

APPROACHING THE HEART OF PROPHECY

BY GRAHAM COOKE



THE EXERCISE OF PROPHECY

THE PROCESS OF PROPHECY

THE PURPOSE OF PROPHECY



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Approaching the Heart of Prophecy is the first of six books in the *Prophetic Equipping Series*.



Brilliant Book House LLC
865 Cotting Ln, Ste C
Vacaville, California 95688 USA
www.brilliantbookhouse.com

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Requests for information should be addressed to:

E-mail: office@myemerginglight.com

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INTRODUCTION

And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. (Joel 2:28–29)

THE WORLD CHANGED THE DAY the Holy Spirit fell on Jesus' remaining disciples in that famed upper room in Jerusalem. The Spirit of God, reserved in the Old Testament for a select few, had now been placed on anyone who sought and loved Christ. With that outpouring came the gifts of the Spirit. While once only a few could prophesy, suddenly everyone could.

I have been in the prophetic ministry since 1974. I began prophesying the year before. That's more than thirty years of sharing the love God has placed in my heart. Amazingly, I'm still learning — and I never want to stop. Every year, I understand something new about God and His ways. He never ceases to intrigue me.

More than a decade ago, my book, *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting*, was first published. It has been a greater success than I could have ever imagined. It has gone through many re-printings, several publishers have taken it up; it has been written in many, many languages; and it still is on the best seller list; and yet the material I teach now is light years beyond that original manuscript. I have come a long way in the years since I wrote that first book. For one thing, I have taught countless prophetic schools during that time. As I work with students and emerging prophetic voices, I have had my own gift shaped and honed. "As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend," as it says in Proverbs 27:17. The people I have met have pushed me further into the things of the prophetic. They have challenged me to find fresh ways of equipping, explaining, and encouraging.

For several months, I have felt the Lord prompt me to rewrite *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting*, adding the material I have taught in my schools over the past ten years since it was published. This book is the first in a series of six that will more fully equip people longing to speak the words of God to those around them.

Following the unqualified success of the spirituality journals in the Being With God Series¹, I have decided to develop this material into the same format.

Each book has assignments, exercises and meditations which, if followed, will bring each individual into an experience of God within the context of the material.

Together, we will study the practical elements of hearing God, of moving in the Spirit, of knowing God's nature, and of representing His heart to someone else. We will learn how to be grounded in the love, grace, and rhythm of God. It is my prayer that these books will give you something fresh about who God wants to be for you. As you read the principles and illustrations within, I pray that you will be excited and inspired to venture further into what God has for you.

A small mind is incompatible with a big heart

Prophecy comes when we have a burden to encourage and bless the people around us. There is no magic formula to prophesying; it all depends on our love for God. When we love Him fully, that love should spill over onto the people around us. Prophecy is simply encouraging, exhorting, and comforting people by tuning them into what God has for them. In every church in the world, there are people who need that life-giving word from God. These aren't just the individuals who are obviously struggling; some appear to have everything together. But God knows what's really going on.

Everyone could benefit from a prophetic word, even those for whom everything is soaring. I love to prophesy over people who are doing really well. If we can target those people and increase their faith at a critical time, they can fly even higher in the things of the Spirit.

New Testament prophecy will be spoken through the context of the Gospel of Grace. Jesus has received the judgment of God for sin for all those who are living, to enable them to find repentance through the goodness and kindness of God.

Prophecy is now in the context of a family; a company of called out people who are learning together to become the beloved of God; the Bride of Christ. There is a new language in the Spirit to learn and the unity of the Spirit to maintain and enjoy, as a people together.

Of course there are necessary tensions in all good relationships and prophecy is not the way to resolve conflicts. Clearly we need wisdom for those situations.

¹ See www.brilliantbookhouse.com for more information

I believe strongly that the more encouraging, exhorting, and comforting prophecy we have the better our churches will be. Blessing and encouragement stir up anointing. The more of this kind of prophecy we can have in church, the less we will need intensive, time-consuming pastoral care. People will actually be touched by God and come into the things of the Spirit themselves. Individuals will realize that, yes, they are loved personally by God. That kind of revelation will stoke up their faith in ways a counseling session never could.

When the church runs out of encouragement, the world runs into wickedness

I know I need that kind of encouragement every day from the Holy Spirit. I can't remember the last time I asked Him to encourage me and He didn't. He may not speak it out immediately, but He always meets me at the point of my greatest need. That's just who the Holy Spirit is, and what He loves to do.

This book can help you go further in the prophetic than you have ever hoped. After all, *"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him,"* (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Approaching the Heart of Prophecy is divided into three chapters: The Exercise of Prophecy, The Process of Prophecy and The Purpose of Prophecy. These chapters are not meant to be read in a day or a week; instead, I encourage you to take your time going through each, reading them until you understand the themes and thoughts they contain. Furthermore, don't neglect the exercises, case studies, and Bible readings included at the end of each chapter — they are valuable practice tools which will take the lessons taught and put them into practice in your life.

Throughout this book, I have included several sidebar articles about some of my prophetic heroes. These are people who lived after the Bible was finished being written, heard the voice of God for themselves, and did marvelous exploits for the Kingdom. I hope this will open your eyes to a few of the people who have gone before us.

I have also included some suggestions of resources that may help you further explore the themes contained in this book. I hope they prompt you to dig deeper into the things of the Spirit.

Blessings on your journey into the prophetic!

Graham Cooke

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