

# Prophecy is Not Manipulation

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To fully address this topic we must answer 2 questions and address 2 groups of people.

## 2 Questions to Answer

1. What is Prophecy?
2. What is Manipulation?

## 2 Groups of People to Address

We can all fall into both of these categories

1. Those who give prophecy
2. Those who receive prophecy

## What is Prophecy?

**1 Corinthians 14:31 (NIV)** For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged.

First of all, let's establish that the Bible says that we can all prophesy. This is speaking of the gift of prophecy. It does not say that we are all prophets—we don't all hold that office. But God says that we can all prophesy according to the definition found below.

**1 Corinthians 14:1-3 (NIV)** <sup>1</sup> Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. <sup>2</sup> For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. <sup>3</sup> But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their **strengthening, encouragement and comfort**.

These are all examples of “**Forth-telling**” rather than “**Foretelling**.” Prophecy can come in the form of foreseeing the future, and speaking out about it. *I believe* this is generally reserved to those who operate in a prophetic office in the church. However, prophecy can also be—and most commonly is—in the format of Forth-telling: Speaking out to others what you feel that the Lord is saying, which is most commonly how “we may all prophesy” ... “so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged.”

## Three Scriptural Types of Forth-telling

- **Strengthening:** to build up, strengthen (where we get our word “edifice”)
  - Prophecy will build someone up and not tear them down

- You may want to ask yourself a couple of questions when you feel that you have a word from the Lord for someone.
  - Is this word constructive?
  - Is this word destructive?
- **Encouragement:** to exhort, to pull alongside for the purpose of motivation
  - True prophecy pulls people close to encourage them—it doesn't push them away.
  - It also pulls them toward God, His Love, and Good Works.
- **Comfort:** to sooth, console, or reassure.
  - This can be as simple as saying, "It's going to be alright."

As you can see, these three aspects of prophecy easily intertwine with one another. They don't have to be separate distinct words of prophecy—one which comforts and another which exhorts. One word of prophecy may do all three. Even the definitions of them are tightly woven together.

### Some More on Prophecy

Here are some more general concepts to understand about prophecy.

- The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy

**Revelation 19:10 (NIV)** At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

  - Prophecy easily flows from the heart that holds to the testimony of Jesus and worships Him alone.
- Prophecy should not bring confusion. Confusion is often a sign of witchcraft.
- If prophecy brings direction or guidance for someone's life, then it will be in the form of **Confirmation** not **Information**. God uses guidance from others to encourage us in what He has already placed in our spirits not to allow that to speak to you instead of God.
  - For example, when the prophets told the Apostle Paul that danger awaited him in Jerusalem. This confirmed what Paul already knew, and he had already settled it in his spirit to go anyway according to God's Will.
- Prophecy lays bare the hearts of men

**1 Corinthians 14:24-25 (NIV)** <sup>24</sup> But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, <sup>25</sup> and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"

  - As a side note, and in reference to several scriptures discussed later in this teaching, I believe that this passage means that the prophetic words (the spirit of prophecy) are what judge the man's heart. Not the people themselves, but the spirit they operate in.

## What is Manipulation?

If prophecy is not manipulation, then what is manipulation? You'll need to understand this to avoid doing it.

*Manipulation can be defined as the applying of emotional pressure to control others, or the use of devious measures to influence or control others.*

- Using hype or soul power to enlist service, even if it is service for God can easily be manipulation (i.e. many modern offering boosts)
- Ultimately, manipulation is witchcraft, and witchcraft is counterfeit spiritual authority.
  - If someone lacks authority or the ability to get another person to do what they want, then they will often resort to all sorts of schemes to try to establish authority over the person. Very often this is done in the forms of threats, guilt, or intimidation—All Manipulation.
  - It is not uncommon for parents to employ these tactics with their children—even Christian parents, and it is sin. Unfortunately, this behavior is most often learned from our own parents. Consider this: A carpenter will show up on a job site with dozens of tools to complete the job. Parents who use manipulation to control and direct their children are like a carpenter who shows up on the job with nothing but a set of hammers in increasing size to try to complete his tasks.
- Prophecy is based in the true Spiritual Authority of God.
  - It does not need to use pressure or trickery to try and establish its authority.
  - It establishes itself in love, confidence, long suffering, and self-control.

## To those who Give Prophecy

We need to take the utmost care to not be manipulative in all areas of our lives not just prophecy, as mentioned above with the parenting example.

Manipulation can be subtle in our daily lives, and we need to allow the Holy Spirit to help us rid ourselves of it completely.

It can be as simple as:

- Trying to make people feel guilty to get them to do something for you (even in altar calls).
- Trying to play on people's emotions to get them to react a certain way.
- Trying to pressure people to conform their own will to your will.

I'm not saying that being persuasive is always being manipulative, but when it begins to move into the realm of using guilt or other emotions to try to bend someone the way that you want them, then it can easily become manipulation.

## Three Errors to Avoid

Steve Thompson, in his book *You May All Prophesy*, explains how that Jude 11 describes three errors that people can slip into easily when dealing with prophecy (or any other ministry for that matter). These three errors seem to be progressive in nature...one leading to the next. Avoiding these will help you to avoid being a manipulator.

**Jude 1:11 (NIV)** Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.

1. The Way of Cain (Genesis 4)
  - a. Cain's name means maker, **fabricator**, or one who makes his own way.
  - b. This is the way of Self-Will.
  - c. Cain wanted God to accept things according to his terms rather than God's.
  - d. Self-will is very likely the primary thing that will taint your Prophetic Ministry or any other ministry you are involved in.
2. The Error of Balaam (Numbers 22)
  - a. Balaam's name means one who devours or conquers the people.
  - b. He represents those who devour the sheep or use the people of for their own gain.
  - c. Balaam was originally a prophet that God spoke to (Numbers 22: 9).
  - d. His life ended as merely being known as a soothsayer because he gave in to the temptation to use his prophetic gift to obtain riches and glory at the expense of God's people. I look at this as a form of Self-Exaltation.
3. The Rebellion of Korah (Numbers 16)
  - a. Korah's name means uncovered or bald.
  - b. This represents not being under authority. Korah specifically rebelled against the fact that God had placed other men (Moses and Aaron) in a position of authority over the assembly.
  - c. The ultimate deception is found in those who rebel against God's appointed authority and claim to answer only to God.
  - d. Korah not only rebelled against authority—he used his influence to incite others to rebel against authority. God ended up causing the earth to open up and swallow Korah and his entire house. He sent fire to consume the 250 men that were burning incense who were not of the household of Aaron that had been part of his rebellion, and even sent a plague the next day that destroyed another 14,700 people who were speaking out against Moses and Aaron. Aaron stood in the gap and made atonement for the people, and the plague stopped where he stood.
  - e. This is why Jude said that these people have "**been destroyed**" or perished in the rebellion of Korah. Ultimately, this will bring death to your ministry. You Must be submissive to Godly Authority.

## Practical Ways to Avoid Manipulation

1. Die to Self-will
2. Avoid seeking personal gain through prophecy
3. Stay under authority
4. Don't prophesy out of:
  - a. Anger
  - b. Pride
  - c. Fear
  - d. Out of a desire to be known as spiritual
5. Don't prophesy to get a response
6. Don't prophesy out of natural knowledge
  - a. If you already knew the information from a natural source, then tell the person. Don't be prideful and try to appear more spiritual than you are. That's a hard place to fall down from, and you must fall (Luke 1:52, James 4: 6, I Peter 5: 5)
7. Don't try to impress
8. Don't try to be spooky or mysterious (just speak the word and leave it at that)
9. Avoid Prophetic Matchmaking
  - a. We must realize that situations in which we deal with the wills of two people who both have a Free Will are very touchy.
  - b. God himself does not impose on the will of man...He give us Free Will.
  - c. How dare we presume to tell people that God said that they are supposed to get married to a certain person?
  - d. I have never seen good fruit come from this type of "prophesying."
10. Don't try to manipulate (control people)
  - a. It's God's word, not yours—let Him do the convincing, which is what conviction means.
  - b. We must avoid to extremes:
    - i. Trying to do what only the Holy Spirit can do (such as conviction)
    - ii. Trying to let the Holy Spirit do what He expects us to do
11. Don't prophesy out of an attempt to establish yourself as spiritual authority.
12. Don't try to interpret if God has not given you the interpretation. A word or symbol may often represent something completely different to the person receiving the word than it may have to you. It doesn't make you more spiritual to speak longer about something—it often can just get you in trouble.

## To those who Receive Prophecy

Dealing with manipulation and false prophecy doesn't stop for us as Christians by just avoiding being manipulative. We must also learn to handle manipulative or false prophetic words in a Christ-like manner.

### False Prophecy or False Prophet?

We must ask ourselves this, and other questions, to be sure we understand the truth.

- Is there a difference between False Prophets and those who may speak a false word?
- Is someone who speaks a false word automatically a false prophet?
- Is someone who says something that isn't true automatically a liar?

**Hebrews 5:13-14 (NIV)** <sup>13</sup> Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. <sup>14</sup> But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

This scripture explains that not everyone is completely mature in Christ right now. Not everyone has “their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (as one translation puts it) by having used those senses for a long time.

An infant's need to only consume milk is no indication that they are evil. It is only an indication that they are IMMATURE!

This is the same for those who may attempt to give a “word from the Lord” and be wrong. It may just be spiritual immaturity that caused them to give you a wrong word—not an intent to deceive, mislead, manipulate, or destroy.

If I tell you something that is wrong while I honestly believe that it is right, am I liar? NO! I am MISTAKEN.

If I tell you something that I honestly believe is from the Lord, but it isn't, am I false prophet? NO! I am MISTAKEN.

If someone attempts what is right to find out later they were wrong, then that doesn't make them a liar and false prophet. God forbid that we could never be mistaken without being evil!

Just keep this in mind:

- Not every word spoken in the church realm is from God.
- Not every teaching is true.
- Not every thought that goes through your head is from the Lord.
- You should pray and ask God to reveal to you if a Word is from the Lord, especially if anything about it just doesn't sit right in your spirit. Whether it is about a word you feel that you are supposed to give or a word that someone has spoken to you.

So, if honestly speaking something that ends up not being true doesn't make you a False Prophet, then what does?

## What is a False Prophet?

There is a difference between a FALSE PROPHET and a False Prophecy.

**1 John 4:1-3 (NIV)** <sup>1</sup> Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many **false prophets** have gone out into the world. <sup>2</sup> This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, <sup>3</sup> but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

[NOTE: I love how this scripture says “there are false prophets, and here is how to recognize the Spirit of God.” Rather than “there are false prophets, and here is how to recognize them.” I believe this marks the true difference between the spirit of truth and a spirit of religion. The spirit of religion is better versed in what is NOT God rather than what IS God.]

### A False Prophet is:

- A person who is of the **spirit of the antichrist**.
- A person whose inner intention is to drive you away from Jesus and toward allegiance to anything else—and ultimately to satan.
- A person whose desire is to glorify themselves above God and to deny Jesus.

Just because someone misses God does not mean that they are of the spirit of the antichrist...it doesn't mean that they do not acknowledge that Jesus is from God.

It more often means that they were TRYING to be Obedient to God, and just missed the mark.

## How do we handle words from False Prophets?

**DO NOT BELIEVE THEM!** I repeat:

**1 John 4:1 (NIV)** Dear friends, **do not believe every spirit**, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many **false prophets** have gone out into the world.

There is really not much mystery left in that explanation.

## Scriptural Direction for False Words and False Prophets

There are some important questions to ask when it comes to dealing with these things.

- How do we handle false words or false prophets in a spiritually mature way?
- What if a false prophet speaks a true word?
- Where are some scriptural examples of what to do?

**1 Corinthians 14:29-33 (NIV)** <sup>29</sup>Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. <sup>30</sup>And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. <sup>31</sup>For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. <sup>32</sup>The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. <sup>33a</sup>For God is not a God of disorder but of peace...

**Romans 14:1-4 (NIV)** <sup>1</sup>Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. <sup>2</sup>One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. <sup>3</sup>The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. <sup>4</sup>Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

**1 John 4:1 (NIV)** Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

**John 7:24 (NIV)** Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment."

These four passages of scripture make a few things abundantly clear:

- We are SUPPOSED to Judge, in many matters—not just prophecy.
- We are supposed to Judge Righteously.
- When it comes to prophecy, we are supposed to judge two things:
  - We judge the WORD (“weigh carefully what is said” or “judge what is said”)
  - We judge the SPIRIT (“test the spirits”)
  - We do NOT judge the Person (“who are you to judge someone else’s servant?”)

So, what do you do if someone speaks a false word to you?

- If after judging the Word you feel that it is false, then don’t receive it...dismiss it.
  - It is not your place to correct everyone.
- Intercede for them...ask God to correct it.
- Pray that they will gain discernment.
- Pray that if the word was just from their own emotions that they would learn to control their emotions [for the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 1 Corinthians 14: 32].
- Pray that if the word was inspired by evil that God would restore them and deliver them from that evil.

What if they don’t just speak the word to you and let it go at that?



What if they keep on with it and are trying to control your decisions or manipulate you into doing what, "Thus saith the Lord."?

There comes a point at which you have to just say, "I'm sorry, but I do not feel that word is from the Lord. If it is, then let the Lord correct me. I appreciate you trying to speak to me about what you feel the Lord would have you say, but if it doesn't feel right in my spirit, then I can't follow it, and I can't accept it." I have had to do this to very close friends before.

But you must keep a humble and loving spirit about you.

The reason we judge what is Spoken and not the Person is so that we can work to restore, guide, help, comfort, encourage, and strengthen them (prophecy to them). If you are judging a person you can't truly prophesy to them.

### **Scriptural Example of Judging the Spirit**

Here is a very interesting and practical example of when the Apostle Paul "rightly judged" a false spirit.

**Acts 16:16-18 (NIV)** <sup>16</sup>Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. <sup>17</sup>This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." <sup>18</sup>She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.

What the lady was speaking in this passage was the absolute truth, but it wasn't the Spirit of God speaking it. This spirit of divination was trying to give itself more validity in the community by not seeming to oppose the new power that was being displayed...the Holy Spirit. That evil spirit wanted to attach itself to Paul's ministry.

That is why you must judge the SPIRIT and the WORD...not the PERSON.

Now if Paul had judged the Person rather than the Spirit, then he may have simply said, "Shut up, you false prophet and leave us alone." But if he had done that, then the woman (the PERSON) would not have been delivered of the FALSE SPIRIT.

Judge the Word. Judge the Spirit behind the Word. Don't judge the Person.

Judge a Righteous Judgment!