

PROPHECY

Many believe the gift of prophecy is the ability to foretell the future. It can be defined more accurately as a Spirit-given ability to proclaim and apply the written Word of God with clarity and a view to correction or edification. Prophets instruct, warn, exhort, promise and rebuke. Prophecy ranks high among the gifts and is considered vital to the church's well-being. The gift of prophecy can be used, for example, to bring correction in a church or to an individual; in counseling, preaching and teaching; for personal encouragement or warning; to inspire others to action against moral decay and disobedience; when serving on governing boards; and when taking a stand on moral issues.

CHARACTERISTICS

1. The need to express thoughts and ideas verbally, especially regarding right and wrong.
2. The tendency to make quick judgments on what is seen and heard and to be wholeheartedly involved in whatever is done to right a wrong.
3. An amazing ability to sense when someone or something is not what it appears to be and to react adamantly to dishonesty or deception.
4. A desire to discipline those who offend so justice will be done and others will be warned.
5. An openness about personal faults and failures.
6. A tendency to be direct when correcting others, even friends.
7. A desire to give open evidences of loyalty and total commitment.
8. A willingness to suffer for doing what is right.
9. An ability to be very persuasive in defining what is right and wrong.

CAUTIONS

1. Correcting people who are not their responsibility. Prophets often feel that they are responsible for everyone, making it difficult for them to respect appropriate boundaries.
2. Jumping to conclusions about words, actions and motives based on a few known facts.
3. Once a hasty conclusion has been made, prophets tend to look for confirming evidence. This can result in taking words and actions out of context in order to prove a point.
4. Judging and exposing an offender rather than restoring them.
5. Cutting off a person who has failed in favor of being true to a cause. Prophets can be legalists.
6. Dwelling on the negative rather than on the positive, being against more things than they are for, viewing things in extremes of either all right or all wrong.
7. Lacking tact when expressing opinions; demanding positive responses to harsh rebukes.
8. The harsh judgments that prophets have for others, they also have for themselves, making them extremely self-critical.