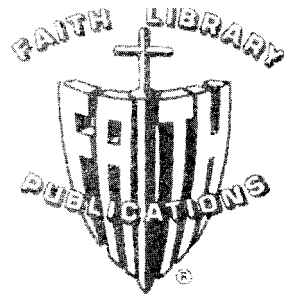


HE GAVE GIFTS UNTO MEN

**A Biblical Perspective of
Apostles, Prophets, and
Pastors**

Kenneth E. Hagin



Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations in this volume are from the *King James Version* of the Bible.

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¹ Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Paternoster Press: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), p. 70.

Chapter 10

God Does Not Put Novices In Positions of Authority

People sometimes ask the question, "Why do we call pastors by their title, but not the other four ministry gifts?" When I first came over among Pentecostal circles in 1937, in our part of the country we'd very often call ministers by their title or office. For instance, we would say, "Prophet So-and-so."

We don't do that so much today, and in one way it gives the impression that these offices no longer function in the Body of Christ. Yet in our day if we did use ministry titles, without scriptural teaching along this line, some people would invariably get into a ditch and get into trouble. I never wanted to be called a prophet myself, because I didn't want to be classed with the false ones. Someone asked me what a false prophet is. For one thing, a false prophet is someone who is trying to operate in that office when he is not called to that office.

Even if a person is a true prophet, it's not always wise to use titles because as I said, usually people get carried away with that. Besides, the ministry doesn't consist in name and title. It consists in power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost. It shouldn't matter to us what people call us or don't call us. We should just want to obey God.

What *is* important is that people stand in the min-

istry office they are called to in the power of the Holy **Ghost** and that **their** ministry **is** based solidly on the Word of God. We need all the ministries God has placed in the Body of Christ, no matter what we *label* them.

Some who do use the title "prophet" today are little more than novices in the ministry. People need to understand that God is not going to put a novice in that office. He's going to prove the minister first before He puts him in any ministry office. And many folks never even move into the fullness of their real calling or ministry in God because they are too unfaithful in the little that God has given them to do.

Jesus said something to me once about this, and it has become more real to me all the time. He said, "Spiritual growth is similar to natural growth."

For example, you knew some things as a teenager and you carried some responsibility. But it was different when you grew up and began being fully responsible as an adult. The same thing is true spiritually.

Those whom God calls to the ministry don't usually get into these offices all at once. Believers don't normally start out in the ministry God eventually has for them. There may be some exceptions to that, but as a normal rule that is true.

We see some reference to this in the Scriptures in Paul's ministry. Paul didn't start out in the ultimate ministry God had for him, which was the apostolic ministry. He was a prophet and a teacher for many years before God separated him for the greater work of the apostolic ministry (Acts 13:1,2).

If you are called to the ministry, don't think you will be the exception to

the rule. No, God will prove you before He puts you in the office He has for you.

For example, if God calls you to pastor a church, you may eventually pastor a church of four thousand, but you couldn't start out there. You may have to start out with a congregation of four or forty and build up to four hundred. Actually, you wouldn't be qualified to pastor a church of four thousand when you first start out in the ministry.

It's the same way with the evangelist. He may have to start preaching to just a few people like I did or in the jails. Teachers may have to start out teaching in home meetings. And it may be that they never develop beyond that stage because that is all God has called them to do — it is the ultimate call God has for them.

But the point is, each one called to the fivefold ministry must prove himself faithful right where he is before God can use him to a greater degree. God can't increase the anointing on a person if he is not faithful to what God has already told him to do.

People don't normally start out in the ministry God ultimately has for them because there is a training and a proving time in God. Since spiritual growth is similar to natural growth, a person needs to grow and mature both naturally and spiritually before God will put him in a ministry office because ministry offices carry great responsibility.

God doesn't put novices, those who are untrained and immature in spiritual things, in positions of authority (1 Tim. 3:6).

Phases of Ministry

For example, in my own life, God didn't immediately move me into the office of the prophet. In fact, I had been in the ministry more than fifteen years before I stood in the office of the prophet.

I felt the call to preach all my life, of course. And after I was born again on the bed of sickness, I said, "Lord, You get me up from here and I'll go preach." I knew I was called to the ministry. I left that bed preaching and for years I was just anointed to preach. From 1934 until June 1943 — nine years — I was strictly a preacher.

In the early days of my ministry, I didn't like to teach. However, as a pastor, I had to teach the adult Bible class. But I was never so glad when it was over so I could preach again. I thought I wasn't anointed unless I was waving my arms like a windmill and spitting cotton.

But in June 1943 at three o'clock in the afternoon, the Lord dropped the teaching gift down into my spirit. Ephesians 4:7 says, "*... unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*"

You remember, in the Old Testament God told Elijah the prophet to anoint Elisha to be prophet "in his room" or in his stead (1 Kings 19:16). Elijah passed by Elisha and threw his mantle on him.

The mantle was an outer cloak which symbolized the anointing of God coming upon a person to stand in a particular office or to perform a particular task or function for God.

As I was walking across the floor that afternoon, the teaching mantle fell upon me. It felt just like someone dropped a cloak on me, first on the outside, and then it went down on the inside of me into my spirit. I knew exactly what had happened. God gave me the ability to teach. I said out loud, "Now I can teach."

But I didn't go around telling people about that experience, saying, "I've got a teaching gift. I'm a teacher."

Become what God has called you to be first, and then people will see the anointing of God upon you. The spiritual equipment operating in your life will demonstrate what you are called to do. And you won't have to advertise it either. It will be readily apparent to everyone the office you stand in.

So I was a preacher and then a teacher of the Word, and I pastored for nearly twelve years. But I still didn't stand in the office of the prophet. Occasionally the word of wisdom was manifested through me. I interpreted tongues, but I didn't prophesy.

The word of knowledge began operating in my life consistently when I was baptized in the Holy Spirit. But I didn't operate it; it operated as the Spirit willed. But that still didn't make me a prophet.

The word of knowledge was a great blessing to me as a pastor. Many times when I was pastoring, minutes before a church member would drive up to the parsonage, by the word of knowledge I would tell my wife who was about to come to the door, why he was coming, and what his need was. A few minutes later that very person drove up and began talking about the exact thing the Lord had showed me.

That didn't **happen every day, but** it **occurred consistently** — almost every week. And if any of my church members got into trouble, I knew it immediately by the Spirit of God. The word of knowledge ought to operate in every pastor's life. I believe it would if pastors knew how to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and how to yield to Him. But that still wouldn't make them prophets.

What often happens is that the word of knowledge operates occasionally in someone's life, and then they try to operate it at will to make something happen. When they do that, they unconsciously begin to yield to wrong spirits, and they get into trouble spiritually.

But even though the word of knowledge operated in my life on a consistent basis, I didn't step into the office of the prophet until 1952.

Actually, in 1950 Jesus appeared to me, and He said this to me: "When you left your last church, at that time, you entered into the first phase of the ministry I had for you."

I replied, "You mean I'm just now entering into the first phase after being in the ministry fifteen years?"

Jesus said, "Yes."

Then He made this comment: "Some ministers live and die and never even enter into the first phase of the ministry I have for them. That's the reason many of them, not all of them, but many of them die young and don't live their full length of time out down here."

Jesus explained that if you are not in the will of God, then to some extent, you are in disobedience. When you are in disobedience, Satan can attack you. He has a right to attack you when you are in disobedience because you are on his territory.

I've experienced the difference between being in God's perfect will and being just in His permissive will! His perfect will is so much better!

Of course there will be tests and trials as long as we are on this earth. But

if you're in the perfect will of God, He will see you through every one of them.

If you're not in the perfect will of God, you open a door to the devil. And you will have to repent and obey God before He can move in your behalf as He desires. It's just better to be in the perfect will of God.

Anyway, in 1952 Jesus appeared to me in a vision, and said, "From this time forward what is known in My Word as discerning of spirits will operate in your life and ministry when you are in the Spirit."

When I received the gift of discerning of spirits, I could see and hear in the realm of the spirit *when I was in the Spirit*. Then two revelation gifts — discerning of spirits and the word of knowledge — operated in my life consistently, plus prophecy.

Did they operate every day or every week? Not necessarily. Every service? No, it was as the Holy Spirit willed (1 Cor. 12:11). But it was then that I stepped into the office of the prophet.

But, you see, the point I'm trying to make is that God doesn't put those whom He has called to the fulltime ministry in these ministry offices overnight. When Jesus appeared to me in 1952 and the gift of discerning of spirits began to operate in my ministry and I entered into the prophetic office, I had been in the ministry more than fifteen years. Even then, I didn't stand in that office publicly until 1953.

But I still didn't advertise that I stood in the office of the prophet, and I don't mention it much today. A person who has to advertise his calling, doesn't have much.

It's all right to advertise your meetings, of course, and let folks know you're in town. But if you are called to the office of the prophet, you don't have to broadcast it all over town. People will find out soon enough if you are really called to that office by the supernatural equipment that operates through you.

Where novices get into trouble is that they go out and tell everyone they are called to a ministry office when they've never even operated in that office or they are just a beginner in it!

As the old saying goes, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating." Are you first and foremost a preacher or a teacher of the Word? Do your prophecies come to pass? Do they line up with the Word of God? Are you teachable and easy to be entreated? Or do you cause strife and problems everywhere you go and get run off from every church where you preach?

These are the true tests of your ministry. Let your ministry first be proved. The Bible says, . . . *let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone . . .*" (Gal. 6:4).

Just because gifts of the Spirit operate through you occasionally, that doesn't make you a prophet. Any Spirit-filled believer may have an occasional manifestation of revelation gifts as the need arises. After all, the Holy Ghost is in believers, and He manifests Himself through the gifts of the Spirit to meet the needs of people.

But there is a vast difference between an occasional manifestation of a revelation gift and a person who is called to a fivefold *ministry* office through whom spiritual gifts operate on a *more consistent* basis. That's where some folks are missing it today.

Of course, the Bible encourages all believers to covet to prophesy. First Corinthians 14:31 says, . . . *ye may all prophesy one by one*. . . . " But there are no revelation gifts — word of knowledge, word of wisdom, discerning of spirits — manifested in the simple gift of prophecy.

For example, in Acts 21:9 it says that Philip had four daughters "which did prophesy." But they didn't stand in the office of the prophet just because they prophesied.

Some folks see a prophet operate in some of the more spectacular demonstrations of the revelation gifts of the Spirit, and they think they can do that too. Then they try to prophesy using revelation gifts, and they are either prophesying in the flesh or they are inspired by occult powers.

Folks who are called to the office of the prophet are called to a full-time ministry *office*. They are called and set apart by *God* to the ministry. They can't call themselves or set themselves in a ministry office.

No Prophets in the Laity

You see, that's why there are no prophets among what we call the laity. Those in the laity aren't spiritually equipped, nor do they have the anointing to stand in a ministry office.

Some people among the laity claim they are prophets, but they aren't. They can't be because that is a ministry *office*, equipped supernaturally by God with spiritual gifts or *endowments*. Only God can equip a person with spiritual gifts and set him into a ministry office.

Ministry offices are for those called to the full-time ministry. The prophet is a ministry gift to the Body of Christ. Of course, a person called to the ministry can stand in more than one office, as he is called by God and equipped by the Holy Spirit.

However, pastors are not normally called to the office of the prophet for several reasons. First, there is no record in the Bible of a pastor who was also a prophet.

Second, the prophet's ministry seems to be more of a roving ministry, like that of the evangelist's ministry. For example, in the Old Testament, the prophet Samuel taught in a circuit (1 Sam. 7:16) and traveled from place to place.

Third, when a pastor is called to the pastoral office, that is his first calling or ministry. You understand that as the need might arise, God could move a pastor over into the prophetic ministry temporarily at times to minister. But that would not be his main call. The pastoral ministry is his first priority.

Pastors may even operate sometimes in revelation gifts, but that doesn't make them prophets. And God may at times temporarily put one who will eventually stand in the prophetic office in the pastoral office as part of his training, as he did with me.

The office of the prophet is a distinct office, equipped with a more *consistent* manifestation of revelation gifts of the Spirit. And it would be a person's main ministry, just as pastoring is the pastor's main ministry.

Let God Set You in Your Place In the Body of Christ

If you think God has called you to a ministry office, even the office of the prophet, let *Him* put you into that office. You couldn't step into it immediately anyway. You wouldn't be ready for it, and you would make a mess of it if you tried to put yourself into that office. But God will add to your spiritual maturity here a little and there a little as He sees fit.

If God *does* want to set you into the office of the prophet, allow *Him* to do it. As you are faithful to do what He gives you as you are maturing spiritually, eventually when He sees He can trust you with it, He will set you into that office.

If you are a novice in spiritual things, just be faithful to do what God has called you to do *today*. Be diligent to "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" (2 Tim. 2:15).

There was a reason the Spirit of God said through the Apostle Paul not to put a novice in an office. A novice is too easily lifted up in pride, and that opens a door to the devil: ". . . lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (1 Tim. 3:6).

Many novices have tried to enter the office of the prophet themselves. Many were lifted up in pride when Satan tempted them, and their lives and ministries were destroyed. Some probably sensed the calling of God in their spirits to the prophet's office, but instead of waiting for God to set them in that office, they tried to rush into it themselves.

Also, the Body of Christ needs to realize that ministering in the office of the prophet carries an awesome responsibility; that is one reason it isn't for novices.

Some folks say, "I wish I could operate in the office of the prophet." Oh, dear Lord! If they really had the opportunity, they probably wouldn't wish that because of the awesome responsibility that goes along with it.

For example, it is an awesome responsibility to look out over a congregation, and by the gifts of the Spirit see someone whom you know is going to die that very night.

Sometimes you know why they are going to die, and sometimes you don't. It takes the wisdom of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit to know what to do with that knowledge. You don't always tell the person what you know, unless you are specifically instructed to by the Lord.

It is the hardest thing in the world to minister over in the prophetic office sometimes because of some of the things you see and know by the Spirit of God.

I've been in meetings where I've stood in the office of the prophet and looked out over the congregation and seen into the realm of the Spirit. Many times I've seen exactly what was physically wrong with people.

And sometimes as the Spirit of God wills, I know the reason they are sick. It is an awesome responsibility to be used in revelation gifts of the Spirit and minister accurately according to the Holy Spirit's leading. Folks, this office is not for novices!

That's why you need to let God develop *you* and *your ministry*, whatever it may be. As God prepares you, people will recognize the gift of God in you. If you think God has called you to the prophetic office, study and show yourself approved, grow and mature spiritually, and be faithful as you serve

Him in other capacities. God will mature you and prove you before he puts you in positions of increased responsibility.

Just trust in the wisdom of God and know that as you do your part and prepare yourself in the Word, God in His wisdom will do His part. He will lead and guide you, and if you are called to that office, He will mature you both naturally and spiritually first before *He* sets you into that office.

SECTION III PASTORS

