

Responding to Personal Prophecy

A Call to Spiritual Warfare

By Clem Ferris

1Timothy 1¹⁸

This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight. NASU

Paul taught Timothy that the purpose of his prophecies was so that he could successfully engage in the good fight of faith.

There are several principles to follow to persevere in the progressive fulfillment of a personal word spoken to you from the Lord.

Principle 1: Embrace Prophecy with the Right Attitude

Faith – the word must be received and held in a strong attitude of faith in the God who spoke the word to you. (1Chronicles 20²⁰; Hebrews 4²; Hebrews 11⁶)

Obedience – we are to be doers of the word, not hearers only (James 1²²). If we only hear the word and never give corresponding action to them, James also says we will be deceived. What if Noah had only believed God's word to him and never started cutting down trees?

Patience – Hebrews 6¹² says that it takes both faith and patience to inherit the promises of God. The Greek word here for patience means "to remain under authority." Impatience will cause you to question God's authority in his word and his appointed leadership in your life.

Humility and Meekness – We must receive the word with meekness, according to James 1:21. The opposite of this is pride – which will oppose and quench the work of the Holy Spirit. So often, the very purpose of God's word, both spoken and written, is to bring adjustment to our attitudes.

Principle 2: Record and Meditate Your Prophecy

1Timothy 4¹⁴⁻¹⁵

Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. NKJV

Even in the Old Testament, God provided Scribes to record His word. A written record of your prophecy will allow you to keep the word before your eyes and cause your progress to be seen by others. This idea of the word for progress means "to blaze a trail through obstacles." When you and others experience these breakthroughs from a prophetic word, it bolsters faith and brings encouragement.

Principle 3: Allow Time for the Process of Change

Understanding will come – but give God time to change your perspective and your concepts, before He changes your circumstances.

Prophecy comes to us as "the word of the Kingdom." It does not originate in the mind of man – it comes from the realm of heaven, as the thoughts of God. Kingdom concepts and earthly concepts often collide, causing misunderstanding. This is an opportunity for spiritual warfare.

The Prophetic Warning:

*"When anyone hears the word of the Kingdom, and understands it not, then comes the wicked one and snatches away that which was sown in his heart."
(Matthew 13¹⁹)*

The idea of "understanding" here in the Greek is from the word "psunami", which means two different streams coming together to form one stream. When God's concepts come to us, from the heavenly stream, we must allow these words to merge into our earthly concepts. If we don't, the enemy is ready to "snatch" those Kingdom words away from us. The word for "snatches away" in the Greek is the word "harpadzo," which means "to seize by force, in warfare."

Principle 4: Do nothing Different, Unless Definitely Directed

Unless God gives us explicit instructions to act upon, the proper response to personal prophecy is simply to continue doing what we have been doing before we received the word of the Lord.

As an example, we see that David was called from tending sheep, and Samuel anointed him to be king over all Israel. But, there were no prophetic indications about when or how this was to come to pass, nor any instructions for David to follow. It was simply a prophetic proclamation. So David returned to his ministry of tending sheep, practicing with his slingshot, and learning to sing and play music to the Lord.

For all true prophecies of future accomplishments – ours as well – God's time for fulfillment must be awaited.

On the other hand, when a prophecy is received which includes specific instructions and an anointing for immediate action, then it is time to act upon the prophecy. (See 2Kings 9)

In conclusion, we must remember that all personal prophecy is:

- **Partial** ("we know in part and prophesy in part")
- **Progressive** (it progressively unfolds in God's time)
- **Conditional** (upon our faith to see fulfillment and our obedience to obtain those things promised.)