

## PREPARED *for the* TIMES

by Rick Joyner

We see in Revelation 2:20 that Jezebel “calls herself a prophetess.” We must beware of those who are so small spiritually that they have to promote themselves or seek to use high titles for recognition. I have been privileged to know a few who walk in true prophetic ministries of biblical stature, and not one of them was concerned about being known as a prophet. As Leonard Ravenhill once told me, “You don’t have to advertise a fire.” If you have the goods, you do not have to promote yourself. Jesus said in John 7:18:

*“He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.”*

The Greek word that is translated “glory” here is *doxa* and could have been translated “recognition.” Both of these words are appropriate. When our motives are to seek our own glory, or recognition, we will not be true messengers of God. If we are going to be used as prophets, we must have the motive of seeking to do God’s will and turn people to Him, not to ourselves.

To help prophetic people with these motives, prophets are rarely recognized as such until after they are dead and no longer a threat. Most prophets must endure constant persecution, accusations, and threats just as we see in the life of the ultimate Prophet, Jesus. Therefore, a true prophet’s acceptance

and encouragement must come from the recognition of God, not men.

Another nearly constant problem for true prophets are the false prophets and pseudo prophets whose constant troubling of issues and people are usually blamed on all prophets. The Scriptures make it clear that we are doing the right thing to put those who come with such titles to the test. If we are truly sent by God, we should not mind these tests—but rather appreciate them as being more for the benefit of those who are true.

The first test I use is the following: Are they coming with the royal dignity, grace, and wisdom of our King? As the Scriptures also make clear, prophets can be quite strange, but there is nevertheless a certain royal dignity that comes with the true royal messengers. It is hard to define, but when we learn to recognize it, it becomes easy to recognize.

Of course, the messengers of the King are not the King, and we cannot expect them to be perfect. Even the Apostle Paul said to the Galatians that he knew



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that his flesh was a trial to them, commended them for seeing past that, and receiving him as if he were an angel, or messenger, of God.

Having known many of the significant Christians of our times, I have always been struck by how those with the most substance always care the least about titles, or themselves being honored, but are rather more devoted to honoring others, especially those they have been sent to. They treat the bride of Christ as the queen that she is. They treat God's people as the royalty that they are, and they come more to honor than to be honored.

Another basic characteristic of the message that comes from God is stated in James 3:13-18:

*"Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."*

## The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle....

James 3:17

As we see here, where there is a devotion to our own recognition, or "selfish ambition," it is an open door to "every evil thing." The seed, or word, whose "fruit is righteousness" must first be pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable. By these things, we must learn to judge both the message and messengers as being true or not.

Certainly our ministry titles have a place in helping the church understand the ministry we have. However, the overuse and misuse of spiritual titles has terribly devalued our spiritual currency in recent times. It is hard not to meet anyone in ministry now who does not claim to be an apostle, bishop, or prophet. It has become so outlandish that when I see those who just call themselves "pastor," I immediately have respect and trust for them just because of their modesty.

Even so, we are in a time when these ministries are being restored to the church, and we would be missing the purposes of the Lord to not expect them. We should seek to recognize and receive them. If we receive a prophet in the name of a prophet, we will receive a prophet's reward, but if we receive a prophet as just a teacher, then we will only get teaching. The same is true of all ministries. If we receive an apostle as just a teacher, we will only get teaching. However, if we receive a teacher as an apostle, we are likely to get wrong or bad leadership. Because of this, there is a responsibility on the part of leadership to "know those who labor among you."

Again, there is a place, and even a need for using ministry titles, as even the Apostle Paul resolutely defended his apostleship. Even so, he was doing it for the people, not just for himself. There was no self-promotion or bombast in his defense, but rather the spirit of a father instructing his children. It has grace, dignity, and high wisdom that we come to know as a hallmark of the true messengers who have been sent by the King.



Likewise, the revelations, dreams, or visions, which come from Him have this same grace and dignity. In this age, the Lord leads by calling more than commanding. He has the authority to do what He wants, but, as we see in Revelation 3:20, He is standing outside of His own church and knocking to see if anyone will hear and open up to Him. The reason for this is because we are in the age when He is seeking out those who will be joint heirs with Him, who will obey because they love the truth, not just under compulsion. For this reason, we should never feel pressured into action by a true prophetic revelation, but rather called. There have been times when we can receive a warning about something that requires action, but even those should come in the dignity and grace of the Lord, calling for a response, not pressuring, as we read in James 3.

I have learned that whenever I was compelled to do something fast, it was not from the Lord, and

the action was usually a big mistake. The Lord, who sees the end from the beginning, is not going to be caught off guard so that He will have to rush us into something. I know of a number of biblical exhortations to wait on the Lord and to be patient, but I do not know of a single one that compels us to hurry. After much experience and many mistakes, I've learned certain things about the way He speaks and leads.

Now here's an important principle that is essential for true ministry, but does fly in the face of what many perceive to be the way we should operate. The Holy Spirit is "The Helper," not "The Doer." When people say that none of them are mixed into the ministry, they are mistaken if it is true ministry. This "mixture" is not only okay, it is necessary. If the Lord had wanted all ministry to be 100 percent Him, with none of us mixed in, then He would never have left, and He would not have let anyone else do anything.

As we have discussed before, in Luke 10 we see the Lord sending His disciples out two by two to preach the gospel, heal the sick, and cast out demons. They were so successful that when they returned, Jesus said that He saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning. However, it is not until the next chapter, Luke 11, that the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray. They did all of this and did not even know how to pray yet!

These disciples were obviously far from perfect, or even mature, when the Lord trusted them with extraordinary authority. Yet, I doubt anyone who was healed, set free, or who heard the good news of the coming kingdom through them, complained. Even just before Jesus was crucified, the disciples were arguing over who was the greatest, and they were to be the leaders of the church through its most delicate formative times just a few weeks later. Many years afterward, some of them were still making extraordinary mistakes, such as Peter, who had to be rebuked by the youngest apostle at Antioch because "he stood condemned."

We are foolish if we look for perfection in ministry or in leadership, regardless of how mature they are. Our hope should not be in the vessels, but in the treasure that is in the vessels—the Holy Spirit. If we keep our trust rightly placed in Him, we will not be overly dependent or disappointed by people. If the ministries and leaders are true servants, they will not be seeking to build people's trust in them, but in the Lord. Jesus, Himself, is the only foundation that can be built upon that will last. If we build people's trust in ourselves instead of the Lord, we have failed, and that foundation will fail too, because no one but the Lord can carry that kind of burden.

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The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."

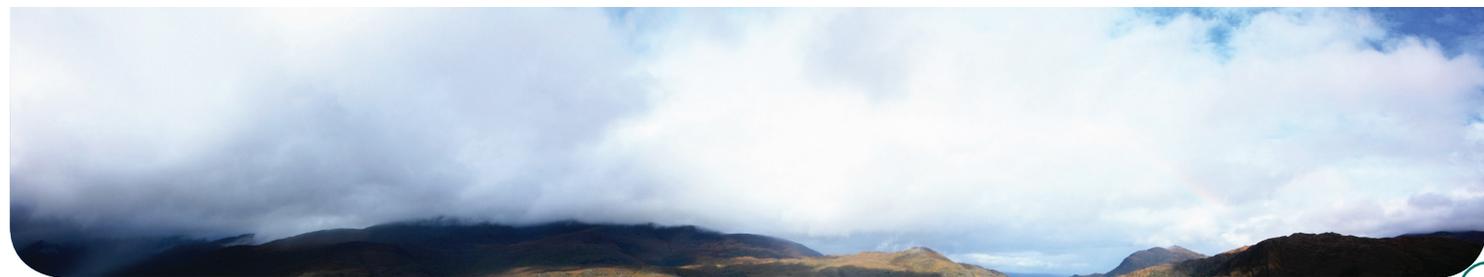
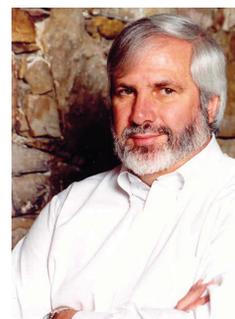
Luke 10:17

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This is important because it is the perfectionist mentality that is based more in a trust in ourselves than in the Lord, which hinders most from stepping out into their calling and ministry. We do not get perfected so that we can be used by the Lord; we get perfected by being used by Him.

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(Rick will be speaking at our August 4-7, 2010, "**Light of the World**" Holy Spirit Conference. He will also be the speaker for the pre-conference Pastors' Day on Wednesday from 9:30 a.m.- 1:30 p.m.)



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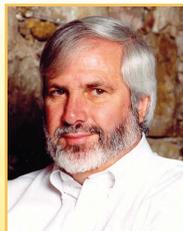


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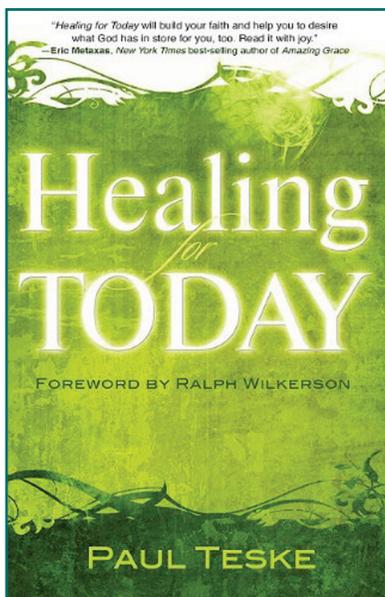
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