

Chapter 9

Preparation for Prophetic ministry

How do we prepare ourselves for the prophetic ministry?

There are various ways to prepare for this wonderful ministry.

Firstly, you must know beyond any doubt that God has called, chosen and appointed you into the prophetic ministry. God who has called you will certainly speak to you crystal clear and confirm through the body of Christ or other ministers of the Gospel. The calling of a prophet is God's Sovereign Choice. No amount of fasting and praying, pleading and yielding, or seeking and asking will move God to appoint you as a prophet. You can enlist yourself in the natural army but definitely not the army of God. What criteria and yardstick God uses to choose a person to be a prophet, only God knows!

After you discover your calling, get ready for the PIT. What is that? Well, it means prophet in training. You can be mentored by another prophet; like Elisha being trained by Elijah. Spend much of your time praying in tongues to build your spirit man (1 Cor 14:4). Read and learn from books written by proven prophetic ministry. Attend prophetic training schools, seminars or conferences. Meet with other eagles and watch how they soar.

The greatest preparation that I would strongly recommend is the preparation of the heart.

Prov4:22 'Keep your heart with all diligence. For out of it spring the issues of life.'

Matt 12:34b -35 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.'

The condition of the heart is likened to the root systems of the fruit tree. If the roots are healthy, the tree will have a better chance to bear good fruit.

1. Big Heart

We need a big heart for the prophetic ministry.

A big heart will be able to see the bigness and greatness of God. A person with a big heart will not major in minor or get involved with the mundane things in life. A prophet with a big heart will build God's Kingdom and not his own kingdom. A big heart will be able to receive and accommodate all kinds of people and races. There is no prejudice in regards to status, wealth, fame and titles. Everyone is created in the image of God. A prophet should not despise any person. He is called to prophesy not to profit. His motives are pure with no personal agendas. He seeks for the higher good of the kingdom, sometimes at his own expense. A prophetic ministry that has a big heart is secure. Other ministers and ministries do not easily threaten him. He is surely not comparing and competing with them. He looks to his Master for his rewards and rest in Jesus. Like a paradox, though his heart is big but the yoke upon him is light and easy.

2. Generous heart

Some prophets are covetous. Ouch! Truth hurts but truth

sets us free. Before you judge prophets, there are ministers and saints who are equally covetous or worse. Maybe you are one of them. Let the Holy Spirit shine His light upon your heart. We really do not know our covetous hearts *many* times until God in His *mercy* or in His *anger* shows us! A generous heart will break the spirit of the love of money and material possession. We say we want to serve God and go to heaven but our bank accounts and the accumulations of our worldly goods betray us. Some of us are so attached and attracted to the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life of this world. Yet we claim we love God. What hypocrisy!

Please read I John 2:15-16 and you will understand. I discover, generous giving releases a person from the hoarding spirit. Until we are set free from the love of money and material possessions, we cannot be effective to impact nations and generations for Christ in the prophetic ministry. Is your giving *commensurate* with *your* income? Do you become defensive and uptight when someone challenges you to give beyond your comfortable level and comfortable amount? When was the last time you gave your sacrificial giving? Are you offended when someone broke the alabaster box of expensive perfume and wasted on Jesus? Have you ever given a month of your salary or your 2 months bonus? Try it and watch whether you still have some traces of this covetous spirit. Do you struggle to obey God when He speaks to you to give a breakthrough amount? By the way, your breakthrough giving prepares you for your breakthrough harvest.

Enough said and let us move to the next point.

We really do not know our covetous hearts many times until God in His mercy or in His anger shows us!

3. Forgiving heart.

If the first two points, as you read you could picture so clearly in your mind that I am talking about someone else, I believe this one is definitely for you if you are called to be His mouthpiece.

Rejection, false accusation, betrayal, hurts, disappointment and mistakes of others can easily make you bitter or better. Offense is the trap of Satan to derail and distract us in this prophetic journey and ministry. I came to a point in the ministry when I sincerely did not know who were for me or against me. If we do not look beyond the flesh and blood, we can be easily trapped by offense. I decided long time ago, that I would choose to forgive regardless of the harm anyone does to me. What kept Joseph sweet in spirit and not bitter when he was sold as a slave by his own brothers was the realization that his own brother meant evil but God could turn it for good to bring redemption and blessings to nations and generations Genesis 50: 20).

Kindly read the story of Joseph from Genesis 37-50. A forgiving heart like the Master will ensure longevity and health in the prophetic ministry. God decides our prophetic future and prophetic destiny but we decide the condition of our hearts. Is there someone you need to forgive? What are you waiting? Put down this book for a while and ask God to forgive you first for not forgiving the person who hurt, despised, abused, rejected or violated you. Forgive that person regardless of how you feel and what he or she had done. Ask God's love and mercy to fill your heart for that person. Let the Precious Blood of Jesus cleanse you from any sin of unforgiveness. Be set free right now in Jesus' name. Amen

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4. Humble heart.

God will make sure we have plenty of opportunities to discover the subtlety of the pride in our heart. What can we boast? Achievement, favor, success, wealth, fame, crowd, spiritual experiences or even our humility. What is that to boast after all what we have come from God! No man can receive anything unless God gives it to him.

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Isaiah 10:15 puts the record straight.

"Shall the ax boast itself against him who chops with it? Or shall the saw magnify itself against him who saws with it? As if a rod could wield itself against those who lift it up or as if a staff could lift up, as if it were not wood"

Let us realize that we are just a pair of gloves. Unless the Divine Hands use us, we are simply good for nothing. The prophetic ministry brings much glamour, admiration and attention especially when those prophetic words come to pass. God has His way to resist the proud but He grants grace and promotion for those who make themselves little.

Sometimes God allows us through a season of humiliation before He takes us to the season of exaltation. The last 25 years, I have witnessed many preachers who started their ministry with humility but sadly, alas when God began to bless and use them, pride crept into their heart. Before

long, like a vapor, they are no more. It is important to start well in the prophetic ministry, it is more important to end well. Humility has a way to keep you in the cutting edge of the prophetic ministry and pride has a way to remove you.

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May God give us humble prophets like John the Baptist. Our constant cry must be that God will increase in our lives and we must decrease.

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5. Obedient Heart

'To obey is better than sacrifice.' King Saul taught us that we would not be able serve God and be useful in His Kingdom unless we are willing to obey all the way. Partial obedient in God's sight is disobedient. Prophetic ministry requires the prophet to walk in total obedient to God's instructions. The prophets are the representatives of God and they cannot afford to misrepresent Him.

Prophet Nathan was given a difficult task to confront David's sin of adultery and murder. If King David did not repent, quite likely Nathan's head might roll. Prophet Hosea was given the assignment to marry a prostitute who would serve as a prophetic act from God of Israel's unfaithfulness (Hosea 1:2). Prophet Ezekiel was required to do many

sufferings acts to serve as symbolic signs from the Lord (Ezekiel 3-4).

Isaiah was truly dead to self and dead to reputation to obey the most difficult command of the Lord. His prophetic action of walking naked and bare-footed was a prophetic sign and judgment against Egypt and Ethiopia (Isaiah 20). Anybody still desires to be a prophet?

6. Servant heart

Jesus was the greatest prophet yet He was a servant. Yet, there are some prophets who behave like superstars and celebrity. Preachers who demand First Class Air ticket, 5 star hotels and a handsome honorarium need to check their lives that they are not stumbling blocks to others. I do not see Jesus behaving with such demand and arrogance. Most preachers who do not have a servant heart also do not have a personal touch with the people.

The foundation of the church is laid on the office of the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20). Foundation supports and serves. Where are the prophets with the servant heart? I thought Jesus said the greatest should be a servant.

When a prophet comes to a local *church*, he is there to serve and encourage God's people with his ministry. He does not order around and usurps the local pastor's authority. He must be submitted to the local church covering and authority. His deeds and his words should not bring strife and division among the flock. Never come to minister a local church with a 'more anointed attitude'.

Pastors who invite prophets to their local church should make sure that the prophet comes to be a blessing to the flock, not fleecing the sheep or going away with 'lamb chops'. Preachers who take up their own offering, without the prior notice and approval of the local pastor are a day light robbers. What is your motive in the prophetic ministry? To serve or to be served, that is the question?

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We may borrow the example of Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 5: 2-3:

'Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by constraint but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly, not as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock'.

7. Pure heart.

Our heart is like a garden. We must constantly remove the weeds. The birds in the air some time carry foreign seeds and drop them on the garden of our hearts. We need to be watchful and vigilant that those foreign weeds be removed immediately lest they steal the richness of the soil.

Many negative issues can defile the purity of the heart. One per cent of poison in a bottle of pure distilled water is enough to kill a person.

I remember when I was pastoring a church, there was a leader whom we raised up under our leadership. He was very supportive and faithful in the ministry. One day out of the blue, he called for an emergency council meeting. At this meeting, he vented all his disappointments. He pointed out all my shortcomings and tendered his resignation.

The next morning during my prayer time, I was nursing the hurt and offense. I could not pray or read the Bible. My spirit was heavy and grieved. The pain of betrayal was too much for me to bear. I understand what many pastors go through with their flock and leaders. I did not know what to do. Suddenly a song came to me. This is the lyric:

***A pure heart, that what I long for.
A heart that follows hard after Thee.
A heart that hides your word so that sin will not come in. A
heart that is undivided but one You rule and reign
A heart that beats compassion that pleases you my Lord.
Sweet aroma of worship that rises to your throne***

I sang many times. My hardened heart started to soften. The Presence of God came all over me. Tears flowed and I began to receive God's love and mercy. My heart was filled with love and forgiveness towards the brother. Suddenly I found myself releasing the pain and hurts. A spiritual cleansing took place and I was totally refreshed by The Spirit of God.

I left the prayer room that morning knowing what Matthew 5:8 meant, 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.'