

## **Ephesians Week 8: Practices to Become What We Believe**

### **Prophetic Word of Encouragement**

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#### **What is a Prophetic Encouragement?**

Prophecy at its most basic definition is “a message from God.” So a prophetic word of encouragement is a specific message from God we receive to uplift another person. When Jesus walked the earth He saw people with a different set of eyes. He didn’t just see people in all of their sin, he saw them as their true, redeemed identity. Peter wasn’t his friend who disowned him, Peter was the rock that the church was going to be built on. Prophecy reveals how God sees a person and who He created them to be, moving them towards their identity and calling.

If we’re honest, sometimes the kinds of prophecy we see in scripture look intense and intimidating. But there is actually a difference between what we see in the Old Testament and what we see in the New Testament. Today we live on the New Testament side of history where Jesus has restored our standing with God; we are the forgiven and redeemed. This means we’re under a new covenant (or commitment) with Him, and the type of prophecy we practice is considered New Covenant Prophecy.

First Corinthians 14: 1-3 & 24-25 outlines some of the distinct values of this type of prophecy. But in summary, New Covenant Prophecy focuses on love, and does not judge or condemn. It is through love that people are brought to their knees, shown the greatness of God, and reconciled with the Father. So the goal for us as we practice prophecy should be to receive God’s heart for people and share that with them.

#### **How to Practice Prophetic Encouragement:**

Getting Started:

- Start by thinking of someone you care about, and reflect on what it is you appreciate about them. Write those things down. After a moment, ask God to show you what He thinks about that person. Don’t feel the pressure to hear anything new or profound, just listen. It may be as simple as He agrees with you, or He might show you more about those traits you appreciate, or it could be something you haven’t thought of before.
- Then write and send them a note (text, email, letter, card) encouraging them. Keep in mind that it’s okay if you don’t know exactly which parts are from you and which are from God. If it is genuine and positive, it’s worth saying.

Going Deeper:

- Ask God to reveal someone to you: a close friend, family member, coworker, roommate, barista, neighbor, etc. Then ask God how He would introduce this person? How does He see this person? Is there something unique about this person that God wants to highlight? Write down all scriptures, thoughts, impressions or words you hear or think of.
- Then find a time to share what you’ve heard with them in person. Focus on traits about their heart, love, relationships, ambitions, gifts/talents; however you feel led to encourage them. Share both what you believe God says about them, and if applicable, affirm where you’ve seen that in them.

Keep Growing:

- If you want to grow in this, start by putting yourself in situations that require you to be listening to God as you’re talking to someone, like the Sunday Prayer Team or in a mentoring relationship.
- As you make this a practice, ask for feedback. When we receive feedback it allows us to learn what was our voice and what was God’s. Ask the person how accurate the word was, did it resonate with them? Were they encouraged in their relationship with God? Also, refine your language. Ask them if you use too much spiritual language. Ask if they felt like you communicated with easy to understand language, not under communicating or over communicating.