

#6 How to Move in the Prophetic

We are all exhorted to desire the gift of prophecy. We can all prophesy. But how? The “how to” of prophecy is to ask expectantly, receptively. “Lord, show me what I need to see here.” Ask expecting God to answer, then be receptive to what He shows you. God will reveal His Word in a number of different ways--often strange ways, and being open to what may seem strange is the art of being receptive.

Though there are numerous ways that our Lord helps us to move in the prophetic, the most common ways are through a small voice, an impression, or a vision. Usually we are not given a fully formed word to convey to someone, we simply receive an inkling about them. We see something on the person that spurs a thought about them, or a single word comes to mind that may seem out of context. Some people see a picture in their minds--a vision--that opens a channel of grace to speak the Word. When we receive this impression, vision, or word, the Lord is prompting us to speak. If we are responsive to His prompting, God will move.

We need to not be afraid. Often what we see does not make sense to our rational mind. But if in obedience to this prompting of the Holy Spirit we begin to tell what the Lord has shown us, God will move us and open the greater vision of His will. When we begin to speak, the words will start to flow and the Spirit will minister prophetically to the individual or to the group or the congregation as a whole. Let me give you an example from Holy Scripture of someone receiving a very strange--a non-rational--vision.

As was prophesied in the Law and Prophets of the Old Testament, God wanted to open the kingdom to the Gentiles. He had spoken this word through many prophets throughout the history of Israel (e.g. Jonah, Isaiah chs. 42 & 49), and now the time had come for that word to be fulfilled. In Acts chapter 10, Cornelius, a Gentile and a God-fearing, prayerful man, saw a vision of an angel telling him to call for a man named Simon Peter to come to him. The next day, Simon Peter is praying at noon. He hasn't eaten and is hungry. The Lord gives him a vision of a large sheet lowering from heaven loaded with unclean food. In the vision the Lord says, “kill and eat.” This is not rational! Peter, being a devout Jew will not eat unclean food. But the vision happens three times. What he has seen is not a clear word to Peter about the Gentiles, but while he is perplexed and thinking about the vision, the people Cornelius has sent arrive at his door. Peter asks the Spirit for interpretation, and the Spirit tells him, “Behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down, and accompany them without hesitation; for I have sent them.” It was a strange vision. But Peter, being receptive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, acted upon that vision and the Lord moved. As a result, through the prophetic visions given to Cornelius and Peter, God opened the kingdom to the Gentiles.

There is no formula for moving prophetically. It is not a matter of the mind and understanding. It is a matter of the Spirit -- the work of the Holy Spirit. If we ask, God will give us His Word. Jesus said, “What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:11-13) The Father loves us. He wants His Church to prosper. He *will* answer. Jesus did not say, “Ask and it *might* be given to you.” If we ask for the gift, and intend to use it for the building up of the Body, why would the Father *not* give it to us?