

#10 How to Minister Prophetically using Impressions

Last week we examined some Biblical examples of Jesus and Paul ministering by means of the gift of impressions. But how do we exercise this same gift? We do it in the same way that Jesus and Paul did. We are sensual beings. God created us with the gift of five physical senses and He communicates His love, His grace, and His Word to us using these senses. He also created us as cognitive and emotional beings. We have the ability to perceive things mentally and understand signs around us. We also have feelings and emotions that help us perceive things in our spirit. As indicated last week, these impressions are more difficult to explain because they are unique to the individual receiving them, and they are easily opened to misinterpretation. Because feelings and emotions are often inaccurate indicators of reality we must be careful in the application of this form of ministry. We need discernment and humility in ministering to others in prophetic impressions and not rely solely on our feelings. But this disclaimer does not negate the fact that God created our emotions and will sometimes speak to us through these feelings and minister to others through our use of them.

Ministering in the prophetic by means of impressions comes in a variety of forms. We can have perceptions physically (e.g. an unusual sensation in your body), emotional perceptions (e.g. feeling a heaviness, or maybe a deep compassion someone), or visual clues (e.g. something someone is wearing). These perceptions may come in observing something about a person's appearance or behavior, or a physical clue given in your own body. It may be a stray thought--something that comes to you "out of left field," or a sudden "feeling" about another person or circumstance. Regardless of how these impressions come to us, we need to submit them to discernment in the Spirit. We will talk more next week about the process of discernment and the wisdom and balance necessary in using impressions prophetically.

Each of us will experience perception in a manner unique to our experience. For example, you may be praying for someone who is struggling spiritually. Suddenly, you feel tremendous compassion for that person. It would be easy to dismiss this feeling as your own emotional response to their predicament, but it may be God seeking to express His love for the person and encourage him or her with a message of God's compassion. If you open your mouth to speak, God can fill it with His word of encouragement and comfort.

Sometimes when our attention is drawn to a person we get a physical sensation, for example a twinge in a muscle, or a pain in some part of our body. It is appropriate to ask, "Are you experiencing a pain in such and such location?" These physical sensations are often given to us as a clue, an impression, to direct us in ministering to another prophetically. And sometimes we are given visual clues as well. On the Sunday after our trip to the school of prophets, Trip saw Becky Baker in the nave before the service. She was wearing a yellow sweater with a boat on it. Trip says, "God told me to get up and say that I felt she wanted to go on a cruise or go somewhere around boats and water. I, not being a sure of what I was thinking, or recognizing it was actually God filling my mouth with the words, decided not to waste everyone's time. At the end of the service she stood up and said she was already booked on a mission trip to Trinidad." When Becky did stand up and tell of her plans, there were numerous prophecies said over her. Though he was hesitant to speak, what Trip experienced was a spiritual perception.

Next week we will look at some cautionary words about moving prophetically in perceptions and impressions. We will examine how to minister in wisdom and discernment.