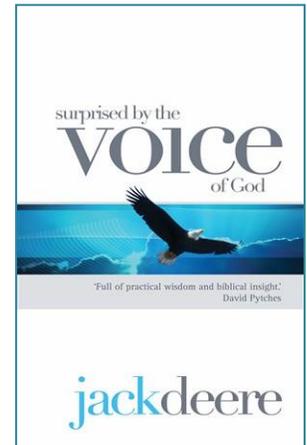


# Jack Deere: The Beginner's guide to the gift of prophecy

Vine Books, Michigan 2001

Notes by Alison Morgan August 2001

Clear and helpful, in a chatty, personal style. Guide to contemp prophetic ministry. JD has been professor, pastor, teaches in Wagner Leadership Institute and directs Covenant Ministries Int.



## 1. *Nobody ever told me*

Personal encounter with a prophet who changed his view that prophecy was confined to pages of the Bible by revealing his past and his dreams.

## 2. *Discovering your gift*

Prophet Paul Cain heard God speaking to him at 8. Another woman started by having vivid prophetic dreams. Others receive the gift by having hands laid on them (1 Tim 4.14). Others ask - pray for the gifts you want.

Prophets can: accurately predict the future; reveal to us the present priorities of God for our lives; shed light on the mysteries of our lives/make sense of our pain.

Recognising gifting - you don't have to pray to make it happen, it just does. Any gift the same; it's given.

Prophetic ministry doesn't tell people what is wrong with them, and it isn't angry; it builds people up. OT prophets were expressing God's anger towards corrupt leaders and a rebellious people; we, to christians.

Faultfinding and anger are not signs of prophetic calling but rather of unhealed pain.

God leads through our desires - Ps 37.4, delight self in me and I will give you the desires of your heart. And thru counsel of others. If you regularly have prophetic experiences, it indicates you have a prophetic gifting. Try it out in cell. 15-20 mins worship, 15 mins teaching on equipping for ministry, then prayer for guidance in ministering to one another, then prayer for individuals singled out.

## 3. *Learning how God reveals*

Listening prayer, and trying it out - as received, without interpretation. Ie ask, does the phrase xyz mean anything to you? Indicate your level of certainty - an impression, a word?

Means of revelation: Bible, angels, audible voice. When you love someone, you want to be with them, speak with them; God also.

General rule: the clearer the revelation, the more difficult it will be to fulfil it.

Internal voice. Sentence fragments.

'Consider for a moment the simple truth that God loves us. All of us believe it, but many of us get over it within a few months of our conversion'. What if we asked why, and went into his presence to find out? The more we saw, the more we would love.

Knowing. Impressions (less certain). Dreams, visions. Thru creation. Fleeces. Physical sensations.

Caution: God's love lies behind all revelation; we must become immersed in that love. The Lord is more important than the supernatural experience.

## 4. *Discerning God's voice*

Encounter with Paul Cain.

Tests of prophecy: Bible (if it doesn't match, reject it); its character (does it bring fear or hope); its fruit (will be evident in our lives even if people reject our ministry); its content (my ways are higher than your ways; hence the need for prophets).

God speaks encouraging words to his weak and immature children who may be stumbling, but who are stumbling towards him.

Paul Cain - spectacular ministry; sometimes complete failure, nothing to say at all. Because he is only a channel. Power of Christ rests on a humble heart. Humility isn't denying our gifts, but recognising our unworthiness. It is usually acquired in the desert.

### **5. Understanding God's meaning**

Revelation, interpretation, application - you can go wrong with any one of them. Need to be right at all three stages if the message is going to benefit someone. Learn to distinguish between the three.

If it's a dream, write it down, or you'll forget it. Bear in mind God won't speak to you only when you're at your desk ready; but in the traffic, the shops, anywhere.

Humility. Humble people want to obey, to be friends with God, and to pray. Why should God speak to us if he knows we have no intention of obeying him? And yet he wants friends rather than servants. Greatest hindrance to loving God is serving God. Prayer - Daniel.

Symbols - jar us awake.

Dreams - negative elements are mostly warnings, not predictions. All prophets are subject to tormenting dreams, from devil/own fears. Test dreams: is it connected to sth we were doing before we fell asleep; does it reflect sth we habitually fear/worry about (fear and worry are entry points for demonic deception); does it take away our hope, so we feel that neither prayer nor repentance will help - characteristic of accuser, not God.

Prophets do not live in a tidy world, but a chaotic and borderline one.

### **6. Avoiding prophetic craziness**

Prophetic megalomania - God may tell a prophet to do sth strange, but if he does it will be *clear*. Issue for Abraham (Isaac), Hosea (Gomer) was not discernment but obedience. God does strange things sometimes. We should respond by glorifying God, not glorifying the experience, eg shaking/falling over. Paul and the handkerchiefs - not a new method of healing but a demonstration of the superior power of Jesus over the Ephesian evil spirits and their magic.

False guilt - woman who felt she should have anointed blind person's eyes with mud, that why they not healed when she prayed for them. Be aware it is natural to think of biblical passages that correspond to our prayers for people; it is natural to search for a reason why someone wasn't healed and to blame ourselves; and if we don't have peace and conviction that God wants us to do sth, he probably doesn't, cos issue is usually not discernment but obedience; and last, we are better not to try for things beyond our level of faith. If you aren't sure whether your emotions or God are leading you, ask him; or ask the person.

Rules for prophetic success:

- emphasize the main and the plain, not the rare and the bizarre
- don't do anything strange without a clear leading from God
- don't do anything potentially embarrassing/harmful without asking person's permission
- know you are a beginner

### **7. Giving prophetic messages**

Occasion when Paul Cain spoke with Wimber and author. Leader of conference attacked him, complaining at rambling message. Paul asked to speak to him privately. He came out looking grateful and hugged Paul, and everything would be fine. Paul had seen his heart and gently led him to repentance. How you do it.

Never give prophetic word without asking and receiving Lord's permission first. If we had capacity to hear it, we also have capacity to know what to do with it.

If you get a general word, eg 'dreams', speak it as it is; don't embellish it.

Give all messages, esp negative ones, with gentleness and tact; enable them to hear it.

If you want your message to draw your hearers to God, pray for them after giving it; it may be the prayers, not the message, which the Lord uses to help them.

Withhold it unless sure this is the right time.

Every message is also a call to prayer.

OT prophets give corporate words, mostly; us individual ones. Jesus gave authority to apostles, not prophets; the authority structure of the church differs from that of the nation Israel. Prophets in the church speak to individuals for their comforting, encouraging, and strengthening (Acts 15.32 Judas and Silas, prophets, spoke encouraging and strengthening; 1 Cor 14.3 someone who prophesies speaks to other people, building them up and giving them encouragement and reassurance). Leaders of local churches have authority, not prophets. All NT authority is given to direct affairs of church, not lives of individuals; that's what cults do.

Respect pastoral authority.

### **8. Deceptions, demons and false prophets**

Is a demonic counterfeit ministry. Lots of scriptures. Devil attempts to counterfeit everything God does, even the gifts God has given to the church. Defining characteristic of false prophets is that they use their power to lead people away from God to false gods. A false prophet is not a prophet who makes a mistake in prediction.

Prophets are recognised by the fruit of their ministry, not by their power, miracles or accuracy (Mt 7.15-23). All ministers make mistakes, inc prophets.

Prophets can be carnal (character deficiencies), immature (growing), spiritual (mature), or false. Jude 4-9 describes false ministers.

Prolonged sin gives demonic entry into our lives:

- anger/unforgiveness
- sexual immorality
- hatred/violence
- envy, jealousy, selfish ambition
- occult
- idolatry/greed
- blasphemy

Cultivate relationship with Lord, not your gift.

### **9. Growing in your prophetic gift**

Humiliation part of it - sometimes you give out a word, no one responds. May be you've misheard; or just that they sat there and didn't respond!

Pray, practice, risk

Learn from failure - best way not to learn from failure is to blame someone else for it.

Remember always to offer hope, not just diagnosis.

Occupational hazard of prophets is to face rejection. But praise is a test too.