

PROPHECY & RESPONSIBILITY

BY GRAHAM COOKE



GUIDELINES FOR
HANDLING PROPHECY

EVALUATING THE
PROPHETIC WORD

WHAT TO DO WITH
WRONG PROPHECY



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Prophecy & Responsibility is the second of six books in the *Prophetic Equipping Series*.



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INVOCATION

Everything about You, Father, we love. We love Your ways, we love Your heart for us, and we love the fact that You're consistent in everything. Father, we are learning to be more amazed by You. Thank You for this journey that we're on, a journey right into Your very heartbeat.

Help us to discover the truth that You will not rest until we see You as You want to be seen. Open the eyes of our hearts, our inner man, the eyes of our understanding. Let us behold You in new ways in this season of our lives. Let us discover that You are more for us than anything we ever thought previously. Let us understand something of the majesty and the greatness of Your affection for us.

Holy Spirit, we revere and bless You for Your ministry to us, and for making real the things of Christ. We bless You in Your ministry. Help us to be more disciplined, more open, and more God-conscious, so that we may respectfully walk with You. Let us not grieve You in any way.

Help us to rest in the revelation that You bring to our hearts about Your nature. Thank You for Your presence with us. Please come and do what You do best: teach us, inspire us, show us the Father, reveal the Son to us, and touch our hearts. If there is anything in our lives that needs a positive adjustment, we pray that You would make it today.

Amen.

INTRODUCTION

“It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on the male and female servants 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. Hundreds of thousands of copies have been sold. But I’ve come a long way in the years since I wrote that first manuscript. 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. “Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another,” 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 expand *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting*, adding the material I have taught in my schools over the past ten years. This book is the second of six manuals that will more fully equip people longing to speak the words of God to those around them.

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.

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.

Prophecy that is edifying and comforting will encourage us to look into the heart of God so that we see ourselves in His image. When we build on that flow of encouragement we can see directive prophecy propelling us into places of faith, vision, power, and anointing in the service of the King. The two together produces a company of people who are strong in the Lord and ready to do exploits (Daniel 11:32 KJV). 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.

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, "*things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.*" (1 Corinthians 2:9)

Prophecy and Responsibility is divided into three chapters: *Guidelines for Handling Prophecy*, *Evaluating the Prophetic Word*, and *Handling Wrong 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 added some exercises on the nine characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5. These exercises are meant to stretch and grow you to become more like Jesus.

Blessings on your journey into the prophetic!

Graham Cooke .