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Seven Steps for Judging Prophecy



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Chapter 1

By Their Fruits. . .

As New Testament Christians, we need the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in our churches today. We should encourage every flame of fire that comes from God, but we also should realize that there are true and false gifts.

There is no need to be afraid of the gifts of the Spirit just because some false elements have crept in. Once I was given some counterfeit money. I didn't throw away my whole billfold and all of my good money just because a little of it was counterfeit. I kept the genuine and threw the false away.

Believers can learn to distinguish between true and false gifts. We don't need to be left in the dark concerning anything; the Bible gives us light!

We're even told that we can judge prophecy and prophets. How? The Bible gives seven steps for judging prophecy. Studying these steps will be a blessing to you now and in the future.

The first step is: "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Jesus warned against false prophets, saying, *"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves"* (Matt.

7:15).

Paul and Peter, writing to the Early Church, also warned against false prophets, false apostles, and false prophecies:

2 CORINTHIANS 11:13-15

13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light

15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

2 PETER 2:1-3

1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

If such a warning was necessary to the Early Church, it is necessary today. (We believe and practice what they wrote then concerning the Lord's Supper, water baptism, and other things. Why not believe and practice what they said about this?)

Jesus is the One issuing that warning against false prophets in Matthew 7. Does He know what He's talking about? I believe He does. I believe people today need His warning.

As we saw, He described false prophets as coming to you *"in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves"* (v. 15). They seem very humble, very

meek—just like the rest of the sheep. You can't tell from their outward appearance that they are ravening wolves.

But Jesus said there is a way to know them. How? *"Ye shall know them by their fruits"* Jesus said. *"Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit"* (vv. 16,17).

He continued, *"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (vv. 18-20).

I once knew a minister who seemingly was used mightily in prophecy and other gifts. Yet when I had an opportunity to attend one of his services, I knew something was wrong. I couldn't put my finger on it—I didn't have any revelation from God—but something on the inside of me told me he wasn't tuned into the frequency I'm on.

I didn't know much about this man's ministry, so I couldn't judge his fruit. Soon afterwards, however, I preached for a pastor friend who had just had this evangelist in his church.

When accusations of dishonesty were made against the man, the pastor confronted him. The evangelist replied, "Why, there's not a word of truth in that! Those people are lying about me!"

When the pastor's sister-in-law came to him with the same story, he had to confront the evangelist the second time. "There never was a bigger lie told," the evangelist stated. "They're lying about it."

Then the pastor's sister-in-law took a tape recorder into a secret meeting the evangelist held with some of the church members. She recorded what he said. He told the people, "I don't let them know I believe this, but it's all right to lie as long as you're lying for good." (Brother, it's wrong to lie, regardless of what it's about!)

When the pastor confronted this preacher with the tape recording, he said, "Well now, brother, you know if a man's working for God, you just can't tell

everything. It's all right to lie sometimes."

By their fruits you shall know them. This evangelist could prophesy long and loud, but who would believe his prophecies? Once you knew about him, would you?

Chapter 2

Does It Glorify Christ

The second step in judging prophecy is: "Does it glorify Christ?"

Jesus, speaking of the Holy Spirit, said, *"He shall glorify me ...."* (John 16:14). And He will, won't He? Let's look at some Scripture along this line.

REVELATION 19:10

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

If the prophet is right and if the prophecy is right, they will testify of Jesus. However, if it attracts attention to man, it's wrong, for Jesus said, *"He shall glorify me."*

In First Corinthians 12:3, Paul wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, *"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."*

Don't take that verse out of context, because anybody could say just from his mind, "Jesus is Lord." Remember that Paul said in the first verse of this chapter, "I would not have you ignorant concerning spiritual gifts." Therefore, what he's saying in context is that when spiritual gifts—

including prophecy—are in operation, the manifestation will make Jesus Lord.

1 JOHN 4:1,2

1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of

God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.

Again false prophets are mentioned. If there were false prophets in the time of the Early Church, there are false prophets now. From verse 2 we notice again that if the prophecy is of God, it points to Jesus. Therefore, we can judge both the prophet and the prophecy according to their attitude toward Jesus. If they lead away from Him or create division in the Body of Christ, they are wrong. If they magnify man rather than Christ, they are wrong.

Chapter 3

Does It Agree With the Scriptures?

The third step in judging prophecy is to ask, "Does it agree with the Scriptures?" This is closely associated with step two.

If it is a true prophecy, it will be according to the Word of God, because the Spirit and the Word agree. The Word was inspired by the Holy Spirit. (" *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,"* 2 Peter 1:21.)

The Holy Spirit is not going to tell you one thing in the Word and another thing through prophecy. If a prophecy doesn't agree with the Word of God, it isn't right. If it's the same Spirit, it's going to agree with the Word.

This does not mean that a prophecy is necessarily from the devil. It could be an evil spirit's influence, but sometimes it is just the result of human reasoning. The fact that a person would unknowingly listen to an evil spirit does not mean he is not a Christian or even that he is not Spirit filled.

When Jesus was discussing His death on the cross with His disciples, Peter said, "Not so, Lord," and Jesus turned to Peter and said, *"Get thee behind me, Satan ...."* (Matt. 16:23). Jesus was not calling Peter "Satan," but Peter had unknowingly listened to the devil and had repeated the wrong thing.

Therefore, *the third rule in judging prophecy is: "Is it in line with the Word of God?"* You can see how essential it is that we know the Word of God, for we

cannot judge prophecy without a thorough knowledge of God's Word.

Chapter 4

Are Their Prophecies Fulfilled?

Step number four is to ask, "Are their prophecies fulfilled?"

DEUTERONOMY 18:20-22

20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.

21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?

22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

There are some who are presumptuous and prophesy out of their own minds. Their prophecies would not be fulfilled. The Lord is saying, "You can mark them and not be afraid of them; that's just man speaking."

Chapter 5

Not All Prophecies Are of God

We need to realize—and this is step number five—that *not all prophecies are of God, even though they may come to pass.* We see this discussed in the 13th chapter of Deuteronomy.

DEUTERONOMY 13:1-5

1 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, 2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; 3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth

you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

4 Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.

5 And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.

Sometimes people say, "Well, that must be right. It came to pass." But even under certain circumstances when it *does* come to pass, it isn't from God. Why? Look again at step number two. Does this sign, wonder, or prophecy lead you to God or away from Him? Does it cause you to become more reverent of God, the Holy Spirit, and the Bible, or does it lead you away from the New Birth and other fundamental doctrines?

If we would judge these prophecies, we wouldn't be confused.

You may have read books by secular people who claim to be able to foretell the future. But they don't have the biblical gift of prophecy, even though they "prophesy."

Somebody might say, "Why, sometimes 85 percent of what they prophesy comes to pass. They must be true prophets."

The Bible speaks right here in Deuteronomy 13 about people prophesying and showing a sign and a wonder, and the prophecy coming to pass, but the Lord said it's still not of God. Why did He say it wasn't of God? Because instead of leading the people to God, it led them away from Him.

I have read some of the books by so-called secular "prophets." I can speak with authority about it. The blood of Jesus Christ is not mentioned once. The Holy Spirit, if He is mentioned at all, is mentioned only in reference to First Corinthians 12, "... to *another prophecy* . . .," in an attempt to say the person has the gift of prophecy.

In their books you'll learn where their philosophy and beliefs have come from. For example, in one such book the writer states that a serpent once came to her in a vision.

Anybody who knows the Bible knows that the serpent is a type of the devil. No angel has ever visited anyone in the form of a serpent! Yet a serpent came and entwined itself around this person and revealed certain things.

I read that statement myself; it's not something somebody told me. I don't believe it's right to repeat hearsay. I read it—the whole book—word for word.

It's certain that genuine prophecies from God are not going to be used to predict who is going to win a horse race or a political race! We need to judge and rightly divide such so-called "prophecy."

One individual who claims to predict the future said that when she was a little girl, her mother took her to a gypsy fortune-teller who was camped outside of town. This gypsy fortune-teller became very excited upon meeting her.

"Oh!" she gasped, "I see some kind of an aura about her.

She's gifted of God. She'll be used this way." And she thought it was so wonderful that she gave the child her crystal ball.

So when this child was 8 years old she began to consult this crystal ball. She says in her book that when people come to her for advice, sometimes she'll look into that crystal ball and she'll see things in vision form. If the vision appears on the right side of the crystal ball, it means one thing; if it's on the left side, it means something else.

Jesus didn't look into any crystal ball! Biblical gifts of prophecy and revelations by the Spirit of God have nothing in common with crystal balls.

People like this are psychic mediums. Good people have swallowed the story that they have the "gift of prophecy." They have a "gift" all right, but it's not from God. It's not from the Holy Spirit. To get gifts from God, you've got to be a child of God. And everybody who is born in this world is not a child of God.

Good people have been misled. You can understand how somebody who is hungry to know God—like some denominational people, for example—would

seek after God, not knowing the facts, and might follow after a secular "prophet" or fortune-teller. That's the reason I'm sounding this alarm.

Reputable people have told me that an adult Bible class in a certain denominational church got a book by one of these psychic mediums and read it. The pastor commented, "This must be what the Lord's talking about in First Corinthians—the true gift of prophecy." So they studied that book.

I know some Pentecostal preachers and people who have said the very same thing. I am appalled! I am alarmed! Christians should be able to discern these prophecies. They should be able to know whether they're right or wrong.

As we saw, the Bible says you're able to judge by the direction these things take. The Bible says that if there arises a prophet or dreamer of dreams among you, and he prophesies certain things, or shows you a sign or a wonder—and it comes to pass—you're not to follow it *if it leads you after other gods.* (In other words, if it leads you away from God, the Scriptures, and what's right, don't follow it, *even if the prophecy is fulfilled.* Instead, ask yourself the question, "Does it lead me to God or away from Him?") One of these psychic mediums was once in Dallas at the same time I was there holding a seminar. She spoke to a club and got a lot of publicity because of her best-selling book A reporter who was present wrote that after her talk, this medium told each of the club members something about themselves. Sometimes she took their hands to get the right "vibrations," as they call it. (I'm afraid of *vibrations.* I believe in *revelations* of the Holy Spirit.) Acting as a psychic medium—it's fortune-telling in a sense—this woman said such things as, "I see you're going to take a trip, and this is going to happen and that is going to happen."

Certainly it's true that the Spirit of God may give a person a premonition. For example, when Paul boarded that ship bound for Rome, he said, *"Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage ...*" (Acts 27:10). That warning, my brother and sister, was from the Spirit of God.

It's also true that some psychic manifestations work in a similar way to the gifts of the Spirit. It's true that when the Spirit of God is operating in me, I sometimes have to touch people, like this woman did, for the gifts to operate. But the issue is: Where did the gift come from—and what is it used for?

Is it just something to play with, or is it from the Word of God? Does it direct

people to worship, lead them to Jesus, and cause them to reverence God, or does this gift work for just anybody—some old drunkard, wino, cigarette sucker, cigar chewer, or gambler? If it does, that's not God.

Chapter 6

Do the Prophecies Produce Liberty or Bondage?

The sixth step in judging prophecy is to ask, "Do the prophecies produce liberty or bondage?"

2 CORINTHIANS 4:13

13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.

Notice, first of all, the phrase "We *having the same spirit of faith...* ." If something's done in the same spirit of faith that we are in, it will produce liberty. If it's not, it will produce bondage.

Many are led into bondage instead of into light and deliverance. God does not want to bind people or hold them in bondage. God is concerned about liberating people—setting them free.

If people are of the same spirit, they'll know it. The "same spirit" is what is important. As I mentioned, I didn't know anything about the "fruit" of this evangelist, but when I got into his service, I detected that he didn't have the "same spirit" I did.

Somebody will say, "Maybe you could be wrong." No, Christians can detect in their spirit if something's not just right. They can detect a *confusion* there; a *mixture.* When you detect such a thing, I'd advise you to be very careful.

Now I want us to notice a verse in Romans 8: *"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father"* (v. 15).

Second Corinthians speaks about our having "the same spirit"—the spirit of faith. But it's still a spirit—the Holy Spirit—who is the Spirit of faith.

In Romans we saw that we have not received "the spirit of bondage." Therefore, this "same" spirit that we have is not a spirit of bondage. No, Romans 8:15 says, *"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear...."*

God's not going to lead us back into fear. We were delivered from that spirit of fear. We have received the spirit of power and liberty, glory to God!

You'll find that some prophets' ministries bring bondage instead of liberty.

I heard one fellow who, by his own admission, claimed to be a prophet. I guess he was at one time; at least God used him. I parted company from him after attending one of his meetings and hearing him say, "You've got to do what I say, because I'm a prophet."

No, that doesn't mean you've got to do what someone says and follow every idea he has about nonessential things just because he's a prophet. Of course he didn't claim to be speaking then under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, but he still wanted people to believe like he did.

"You've got to believe this like I believe it, and you've got to obey me," he said. He confused and bound the people instead of liberating them. Some came to me almost in tears, saying, "Brother Hagin, I'm all confused. I don't understand."

I said, "Forget it. Forget it! He's wrong. That's not right.

That brought you into bondage."

So we can judge these things. If prophecy produces bondage, it isn't right. The Word says,"... *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"* (2 Cor. 3:17). Some people stop right there and take the wrong liberty.

This fellow, even though he had had a move of God in his life at one time, was trying to push some warped ideas of his own by telling the people, "You're going to have to believe everything I say and do like I tell you, or you're not going to make it, because I'm God's spokesman. He's not speaking through anybody but me."

(When somebody becomes dogmatic, he's gone too far. God uses many different people, not just one man.)

2 CORINTHIANS 11:20

20 For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face.

God's not going to do any of those things. It's man who will do all that to you. That Scripture is simply talking about someone's using you. A lot of people are trying to "use" everybody they can. You suffer if someone uses you.

Notice the expression *"if a man bring you into bondage."* Ask yourself this question concerning prophecies: Do they produce liberty or bondage? If they produce bondage, it's just from man or the devil; it's not from God.

I remember hearing a fellow who called himself a prophet say, "I'm a prophet of God. If you want to get to heaven, you've got to do what I tell you to do. Even if you do what I believe—but because somebody else said to do it—you still won't make it to heaven. You've got to do it because I tell you to. And you've got to live just like *I* tell you to, or you won't make it. Now, you may *already* live that way, but if you don't do it because I tell you to, you won't make it."

He added, "You women are going to have to dress just like I tell you to. Even if you *already* dress that way, you won't go to heaven unless you do it because I told you to.

And I'm telling you not to wear any silk hose. You wear cotton hose or you're not going to heaven!"

Dear God, I'd just as soon hear a donkey bray at midnight in a tin barn—as we say down in Texas—as to hear that, wouldn't you? Yet that's what he said. I remember I laughed when I heard him. Really, it was so pathetic it wasn't a laughing matter. It should have brought one to tears.

It certainly didn't bring those people to liberty. It brought them to bondage! Therefore, this man's prophesyings weren't right, were they? We've got a scriptural right to judge them, haven't we? They weren't right.

A passage in Acts 20 shows us that what happened in the Early Church is still happening today:

ACTS 20:28-30

28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Paul is talking about two different things here: First, grievous wolves will come in from outside the flock, feeding on it and dividing it. (We have these "grievous wolves" today, don't we?) These men have no interest in the flock's well-being.

They're only concerned about themselves; not with "sparing the flock."

Second, Paul warns by the Holy Spirit that such men will even rise up from inside the flock, creating division and ". . . *speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."* (If it's God, it's not going to create divisions.) I'm not interested in leading disciples off after me.

There are too many "prophets" and others around the world building kingdoms for themselves, proselyting and leading people off into error.

Some claim they're "apostles," but they're false apostles.

Others claim they're "prophets," but they're false prophets.

We need to understand that the Body of Christ is One!

And we need to remain sincere and honest, walking in reverence toward God and man, honoring the entire Body.

The same things that apply to prophets hold true concerning evangelists or any other ministry gift. I pastored nearly 12 years, and I think many fellows in the evangelistic field ought to be made to pastor for a while.

Then they wouldn't do some of the things they do.

On the other hand, sometimes I think some of these pastors ought to be pushed

out of their nests and be made to get out and scratch for themselves for a while. Then they'd know how to treat an evangelist.

Too often selfishness reigns in our midst. Preachers are leading disciples off after themselves, not sparing the flock.

Preachers sometimes get to fighting among themselves, not sparing the flock—not considering them.

One time I was certain in my spirit that God was leading me to pastor a certain church. Its pastor was leaving at the same time I was leaving my church.

Because he didn't have an automobile, I drove him to certain churches that were seeking a pastor so he could try out by preaching for them. After we got back to his church, he asked, "Brother Hagin, would you be interested in coming here?" I replied, "If the people would be interested in having me, I probably would be."

He said, "Well, some have mentioned it to me."

He mentioned it to the congregation, and they seemed to respond favorably. But then his cousin came along, and instead of having the flock's interests in mind, the pastor got up before the people and suggested his cousin as the new pastor.

He added, "Well, Brother Hagin's interested in coming, too."

Immediately, acting in love, I got up and said, "No, I never put my name up. You're mistaken about that. I haven't put my name up, and if anybody did, I'm withdrawing it right now." And I got in my car and left.

The Lord whispered in my heart, "Don't bother about it.

I'll work everything out. They're the ones who are going to suffer; not you."

I refused to get in strife about it. I was thinking about the good of the people.

I just went on my way. God opened another door for me, and I stayed in that other pastorate for a year in His permissive will.

But that pastor's cousin still didn't get the church.

Somebody else came along and took it, and it kept going down, down, down. Then he left and they got back in the will of God. They called me to be their pastor, and God blessed us immeasurably. But you can see we were a year late. It could have been different. They could have saved themselves a lot of difficulty by listening to God to begin with.

But I never got up and said, "Now, you're missing God, and you're going to suffer for it. This is not right." No, I kept my mouth shut, bid them goodbye, and left. God worked it all out.

We ought to act in love whether anybody else does or not. We're responsible before God. And it isn't only preachers who ought to live right and do right; laymen ought to live right and do right, too. We all ought to walk in love—and love puts the other fellow first.

We've had many experiences along these lines in the ministry. I remember the time my wife and I were holding a meeting for some folks, and I don't know why in the world they invited us to preach for them, but I happened to have the week free, so we went down there. (They lived in another state.)

We stayed in the parsonage with them. We were their guests. We'd never been there before.

They didn't say anything about eating, and they didn't fix us anything to eat. They'd get up in the morning and leave the house. We'd rummage around to see if we could find something. We had very little to eat.

One of the deacons suspected something. He lived on their street, and he came down and asked me how we were doing. "Oh," I said, "we're all right, brother." I didn't want to cause the pastors any trouble. (I knew people like them were going to get in trouble soon enough without my causing them any!)

The deacon said, "Now, there's a freezer on the back porch of my house, and it's full of meat. Just come on up and get anything you want."

Then he asked, "Where are the pastors?"

I sort of covered up for them. I said, "Well, they had some kind of call to make" (which I'm sure they had).

On the last Sunday we were there, we returned to the parsonage after the morning service. While I was watching the news on television about 12:30, the pastors walked right by me. They never said "Goodbye; we'll see you" or anything. They just left. And they never came back.

We were sitting there with nothing to eat. Finally, my wife, who had been in another room, came out and said, "Where did they go?" I said, "I don't know. I guess they went to get something to eat." I knew there wasn't much in the refrigerator.

By 2 o'clock they hadn't come back, and we began to get hungry. We looked in the refrigerator and found a slice of bologna and two eggs. We boiled the eggs.

I said, "I believe I'll go up to the corner and get a fryer out of that fellow's freezer. We can thaw it out pretty quick in water and fry it."

Then I said, "No, I can't do that, because if I go down there, he's going to ask me, 'Where are the pastors?' and I'm going to have to say, 'I don't know.' And he's going to say, 'Well, didn't they take you out and feed you?' And I'll have to say, 'Well, no.' And he's going to wonder what kind of pastors they have. So I can't go to that deacon's house, because it would get the pastors in trouble with him."

Then my flesh rose up. (Now don't tell me *your* flesh never rises up. Don't tell me you don't have trouble with *your* flesh.) I began to be a little angry. I went to the phone and actually picked it up. I said, "I'm going to phone long distance to the district superintendent. I'm going to ask him, "What kind of preachers do you have over here, anyway?

I'm tired of this!"

Then I put the phone down. My heart said, "No, you can't act that way. That's not love. You'll get them in trouble with the district superintendent if you do that—and they're going to get in trouble soon enough."

I couldn't figure out anything else to do except eat that piece of bologna and an egg apiece and just forget it.

When the pastors finally came home, I acted like nothing had happened. Then I thought about it a while, and finally decided I'd load up the car and leave; I wouldn't even stay for the night service. And when I didn't show up, it would put

the pastors on the spot!

Their church members would ask, "Where's Brother Hagin?" And they'd have to say, "We don't know. He left while we were gone." The people would wonder, "What made him leave?"

But we didn't do that, either. We went ahead, held the service, and acted like nothing had happened. We did our best.

Why did I put up with all that? Mainly to spare the flock.

What a difference it would make in a lot of lives—preachers and laymen alike—if we would put the other fellow first and consider the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in our actions.

Chapter 7

The Anointing Abideth in You

The seventh and last step to judging prophecy is found in First John:

1 JOHN 2:20,27

20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things...

27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

The words "unction" and "anointing" mean the same thing. *"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you ...."* You see, when things are not right, something on the inside of you—an unction of the Lord, the anointing that abideth in you—tells you so. The Holy Spirit is there to inform you if things are not as they should be, and you will know immediately.

(If we practiced looking to our spirit like this, it would prevent a lot of error from occurring in meetings.) I never allow the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be misused in my meetings.

I was preaching at a certain church, and the pastor's wife remarked to her husband, "Since Brother Hagin's been here, we haven't had a bit of trouble with Sister So-and-so and those others."

I said, "Why, no, I haven't had any trouble with them."

The pastor's wife said, "You notice they don't manifest whatever it is they claim to have in Brother Hagin's services. They stay quiet."

This pastor and his wife went on to explain that these women tore up some of their services with so-called "prophecies" and interpretations of messages in tongues.

These "prophecies" were wrong. They were not in line with the Word of God. They were unedifying, and they led to bondage.

The pastors were marveling at the good behavior of these women in my services. "Why, they're quiet as mice," they exclaimed.

I replied, "I wonder why? I didn't say anything to them, but if they had gotten out of line, I would have corrected them in love."

The pastor's wife said, "Well, Brother Hagin, you take charge of the service. One thing about it—they know you're in charge, and they're a little fearful of you."

When things are wrong in a meeting—when someone misuses the gifts—I don't think we should go along with it and just "swallow" it. If we do, people (and especially our young people) think we don't know the difference between the right and wrong operation of the gifts; between the real and the false.

We should teach people in love. If they won't accept correction—and if they persist in their error—we will have to rebuke them in love from the pulpit. I do that in my meetings. I endeavor to do it in love. You may have heard me call people down sometimes. I say, "Now you just wait a minute here..."

It doesn't mean that person is completely out of line; but it does mean that they're misusing the gifts and are out of line in some things.

People whose hearts are right want to be taught. People who don't want to be taught are not right to begin with. If I got wrong, I'd want people to line me up.

I'd take teaching.

I'd line up. I'd admit I was wrong.

Sometimes we have a false pride about us. We don't want to admit it if we've made a mistake. But if you say you've never missed it in life, you'd be lying. So you might as well go ahead and admit that you've made mistakes.

Let's take correction if we need correction. And let's realize that this anointing and this unction is on the inside of us, praise God. And He said that by this anointing or unction we know all things.

That's what the Bible said. It's either the truth or a lie.

Some people say, "I don't know." If you don't it's because you're not listening to the unction that's inside you, because the Spirit is in you to inform you, instruct you, and tell you things. And you can know immediately when something's out of line.

It's amazing to me how little children will know when things are wrong and grownups don't know the difference. I remember one time when my son was about 9 years old and was with me in a service, for I was preaching close to where we lived.

There were some things that went on with tongues and interpretation that were out of line, but I never said a word, because it didn't happen in my part of the service. It happened while the pastor had the service, so it wasn't my responsibility.

Driving home that night, Ken spoke up and said, "Daddy, that wasn't God, was it?"

I said, "What, son?"

"Oh," he said, "those goings on there—that tongues and interpretation. That wasn't God. That wasn't the Spirit. That was just them doing it, wasn't it?"

I thought to myself, *That poor pastor swallowed it.* I could tell by the way he acted. He looked like the cat that swallowed the canary. He thought it was wonderful what God was doing—and God wasn't doing a thing! It was just some

people acting in the flesh, putting on a display. And a 9-year-old child knew the difference!

No wonder we lose our young people, friends. They want reality! They believe in reality. When we sit around and swallow everything and act like we don't know the difference between the real and the false, allowing just anything to happen, we lose them.

I've come to the place where I believe it's my responsibility to the young people to deal with the false.

One reason why the hippie movement came into being was because the young people were sick and tired of frauds and fakes. They were looking for the genuine, even though they were looking in the wrong place. If we the Church won't give reality to them, who will?

We should encourage people to love God, love people, and love other Christians —not separate the flock. Some people spend all their time fighting some other church they don't agree with.

I was reared a Southern Baptist. I got healed on the bed of sickness as a teenager, got the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and developed a little bone of contention with the Baptists. Here I had gotten healed and I'd seen healing in the Bible, and I thought they'd be glad to know that this was right. They weren't.

They would rather I'd have died than got healed, because that would have proved them right—that healing's not for us. When I got healed, it was an embarrassment to them. Here I was a Baptist going around testifying about being healed!

My own doctor, who belonged to the same Baptist church I did, admitted it was a miracle. He couldn't deny it.

He put it this way, "I said all the time unless a higher power intervened, you weren't going to live."

I believed God's promise. I got Grandma's "Methodist"

Bible, studied it, and exercised faith. My healing came about as a result of a combination of things. It wasn't just what God did for me; it involved my

believing God. He responded to my faith and prayers.

My Baptist pastor, however, said, "The poor boy stayed in bed so long his mind went. Healing's not for us today."

He'd been taught that way.

So the Southern Baptists wouldn't accept my testimony.

It's easy to develop a little bone of contention toward people who won't accept your testimony.

I backed up a little. I continued preaching healing, but I didn't hold public healing services. I prayed for the people privately.

Then I began fellowshipping with Full Gospel people.

The Baptists had warned me about them, saying that tongues was of the devil. But these people believed in healing like I did, so I fellowshipped with them. And like a fellow in East Texas said, "It's like a slippery creek bank. If you keep fooling around on it, you'll fall in." I fell in and got the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Unconsciously, I began fighting the Baptists. I never won one of them to my way of thinking, and I never got one of them filled with the Holy Spirit. I never changed one of them. You can't do it that way. If some of them came to my services and I knew they were there, I'd let them have it! But God corrected me. The Spirit of God will do that, but He'll do it in love.

It happened while I was praying in tongues one day. I thought I'd been praying for 15 minutes. I found out later I'd prayed four and a half hours. While I was praying in tongues, the Spirit of God interpreted the tongues and took me over into the first three chapters of First Corinthians.

This Corinthian bunch was carnal. There was envy, jealousy, strife, division, and debate among them. They walked as "mere men." Yet Paul started off by bragging on them, and he wound up by saying, *"Ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's"* (1 Cor. 3:23).

The Lord said to me, "If it had been you and some preachers you know writing

to that bunch, you'd have said, 'You bunch of backslidden buzzards ought to pray through and get right with God.'"

And until that moment, that's exactly what I would have said. But the Lord said, "Paul didn't do that; the Spirit of God didn't do that. Paul found a place where he could join up with them and encourage them to grow. He told them, 'Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. All things are yours. Come on—rise up to the level of what belongs to you!'"

And the Lord said to me, "If you'll find the place where you can hook onto the Baptists and quit fighting them, you'll get them."

I quit fighting them that minute. I just went over and hooked onto them—and other churches, too—praise God.

There's always somewhere we can hook on.

The minute I did this, pastors and their wives started getting filled with the Holy Spirit. When you start loving people instead of fighting them, you can help them.

So we may have to judge ourselves sometimes. When we do, let's correct ourselves. Remember, it's not a disgrace to be wrong; it's a disgrace to *stay* wrong. If we're wrong, thank God we can straighten up and do right, no matter who we are.

That unction is in you. The Bible said so. We ought to have enough common sense to know when things are out of line and to line up.

The same thing holds true of prophets and prophesying.

When these fellows come along leading off disciples after themselves, saying everybody else is wrong but them, no matter what kind of manifestation is going on, you stay away from it, and you'll be doing the right thing.

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