves you and wants you to accept His forgiveness." That man cried out to God for forgiveness and gave his life to Jesus. The prophetic dream was not a prophetic word; it was insight and understanding of this man's life context. The prophetic word was about love and forgiveness not a record of wrongs. Such prophetic insights should not be shared publicly but addressed privately with love and gentleness. Never make the evil you see the focus of what you say. Overcome evil with good.

PERCEPTION AND SEPARATION

God never lets what he perceives in a person keep him from loving them or seeing potential in them.

For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray him.

John 6:64 (NASB)

He knew that Judas would betray him but still entrusted him with the same power and authority as the other disciples. He offered Judas communion with his own body and blood. He gave Judas a chance. We need to view people through the heavenly highlight reel and not let what we know or perceive about their past or present keep us from prophesying heavenly identity or future destiny. Anyone can see the trash, but only God can reveal the deepest hidden treasure.

Prophecy Keeps No Record of Wrongs

When I was a child, I used the negative perceptions I saw and felt in the Spirit to separate me from people and places. I later discovered that these sensitivities were an untrained form of spiritual discernment. Discernment is a good gift from a loving Father, and it was never meant to build walls between you and others. I'm not saying that we open our doors and lives to people who are unsafe, but we shouldn't let discernment keep us from connecting with people and life in the real world. Jesus didn't.

DIAGNOSTIC DISCERNMENT

Many people suffer from their own diagnostic discernment. They let whatever evil they perceive in people and the world around them keep them isolated and uncomfortable. I wonder if some people who have been diagnosed with demophobia (fear of crowds) or agoraphobia (fear of public places) actually have a gift of discerning of spirits without the understanding of how to use it. Diagnostic discernment is like a prophetic warning system telling a person that something is not right. Untrained people often don't know how to interact with those types of perceptions and so isolate themselves from places where that kind of stimulation can occur.

Jesus certainly had diagnostic discernment. He knew what was in the heart of every man. He did limit his trust in some but not His love.

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But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people.

John 2:24

It's certainly ok to set appropriate boundaries through what we discern; that is a proper use of the gift. There are times when you know negative information about someone by knowledge, experience, or through a conversation. There are other times when this information comes by the Spirit through diagnostic discernment. Love is aware, but it doesn't keep records of wrongs. It doesn't treat people as their sins deserve.²²

Mature believers bring impressions of discernment into subjection; within appropriate guidelines and boundaries, they give every person an opportunity to be prophetically encouraged and impacted. Never let what you know or discern in someone keep you from love or prophecy.

Jesus is the great transformer and deliverer. Jesus is the great example of loving beyond His discernment. The Father has a heart of love for all broken humanity. Prophetic maturity digs deep into the love of the Father and speaks to every person the treasures of what has been or could be. Prophecy keeps no records of wrongs.

²² Psalm 103:10.

Prophetic Protocol #8

We don't let the failures of a person's past limit their prophetic potential.

We don't allow what we discern to keep us from looking for the treasure.

Prophecy does not read from the record of wrongs

9

PROPHECY DOES NOT DELIGHT IN EVIL BUT REJOICES WITH THE TRUTH

The words “delight” and “rejoices” in the Bible verse “love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth” come from the same Greek word “chairo.” “Rejoices” is translated from the Greek “sygchairo.” The “syg” prefix means “to come alongside of and congratulate.”²³ Prophecy does not rejoice in evil, unrighteousness, or judgment but comes alongside to congratulate what is true.

²³ "1 Corinthians 13:6 (NIV) ." Blue Letter Bible. Web. 6 Jul, 2019.

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Of course, no believer would willingly partner with evil or rejoice in it. However, I have seen more than one prophet rejoice as their disaster predictions came true. These messengers seemed to forget that in the predicted disaster, hundreds of people died and thousands were traumatized. How could rejoicing over a fulfilled prophecy where people suffered ever be love?

I shared in an earlier chapter about Jonah's pouting session in the Book of Jonah chapter four. The prophet was angry because the city he prophesied over was not destroyed. The amazing thing to me about this account is to realize that Jonah's prophetic words were a catalyst for one of the greatest revivals in the Bible. Families repented; government leaders repented; even the animals were fasting. An entire city was swept into repentance through the kindness and mercy of God. Unfortunately, Jonah couldn't see or enjoy the revival all around him because of his negative attitude. He wanted to see judgment come upon the city. He partnered his joy and agreement on the side of destruction rather than mercy. That's the problem with partnering with evil and judgment, it robs you of seeing and enjoying the treasures of mercy and redemption all around you. You see only the evil in the world and not the power of positive change.

I knew a woman who prayed for her unsaved husband for more than thirty years. When he finally gave his life to the LORD, she divorced him. She couldn't find a place

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to partner with his breakthrough. Her agreement and identity had become wrapped up in praying the problem, so she couldn't enjoy seeing the answer to her own prayer. That's so sad.

FORESEEING A DISASTER

I have wondered whether prophets of destruction have through their prophetic declarations been the cause of the natural disasters they thought they were simply announcing. The Scripture tells us that the power of life and death are in the tongue.²⁴ Is it possible these prophets of destruction added the power of their earthly agreement to a negative force and gave it permission to come? In my opinion, that may qualify as a form of rejoicing in evil.

There is a huge difference between announcing a natural disaster and welcoming it. If you believe people and cities are always evil and deserve destruction, then it's easy to rejoice in their demise. When a disaster happens, it could be reasoned that God got His way or it was an act of God. But this is not the way of interacting with natural disasters revealed in the New Covenant. Consider the example of Agabus, the prophet who predicted a natural disaster in the Book of Acts.

One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a

²⁴ Proverbs 18:21

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severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.)

Acts 11:28

Agabus announced a coming famine but did not connect it to any sin or destruction. He wasn't announcing an act of God but rather revealing a groaning of creation. If this had occurred in the Old Testament, the prophet surely would have warned everyone to leave the area because of the coming judgment of God. The opposite is true here. The leaders of the New Testament church mobilized offerings to help with relief efforts. We see the church running into the disaster zone rather than fleeing away. Agabus and the leadership are not rejoicing in an evil event; they are partnering, agreeing, and congratulating the mobilizing of true Christianity to alleviate potential suffering.

AGREEMENT HAS POWER

Your agreement has power. What you rejoice in has power. What you assign your agreement and joy to will affect the weight of the reality you partner with in prophetic declarations. I think man has more dominion in the earth and the atmosphere than he realizes. God extended this authority in the first chapter of Genesis.

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and

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subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 1:28

Mankind gave that dominion over to the devil, but it has been restored through Christ. That is why Romans 8:19 pictures creation groaning and travailing as it waits for the sons of God to be revealed. Creation longs to be brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. What are you partnering your faith with? How are you exercising your God-given dominion and authority? In California, we often say, "We're not looking for those who can prophesy an earthquake; we are looking for those who can stop one."

STOPPING A TIDAL WAVE

I remember one year at a leader's event in Redding, California, there were prophetic painters on stage during worship. I watched one woman create a beautiful ocean scape. As the service progressed, she began to paint a huge block wall right in the middle of the ocean. I thought to myself, "Oh, too bad, she's gone and ruined that painting." Then the artist painted a huge wave slamming against the wall. Again, I wrongly judged her work, "Oh, that looks corny. If that was meant to signify break through," I reasoned, "then the wave should have crested over the wall." I truly thought that she had ruined her painting.

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That same day, my local church had a ministry team of fifty people working in the Fiji Islands. During that same service, we received word from our team that a huge tidal wave was heading for the Fiji Islands. I ran to the platform and shared the prayer request with Pastor Bill Johnson. He asked the crowd of nearly a thousand leaders to pray, and a great intercessory cry went up from the crowd. Pastor Bill paced back and forth across the stage praying and crying out to God. Suddenly, Pastor Bill turned to the woman's painting. He pointed to the giant wave hitting a stone wall in the middle of the ocean and announced, "This is God's answer!" Twenty minutes later we heard a news report that the wave had just died in the middle of the ocean as if it had hit a giant wall. We rejoiced in the miracle. A prophetic painting spoke for God's will to stop a tidal wave.

Our goal in New Testament prophetic ministry is to partner with the ultimate protocol of love. We choose to agree with the highest good for every individual in each situation. Love is centered in choosing the highest good. If you perceive a coming disaster then ask the LORD, "What can be done? Can we stop this? Can we change this? If not, what should we do for the people it impacts?" Dialogue with the Holy Spirit. Ask questions. Seek counsel that aligns with the ultimate protocol of love and choosing the highest good.

When it comes to prophesying future events, what are you adding your weight of agreement to? What outcomes do you most celebrate and congratulate?

Prophecy Does Not Delight In Evil

Prophecy does not rejoice in evil but adds its weight of agreement to good.

Prophetic Protocol #9

We always partner in love with the highest good concerning the individuals we prophesy to. If we foresee a potential disaster or hardship, we seek the most redemptive solution possible in that scenario. Prophecy does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth

10

PROPHECY ALWAYS PROTECTS

The Greek word translated “protects” is “stego.” It literally means “to cover over with silence, to keep a secret, to conceal; by covering to keep off something which threatens.”²⁵ Confidentiality is a core value in any ministry dealing with the vulnerability, hurts, or brokenness of people. This discretion should certainly be true of prophetic ministry. There is nothing quite so vulnerable as prophetically seeing into a person’s past, present, and future.

Prophecy could be considered as God sharing His

²⁵ "G4722 - stegō - Strong's Greek Lexicon (NIV)." Blue Letter Bible. Web. 6 Jul, 2019.

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secrets with man. Three times in the Book of Daniel, God is referred to as “the revealer of secrets.”²⁶ Prophecy is God sharing secrets with His friends.

Remember how God told Abraham his plans for Sodom and Gomorrah before these events happened?

Then the LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him.”

Genesis 18:17-18

God was questioning whether to share His secrets with Abraham or not. God deemed his servant trustworthy and went on to tell Abraham of the impending destruction of these cities. What was Abraham’s response? He stepped in to protect the city. He covered their sin with God’s compassion and began to bargain with God for a different outcome. Love always protects.

Then Abraham approached him and said, “Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of fifty righteous people?”

Genesis 18:23

²⁶ Daniel 2:28, 29, 47.

Prophecy Always Protects

Is it possible that God was sharing the secrets of the city's future not to expose the sin of the city but to reveal the heart of a leader? Why was God sharing His secrets with Abraham? Abraham could offer a covering or protection because of his God-given call to be a blessing to all nations on the earth.²⁷ Abraham could be trusted with secrets because he understood the heart of God. What does the ultimate protocol do with secrets? It protects, conceals, and covers over with silence.

Look what the Book of Proverbs says about people who share secrets.

*A talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is
of a faithful spirit conceals a matter.*

Proverbs 11:13

A faithful, trustworthy spirit conceals and protects. Part of the prophetic call is to be a secret keeper. There are times in all spheres of influence when you must cover and protect what you see, hear, feel, or perceive. Out of love, friendship, and honor, we conceal information for the greater good.

INFLUENCING INFLUENCERS

Much of our prophetic training in Northern California is focused on preparing our students to influence influencers. To be entrusted with the secrets of heaven

²⁷ Genesis 17.

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and earth, you must be able to hold your tongue. You must be able to cover and protect. Some of my very best testimonies I never share because of confidentiality. I have chosen to protect the identity and privacy of an influential leader. It's very tempting when you feel insecure or inadequate to blurt out one of these testimonies, but the ultimate protocol directs me to always protect.

LOOSE LIPS SINK SHIPS

"Loose lips sink ships" is an American idiom meaning "beware of unguarded talk." The phrase was created by the War Advertising Council and used on posters by the United States Office of War during World War II. I learned this lesson on unguarded talk the hard way.

Many years ago, an amazing missionary privately shared one of the greatest resurrection stories I have ever heard. I was so excited about the power of this testimony that I repeated the story at a pastor's gathering. The crowd was equally blessed by the testimony. What I did not know is that my account of this event was being filmed for international broadcast. In my attempt to give honor to the missionary and to be accurate in the details, I mentioned his name and country during my recounting of the testimony.

That resurrection testimony video went viral and was seen by hundreds of thousands of people, including the non-Christian government of the missionary's host

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nation. As a result of my sharing his name and activity publicly, the missionary was thrown out of his nation and not able to serve there for many years. I carry that responsibility to this day. In my ignorant zeal, I failed to protect that secret, and I deeply regret it.

A few years later, a film crew was doing a documentary and book about resurrection. They pleaded with me multiple times to share this and other testimonies on resurrections I have experienced. Though I am a huge champion for resurrection ministry and a lover of documentaries, I just couldn't do it. Even with a vow to keep names and places out of the testimonies, I couldn't risk it. It wasn't my story to tell. I had to protect this precious leader in love.

BANK ACCOUNT NUMBERS

As I mentioned earlier, I have a friend with an amazing word of knowledge gift. He often shares birth dates, addresses, and even personal identification numbers. I love the word of knowledge gift, and one purpose of receiving this kind of knowledge is for people to feel known and seen by God. Personal information shared in a public setting can be very affirming, but it can also cause problems.

One day, my friend unknowingly shared the bank account number of a very rich man in a public meeting. I know you might ask, "Why would God do that?" Perhaps God was secretly speaking to the things that

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were holding this rich man back from a deeper love relationship like the rich young ruler in the Book of Mark.

Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

Mark 10:21

In this passage, Jesus revealed what was holding this man back from a more abundant life. Through a word of knowledge, my friend may have been helping this rich man to see that God knew the center of his affection. Unfortunately, the man in my story was terribly offended and withdrew his financial support from a major ministry because of it. This caused a conflict between the ministry and my friend and some questioning and criticism on the value of public words of knowledge.

None of this conflict was necessary. No one but the man involved knew that the number shared in the word of knowledge was his bank account number. I believe his concern was largely unfounded, but I also wonder whether my friend should have shared those numbers.

We often encourage our students in prophetic training to ask deeper questions of the Holy Spirit. We never

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encourage a person to share everything they receive. Some information you receive from the Holy Spirit is personal, and those perceptions are for the purpose of context not content. God shares His secrets with trustworthy and faithful servants. People share secrets with prophetic consultants out of trust and confidentiality.

It's possible for us to make honest mistakes with information we didn't realize was confidential, but our goal should be to follow the ultimate protocol that prophecy always protects. If you have a heart to influence influencers, then you must be able to protect confidential information.

PROTECTING IDENTITY

We've talked so far about protecting confidential information, but there is another way that prophecy always protects. Prophecy protects a person's truest identity by reminding people of how heaven sees them. Consider Mary the mother of Jesus who treasured the prophetic words spoken over her son.²⁸ The word "treasured" in the Greek language means "to keep, to preserve a thing from perishing or being lost." Mary protected the words of Jesus' identity and destiny from being lost. Later she was catalytic in the launching of Jesus' miracle ministry as seen at the wedding in Cana

²⁸ Luke 2:19, 51.

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where Jesus turned the water into wine.²⁹ Prophetic communities help protect the heavenly identity and destiny of one another by reminding us of who we are as new creations in Christ Jesus.

Knowing prophetically who we are in Christ Jesus allows us to regard one another from a heavenly view rather than an earthly view.

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here!

2 Corinthians 5:15-16

The disciples once knew Jesus only as a carpenter, a teacher, a prophet, and as Joseph and Mary's son. Through revelation, they later protected and proclaimed His truest identity as the Christ, the Son of the Living God. That's what prophecy does. It peeks behind the curtains of heaven to reveal the truest you. It shows what you look like seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.³⁰

Once that heavenly identity has been made known, we regard each other in a different way. We don't relate to

²⁹ John 2.

³⁰ Ephesians 2:6.

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each other on the basis of who we have been or how we have performed. We relate to one another on who we have become through the redemptive work of Christ. We treasure that revelation in our hearts and protect it. We help one another to live in the fullest expression of the new birth. Prophecy always protects.

Prophetic Protocol #10

We never share confidential information in any public setting. We realize that some prophetic information serves for the purpose of context, rather than content. Our goal is to know one another after the Spirit and protect people in love because prophecy always protects.

11

PROPHECY ALWAYS TRUSTS

One of the phrases I have tried to eliminate from my vocabulary is “I can’t believe it.” I don’t know that a believer should ever say such words. If I am a believer, then I should be able to believe anything that aligns with God’s word or His nature. The heart of the prophetic is to trust and believe. We believe we can hear from God. Prophetic people believe God’s words will come to pass. We believe God has good things to say about every person because He is a good God. The prophetic is based upon a belief system and a trust relationship. Prophecy always trusts and believes.

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WHO WILL YOU TRUST?

Decades ago, I served as a youth pastor and worship leader in a church rich with supernatural culture. One night before stepping into the pulpit to speak, I asked the Father for some words of knowledge for healing. God shared several words with me. I called out the first two physical conditions, and some strong healing took place. By the time I got to the third word of knowledge, I was quite confident. I called out, "Someone has an ear infection on the left side, and it has been bothering them for quite some time." No one answered, so I tried again. No response. I was so convinced of the word that I kept asking over and over for what became an uncomfortable length of time. Each time I asked, I was met with silence, and the faith and patience in the room diminished. I know now that I should have stopped and moved on, but I didn't know to do that back then. By the time I got to the sermon, I preached without unction because I was embarrassed and confused. It felt like faith had left the room.

One night after a church service a few weeks later, I went to a restaurant with some friends and family. While we waited for a table, an elderly woman came up to me and said, "Brother Dan, do you remember preaching a few weeks ago?" Immediately, I thought of my embarrassing press for the ear infection.

"Yes," I responded somewhat sorely but intrigued why she would bring it up.

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"Well," she continued, "I had an ear infection in my left ear that had been bothering me quite some time. I just wondered if that miracle was for someone else, so I didn't respond." I stood there a bit shocked as to why she hadn't responded earlier. "It's gotten worse every day since that service," she continued. "Would you pray for me?"

I let go of my hurt and confusion and prayed for that woman in the restaurant. God healed her. As I was walking back to my seat, I believe I heard the LORD say, "Dano, who are you going to trust? Man or Me?" It was a strong call to trust the voice of Holy Spirit.

Though it turns out I didn't miss it that particular night as it first appeared, we can all miss it sometimes. I have missed words of knowledge many times, but I don't let it shake me because I understand that we know in part and prophesy in part.

A NEAR MISS

One time I was ministering to a line of supernatural school students who were graduating. I finished sharing a prophetic encouragement with a young lady, and she had a stunned look on her face—not the good kind. I asked, "Did any of that resonate with you."

She spoke honestly, "Not really."

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Then the young lady standing next to her in line said, "That was my word. I grabbed every word, knowing it was for me." I had the right word but the wrong person. We laughed about it together. After that, I was able to refocus and give the girl in front of me a more accurate word of encouragement. We are all learning and growing, but prophecy works at the level or according to the proportion of our faith.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith.

Romans 12:6 (NKJV)

RESISTANCE TRAINING

If you let go of your faith, then you have let go of your ability to prophesy. In our prophetic activation school, we call this principle of pressing through after you miss it "resistance training." Resistance training in the natural realm is a form of exercise that improves muscular strength and endurance by moving your limbs against resistance provided by your body weight, weighted bars, or dumbbells. In prophetic training, resistance training is what you do with your gifts and your faith when you experience a perceived miss or failure. What happens when you get it wrong? What do you do when you share a word with someone that does not resonate with them at all?

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When you fail, do you make a judgment about yourself? "I knew I wasn't any good at this." "This is not my gift." "I don't want to try that again." These types of statements can close the gateway of your faith. Scripture tells us that God's gifts and callings are irrevocable.³¹ The gifts never leave you, but your gifts must pass through the gateway of your faith. Like Romans 12:6 specifies, spiritual gifts work according to the proportion of your trust. If you lose faith in your ability to hear God because you misunderstood what He was saying or miscalculated what you should do with it, then your gift of prophecy can seem to shut down. The gift hasn't left; it is your trust that is gone. The ultimate protocol says that prophecy must always trust.

SOUL OR SPIRIT

In 1904, Europe experienced the Welsh Revival. One of the leaders was a twenty-six-year-old prayer warrior named Evan Roberts. The nightly meetings of this revival shifted the culture of the nation to the extent that jails, prisons, and courts shut down because there were no cases to take to trial. Crime stopped. The meetings were non-scripted and characterized by a deep trust in the moving of the Holy Spirit. Anyone who was led by the Spirit could rise and speak.

After two years of the revival, Evan had a nervous breakdown. Many revival historians attribute it to

³¹ Romans 11:29.

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exhaustion and the failure to keep his body as healthy as his spirit. The young revivalist found respite in the care of an elderly saint and her husband. Evan's hostess reportedly told him that he had not been hearing from God but that it was his own soul speaking to him. She had written a book on the subject, *Soul and the Spirit*, that had circulated widely during the revival. Through the influence of this teaching and the effects of exhaustion, Evan lost confidence in his ability to hear the voice of God.

From then on, Evan always questioned whether he was hearing the true voice of God or not. Since he couldn't be sure, he didn't step out to minister, and the revival came to an end. Evan lived the next fifty years in solitude. The few times that he gained the confidence to step out and share, there were always fresh breaths of revival, but they were few and far between. This is a sad story. I've written in earlier chapters about how a person can mistake the impressions of their own soul as a voice of the Holy Spirit. However, I don't believe this is something we should constantly be afraid of. Fear is never a good operating system for a believer.

When we gave our lives to God, He took them. He took our lives and possessed us. God is really good at everything He does. He is good at possessing you. He gave you a new heart and changed your nature with the new birth. He not only forgave your sins, but He made you a new creation. My trust in my ability to prophesy

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does not come from my own spirituality or judgment; it comes from total confidence that it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me.³² It is the riches of God's grace and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that qualifies me to prophesy. God poured out His Spirit on all flesh so that every son and daughter could prophesy.³³ Truths like these should form the basis of a strong trust relationship in recognizing and responding to the voice of God.

WHAT TO DO WITH MISTAKES

If you make a mistake in prophecy, apologize and invite the receiver to disregard it. The receiver possesses the power and responsibility to judge and test prophecy. If there is a mess to clean-up like a need to inform others that you were wrong, then do it. Apologize if you need to for any harm or confusion. Do whatever you can to make it right.

In the New Covenant, a wrong prophetic word does not make you a false prophet. False prophets are characterized by evil or selfish motives. False prophets don't have a heart to connect with God and bless His people. Mistakes show that you are trying and taking steps of faith.

At the writing of this book, I have three grandchildren

³² Galatians 2:20.

³³ Acts 2:17.

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and more on the way. When my grandchildren make any random sound, it interprets as “Papa” to me. Papa is what my grandchildren call me. I ask the people around me, “Did you hear that? My grandchild said ‘Papa.’” Everyone else laughs or discounts the sounds of the young child, but to me it sounds like “Papa.” The same is true when they are learning to walk. If they take even one step in my direction, then I am ecstatic with joy. They are walking to me! It doesn’t matter that they stumbled or mumbled, it only matters to me that they are trying to walk and communicate.

The same is true of your heavenly Father. He’s not looking for perfection, He is looking for progress.³⁴ He is looking for faith. He is looking for steps of obedience, and He is celebrating anything that looks like the ultimate protocol of trust.

And without faith it is impossible to please God...

Hebrews 11:6

Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.

John 14:23

³⁴1 Timothy 4:15.

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God cherishes every word and every step that is in the direction of faith and obedience. Prophecy always trusts.

SPIRITUAL MAN OR SPIRT MAN

Many years ago, I stumbled onto an important distinction that helped me trust in my ability to hear the voice of the LORD. Up until that time, I believed that I was a material physical being that was having some spiritual experiences. This was my default belief. I am a mere human being who is having encounters with a spiritual being. However, the biblical truth is we are sons and daughters of God. The greater reality is the spirit man that will live forever. It is more accurate to say that I am a spirit man that is living a physical experience. This change in core belief is essential to our ultimate protocol that prophesy always trust. How do you see yourself in Christ?

If I am only a physical being that is having a few spiritual experiences, then my default belief when I have a spiritual impression will be that it might be God, but it is probably just me. This belief causes an internal argument every time you have a spiritual impression. Like the confusion of Evan Roberts, you find yourself always wrestling to know whether you are truly hearing from God or not.

When I change my default to the greater biblical reality that I am a spirit being living a physical experience, then

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I believe it could be me, but it is probably God. I leave room for the human element, but I expect God to speak and to move because of His promises and purposes in Christ. Why do I believe this? Because God saved me. God changed me. God lives in me. God promised that His sheep could hear His voice.³⁵ So, I believe any impression I receive that lines up with the Word of God and the character and nature of God is probably God moving or speaking in me.

This belief system gives me the trust I need to step out more often in the gift of prophecy. Prophecy always trusts. Trust that God is speaking and moving to bless and build everyone around you. Through His Son and by His Spirit, He has invited you into the family business of blessing and redeeming the world. He has entrusted you with His words, His heart, and His thoughts. Will you trust Him? The ultimate prophetic protocol tells us that prophecy always trusts.

³⁵ John 10:27.

Prophetic Protocol #11

We trust that we can hear the voice of God because of what God has done in us and for us through Christ. We apologize or clean up our messes if we miss it, but we don't stop pressing forward because prophecy always trusts.

12

PROPHECY ALWAYS HOPES

Prophecy produces hope. Hope is the joyful expectation of good. When we give a person a prophetic word that is based on the New Covenant values of blessing, encouraging, and comforting, it creates within that person a joyful expectation of good things to come.

When God promised Abraham that he and his wife would have a child even though they were decades past the child-bearing age, Abraham chose faith and hope.

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of

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many nations, just as it has been said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

Romans 4:18

Abraham responded to God's prophetic word with supernatural hope. This ability to believe from a place of hope qualified Abraham to be a friend of God. Like Abraham, our prophetic words come from hope and are meant to produce even a greater hope within us.

STRENGTH, COURAGE AND COMFORT

There is an amazing correlation between champions in the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, every time a person was about to take hold of an earth-shaking destiny God said three things: "Be strong and courageous...for the LORD your God is with you."³⁶ These three virtues were God's admonitions to persons like Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, and the Children of Israel. These qualities of strength, courage, and comfort formed a basis for godly hope and confidence to launch out and do the amazing things that God had prepared them to do.

In the New Testament, strength, courage, and comfort are imparted through prophetic words.

But the one who prophesies speaks to

³⁶ Deuteronomy 31, Joshua 1, 1 Chronicles 21, 28, 2 Chronicles 32.

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*people for their strengthening,
encouraging and comfort.*

1 Corinthians 14:3

The very things needed to take ahold of an earth-shaking destiny are now embedded in the prophetic grace. This is important because all believers are called to be world changers.

The Christian life is not meant to be hard; it's meant to be impossible.³⁷ You can't do it without God. You must be born again.³⁸ Only God can change you from conformer to transformer.³⁹ We are not called to live ordinary explainable lives; we are called to do the impossible. Jesus said that we would do the same works that He did and even greater works.⁴⁰

A protocol of blessing is far from a bless-me club; it is the incubator for world changers and culture creators. Prophecy is meant to give people the hope they need to be an agent of change in the world around them.

*You are the salt of the earth... You are the
light of the world. A town built on a hill
cannot be hidden.*

Matthew 5:13-14

³⁷ Matthew 19:26.

³⁸ John 3:3.

³⁹ Romans 12:2.

⁴⁰ John 14:12.

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You were not born to conform but to transform. You were created to make a difference, and prophecy releases that hope and direction. Faith believes that God can do anything, but hope holds that He will do it in and through you. Hope is a personal expectation.

HOPE IN YOUR WORD

Prophetic words are meant to create hope. King David was not only a great physical warrior, he also knew how to war in the Spirit. David fought in the Spirit by putting his hope in God's words to him. Five times in Psalm 119, David declared, "I have put my hope in your word." When God makes you a promise, you can war with it.

It seems like children sometimes understand this principle better than adults. When you tell a child that you will take them for ice cream later, they will put their hope in your word. They not only believe, they fully expect a good outcome for themselves and soon. They will constantly remind you of your words to them. They will not let you rest until that word is fulfilled. We can learn a great lesson of hope from how children respond to the power of promise.

Jesus also put His hope in His Father's words. When Jesus was baptized by John in the river Jordan, the heavens opened, and the Spirit descended upon Him like a dove. A voice spoke from heaven saying, "This is

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my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.”⁴¹ Right after that, Jesus was led into the desert where He fasted forty days and nights. At the end of the fast, the tempter came to Him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” Let’s look at Jesus’ answer.

Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

Matthew 4:4

In this passage, Jesus honored both the written and the spoken word. He first said, “It is written,” then He shared the principle of living according to what God speaks. Jesus was not only referencing the passage in Deuteronomy 8:3, He was also speaking of what had just happened at the river Jordan. The Father spoke directly to Jesus and John the Baptist, “This is my Son.” Jesus fed himself with that spoken truth. He put His hope in what God has said.

When prophecy has been judged, it becomes daily bread that you can live from. Like David and Jesus, you feed yourself hope from the word that comes from the mouth of God. Jesus said, “The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life.”⁴²

⁴¹ Matthew 3:16-17.

⁴² John 6:68.

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THE MOTHER TONGUE OF HOLY SPIRIT

How does this relate to protocol? First, it establishes the importance of speaking what is encouraging. Encouragement is the mother-tongue of the Holy Spirit. How will people hope in words that are not laced with hope? A prophetic word should make a person hopeful for a more desirable future. It should create an expectation of good. Prophecy is an expression of God's goodness. It is a representation of the verse we often quote from Jeremiah.

*"For I know the plans I have for you,"
declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you
and not to harm you, plans to give you
hope and a future."*

Jeremiah 29:11

Does God ever share through prophecy a warning or a caution? Of course, but our New Covenant calling is to be carriers of Good News. Our mission is hope. God is both the source and dispenser of hope.

*I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill
you completely with joy and peace
because you trust in him. Then you will
overflow with confident hope through
the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Romans 15:13 (NLT)

Prophecy Always Hopes

If faith, hope, and love are the three most enduring virtues, then our prophetic community must build on this unmovable foundation. This trinity of virtues is as inseparable as the godhead. In the same way that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are always recognizing and responding to one another, love always hopes and always trusts. Faith and hope are built into the very nature of the virtue of love. A prophetic community must build from the source and fountain of hope. Prophecy always hopes and produces hope in and for others.

Prophetic Protocol #12

We prophesy from the fountain and source of hope. Our prophetic words should create and release a joyful expectation to see God's goodness in the land of the living.

Prophecy always hopes.

13

PROPHECY ALWAYS PERSEVERES

It's fascinating to me that love's protocol begins with patience and ends with perseverance. The differences between the two can seem subtle. In the Greek language, patience and perseverance are two different words. Patience in the original language carries the idea of a long sacrifice or suffering. In the prophetic context, we talked in the first chapter about patience as holding on to what you receive to fit a specific timing, protocol, or adjusting to one's capacity to receive. Perseverance on the other hand refers to staying power or endurance. It comes at the end of our study and refers to holding on to the word after it has been delivered. Perseverance

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stems from the same root word we use for abide or remain.

Simply put, patience comes first and goes out front. It speaks of holding in prophetic perceptions for their proper time and protocol that makes them useful and full of purpose. Perseverance comes after a word has been delivered and speaks of remaining in the hope and faith for prophetic fulfillment. It is warring with our prophetic words until they come to full fruition. Perseverance in prophecy reminds me of the words Paul spoke to his spiritual son, Timothy.

Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well.

1 Timothy 1:18

Prophetic perseverance is fighting well with your prophetic identity and destiny. Once you have judged a word to be from the LORD, don't give up on its fulfillment. Persevere in faith, hope, and appropriate acts of obedience that align with your words.

Perseverance is so important in prophetic community because prophecy literally means to say before. The Greek word is "prophēteia," which is "pro" (before) and "phemi" (to say, declare, or affirm).

Habakkuk was an Old Testament prophet to whom God

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taught the importance of perseverance.

For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it lingers, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.

Habakkuk 2:3

Healthy prophetic community members understand that we often perceive things before they happen with such vivid detail and intensity that they seem urgent and current. Often, what we perceive is speaking of an end rather than a current reality or process. If you don't learn to see in and out of time, you can live in a constant state of frustration caused by your prophetic perceptions because your reality seldom lines up with what you see, hear, feel or sense at the time.

PROCESS AND PROMISE

I spent over twenty years with a local leadership team who were apostolic and prophetic. Often, I would have a prophetic perception of a desirable future for our team. I would share that idea in staff meetings, and those ideas were not always met with a lot of positive feedback. I would leave those meetings frustrated that none of the other leaders seemed to be perceiving the same direction. Those are the moments we must be careful. Never allow your perceptions to isolate you or make you feel like the only one. Everyone sees a piece or a part. Isolation is a tactic of the enemy. As a predator

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seeking whom he may devour, the enemy attempts to cut you off from your herd or tribe.⁴³

In those moments of temptation to be frustrated and isolated, Scripture reminded me that I was seeing an end promise not a current process. I felt Holy Spirit encouraging me to choose to meditate on what was genuinely good about what our local church was doing right now. Focusing on the good things God was currently doing, I looked for ways that we could move toward the more desirable future that I saw.

I felt prompted to share the same idea with different words and illustrations six months later. Still, there was not a lot of positive response. Another six months went by, and I felt led to share it again using different language and applications. After two years, one of the team leads shared an idea he had for advancing our structure. You guessed it; it was exactly the idea I had been sharing for two years.

Everyone responded positively, and in that moment, I had to guard my heart. I could pout that no one received it when I shared it. I could get jealous that this leader would receive the credit, or I could rejoice that it was time for that word to be fulfilled and others were beginning to see its value. Do I care more about the credit or the outcome? Where is my commitment and

⁴³ 1 Peter 5:8.

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what is my motive? Mature prophetic communities persevere the distance between process and promise.

It's not always easy to see, hear, feel or perceive before others do. It can make you feel out of sync and out of sorts. Train your gift to see the treasures of now. Commit your heart to being involved in the service of process not just the declarations of promise. Roll up your sleeves and volunteer in something good that is currently going on in your organization. Listen well to other great ideas that are being presented and express your value for them. Celebrate the victories of the community you are involved in no matter how small. Build bridges in communication and relationships. World changer is a long distance run not a sprint. Commit to prophetic perseverance.

NOTHING WITHOUT LOVE

Prophecy without love is nothing. Don't choose God's gifts above His nature. That insults the spirit of grace. The ultimate prophetic protocol is not a set of rules to be followed; it is a revelation of God's love to be embraced. There are levels of truth. Fact is the lowest level of truth, and the person of Jesus Christ is the highest.

Facts are true; they are just a low level of truth. The fact may be that a person is sick, but Jesus says that you are healed. Both things are true, but what is the higher truth? In the same way, a prophetic word can be

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accurate, but without love it is a lower level of truth. Prophetic words without love are like facts; apart from the heart and revelation of Jesus Christ they will never be truly treasured. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in the person of Jesus Christ.⁴⁴

Living by the ultimate protocol is choosing love. It is taking the prophetic gifts that God has freely given us and soaking them in the living water of His love. Accuracy is not what makes prophecy powerful; rather, it is love. Every effort of God towards humanity stems from His great love.⁴⁵ Prophecy is designed to be an expression and extension of God's great love for mankind. Persevere in the love of God. Love remains so remain in love.⁴⁶ At the end of the day, we know we are staying within love's ultimate protocol when after receiving prophetic ministry, someone feels known and loved. Mature prophetic persons and communities choose to live by the ultimate protocol. What will you choose?

⁴⁴ Colossians 2:3.

⁴⁵ John 3:16.

⁴⁶ 1 Corinthians 13:13, John 15:9.

Prophetic Protocol #13

We don't just proclaim prophetic promise,
we persevere in prophetic process. We
find ways to serve and celebrate what is
good about now while moving towards
a more desirable future. When our reality
doesn't match our prophetic promise,
we fight for what God has said and
hold onto faith and love.
Above all, we persevere in love as the
ultimate prophetic protocol.
Prophecy always perseveres.

THE ULTIMATE PROPHETIC PROTOCOL

1. **Prophecy is patient.** We patiently wait for the right time to share a prophetic word and watch for the right way to say it. Love shares what a person can bear because prophecy is patient.
2. **Prophecy is kind.** Our prophetic words are to be soaked with kindness and compassion. Prophecy focuses only on what is helpful for building others up. We speak prophetic words in a way that benefits the listener because prophecy is kind.
3. **Prophecy does not envy and is not jealous.** We don't compete with the prophetic. We won't use a prophetic word to try to outdo our last prophetic testimony or to be better than someone else. The focus of our prophetic

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ministry is not ourselves but to honor and obey the LORD and to deliver His message in love.

4. **Prophecy is humble.** We speak prophetic words in a way that regards, honors, and leaves room for the input of others. We don't allow the fulfillment of a prophetic word to inflate our egos or attach to our identities because prophetic words are His words and our greatest identity is as His sons and daughters.
5. **Prophecy honors others.** We don't use prophecy to dishonor people. It's not honorable to publicly expose sin. We use prophecy to uncover treasures of the heart in believers and pre-Christians in order that they might better know and worship God.
6. **Prophecy is not self-seeking.** The focus of the prophetic is God's great love for the person we are ministering to. We recuse ourselves from situations where we have a strong soul connection or a vested interest in the outcome. We don't prophesy when our words are contaminated with self-interest.
7. **Prophecy is not easily angered.** We prophesy carefully when we are angry, irritated, or

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provoked. We don't take on the offenses of others and respond with prophetic retaliation.

8. **Prophecy does not keep a record of wrongs.** We don't let the failures of a person's past limit their prophetic potential. We don't allow what we discern keep us from looking for the treasure.
9. **Prophecy does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth.** Prophecy always partners in love with the highest good concerning the individuals we prophesy to. If we foresee a potential disaster or hardship, we seek the most redemptive solution possible in that scenario.
10. **Prophecy always protects.** We never share confidential information in any public setting. We realize that some prophetic information serves for the purpose of context rather than content. Our goal is to know one another after the spirit and protect people in love.
11. **Prophecy always trusts.** We trust that we can hear the voice of God because of what God has done in us and for us through Christ. We

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apologize or clean up our messes if we miss it, but we don't stop pressing forward.

12. **Prophecy always hopes.** We prophesy from the fountain and source of hope. Our prophetic words should create and release a joyful expectation to see God's goodness in the land of the living.

13. **Prophecy always perseveres.** We don't just proclaim prophetic promise we persevere in prophetic process. We find ways to serve and celebrate what is good about now while moving towards a more desirable future. When our reality doesn't match our prophetic promise, we fight for what God has said and hold on to faith and love. Above all, we persevere in love as the ultimate guide to prophetic protocol.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Other books about prophecy from Dano:

Basic Training in Prophetic Activation

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