

The four week Course

READ THIS:- This is a teacher's guide, not a book! You need to study and think about the things you are going to teach. If you have been to 2003, you will have the extended course book, which will help you study. You can also visit www.serving-africa.org for extra material.

The Four week Course.

Prophet Jim Smith writes:- **“As I was preparing the teaching material for the International Conference 2003 in Kumasi, I thought “How can Pastors and teachers, who have received teaching at the 2003 Conference, respond to what they have learnt?” Many Pastors want to teach their people, but would find teaching the whole of this course a bit too long and complex.**

So for these Pastors and leaders I have devised “The 4 week course.” This material is a smaller version of my major course. It has 4 sessions, which can be taught over two days, over a weekend, or over four weeks. (1 night a week.)

If you are a Pastor or a leader, I want to encourage you to have a go at teaching this material to your people. It is not complicated, and I know that African leaders are longing to grow, and to help their people to grow.

It's time for Africa to teach Africa. For God's African people to rise up, and take their prophetic inheritance. This course gives you a chance to do that - to really make a difference. Will you accept the challenge? I know you will.”

Outline:-

- Week 1. What is a prophet?
 The five fold ministry.
 Bible study. Elijah.**

- Week 2: Hearing from God.
 Characteristics of the prophetic life.
 Bible study. The Servant heart.**

- Week 3. Knowing true from false.
 Testing the words and the men.
 Bible study. Recognition.**

Week 4. Recognising and releasing prophets
Bible study. Psalm 51
What to do now.

Each of these sessions should last one hour.
You are free to photocopy the teaching material.
You can get more information from our web site.

www.serving-africa.org

WEEK 1: Session 1 What is a prophet?

Teaching suggestion:- Study each of these passages yourself, to understand the prophetic ministry. Then explain what you have learnt to your school.

Prophets have a wide range of ministry:-

1. Watchman. (Ezekiel 33:1-11)
2. Messenger. (Isaiah 6:9)
3. Intercessor. (Amos 7:1-3)
4. A man of the Bible. (Revelation 22:18)
5. A man of the Spirit. (1 Cor.12: Eph 4: 1-16: Rev 19:10)
6. A man who accepts the hard things. (Luke 6:26)
7. A man of the Fellowship.(Eph.4:12)
8. A Man of prayer. (Philippians 4:6)

Teaching suggestion:- Encourage your school to see prophets as men and women with different emphasis in their ministries. Prophets are not just people who come and give you a personal word! Their ministry is much deeper and wider than that. We in Africa want men and women who will enter the fullness of the call.

WEEK 1: Session 2 The 5 fold ministry of God.

Teaching suggestion:- It's vital that we understand that prophets are central to God's plan for ministry. Try to explain the five fold ministries yourself. I have given you a few words to illustrate each one.

“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service.” (Ephesians 4:11)

Prophets complete the totality of ministry which God intends for his people. If this ministry is missing, then the work is unbalanced. Here is an outline of the five fold ministry as taught by St Paul in Ephesians.

Apostle Releaser of gifts and appointer of ministries. Must have a wide and deep view of the Church.

Prophet Interpreter of times and indicator of ways.
His integrity must never be compromised.

Evangelist Keeper of the door and voice of the Gospel. Must have passion and force. But often cannot understand wider implications of ministry.

Pastor Shepherd of the sheep. Keeps open the bridge of love. Will be trodden down.

Teacher Equipper of ministries and guardian of truth. A passion for teaching, but refuses to suffer fools gladly. Often pushed to the edge of Church life.

Teaching suggestion:- If prophets are to be part of the ministry of the Church, what benefits does this bring us? Ask your school to give you some answers.

WEEK 1: Bible study Elijah:1 Kings 18.

Teaching suggestion:- Each of these verses reveals something about prophetic ministry. Study them yourself, and then teach them. Note:- Bible study is an option on this course. It's up to you whether you use it.

1. v.21 “But the people said nothing.”

Elijah had held on to the truth of God, but when he laid it before the people, they did not support him.

2. v.24 “The god who answers by fire – he is God.”

Elijah had the courage to let God have his way.

3. v.30 “Come here to me.”

Elijah was not afraid of men. He did not hide from people, but challenged them openly.

4. v.36 “At the time of sacrifice.”

Elijah was in tune with the spiritual times. He knew that timing was everything.

5. v.38 “Then the fire of the Lord fell.”

Vindicated, he was not overwhelmed. The job was not finished. There was no time for glorying in self achievement.

6. v.40 “Then he slaughtered them there.”

The task he was called to had to be finished. No one was going to stand in his way.

7. Ch19:2 “By this time tomorrow..”

Elijah could not keep the spirit of fear away.

8. Ch19:9 “What are you doing here Elijah?”

God does not abandon his men.

WEEK 2 : Session 1 Hearing from God.

Teaching suggestion: This is a practical session. Through these various teaching points, try to understand how a prophet hears from God.

The prophet expects to hear from God – this is God’s covenant to the prophet. He hears God’s word in many ways:-

Through prayer. (Isaiah 6:1)

God impresses his will into the heart, as the prophet waits on Him in prayer. Has this ever happened to you ?

Through worship. (1 Samuel 7:7-9)

God makes his will known to individual people, as they worship him, privately and in the fellowship of God’s people.

Through the Bible. (2 Kings 22)

As a prophet studies and meditates on the Bible, God will impress things in the prophet's heart.

Through dreams and visions. (Revelation 1:10)

God does speak in dreams and visions. The problem is that in some cultures, and this includes Africa, dreams and visions are given the top place in revelation, and God's people do not give them the serious testing which they need. Deuteronomy 18:9-13 and Deuteronomy 4:16 teaches what is not permitted. To sum these verses up – no witchcraft, no trances, no spells, no incantations, no amulets or charms are permitted. Nothing from the occult must be included in biblical prophecy.

Through incidents in life (Jeremiah 11-15)

Teaching suggestion: Ask your school to share any ways in which they have heard from God. Suggest that next week we might share anything God has been saying during the week.

WEEK 2: Session 2 Character

The prophetic ministry cannot be separated from the life, character and behaviour of the prophet. The word he receives is spoken through his life and personality. So it is essential to know what the Bible expects of that character and life.

Teaching suggestion: There are too many characteristics listed here! You must choose which ones to teach. I always teach the crucified life material. No prophet will go far wrong if he or she leads a crucified life.

Characteristic 1 God centred. (1Sam 17:45&47)

Characteristic 2 Never takes the easy way out. (1 Kings 22: 1-38)

Characteristic 3 Crucified the world. (2 Tim 4:10)

The world loves power and success.

The crucified life of the leader loves obedience and service.

The world wants to control.

The crucified life of the leader wants to encourage and release. The world likes to manipulate, to work in the darkness and in underhand ways.

The crucified life of the leader works in honesty and openness, rejoicing in the light.

The world loves riches.

The crucified life of the leader looks to the provision of God and his work.

The world loves laziness, poor discipline and indulgence.

The crucified life of the leader seeks to discipline his life, so he can be effective, and endure.

The world likes confusion in its thinking, diluting truth to suit its own needs.

The crucified life of the leader loves the truth of God's word, and matches this life to God's law.

The world hates the poor, despising them, or providing them with the minimum.

The crucified life of the leader looks to the needs of the poor, the oppressed and the helpless, knowing that in serving these, he is serving the Lord.

The world exploits sexuality, and pulls down family life.

The crucified leader has control of his or her sexuality, and seeks in every way to build up marriage and family life.

Characteristic 4 Obedient, whatever it costs. (Mark 10:32)

Characteristic 5 Discipline whatever it costs. (Acts 27:21)

Characteristic 6 Spirit filled. (Acts 4:8)

Characteristic 7 Servant heart. (Mark 8:34-35)

The servant denies himself. He has conquered his self will, (Luke 17:7-10) and follows in his Master's way. (Phil 2:5-8)

The servant takes up his cross, without complaining. He bears all the burdens of the cross with joy. (Hebrews 12:2)

The servant follows, without complaint. (Luke 9:51-62)

Teaching suggestion: If you have taught the crucified life, challenge your school to apply this teaching to their own lives.

WEEK 2: Bible study- The Servant heart.

Teaching suggestion: This is tough material! The servant heart is not a popular idea, but it is the key to prophetic ministry. Teach with gentleness, but make sure each member of your school grasps the importance of this teaching. NOTE: This Bible study is optional. You choose if you have time for it, and if it is appropriate.

1. Read Mark 8: 34 -9:1

Ask this question - what is it in the human heart which rebels against this teaching? (See Mark 7: 20-23)

What does this rebellion steal from us? Look at Mark 8:34.

- * The control of our selfish will (“deny himself”)
- * The way of the cross (“take up his cross”)
- * Closeness to the Saviour. (“follow me.”)

2. Look closely at “denying,” “taking up the cross,” “following.”

“Deny”

Jesus is jealous for his position as ruler of your life. He paid a very high price to have this right, and he has the right to it. Those who cannot accept this have had their hearts stolen by Satan. Just in case you are tempted to think that this is unfair, **read Philippians 2: 6-8.**

Jesus accepts the position of servant, and in that position he is able to fulfill his Father’s will. Do you want to fulfill the Father’s will? Then you must deny your own self, and let Jesus reign in your heart. It looks easy to read, but it’s hard to do. It’s not easy to deny yourself position, glory, personal satisfaction, promotion above others. It’s not easy to put others first, to serve others, to take the humble path. But this is the only way to have the heart of Jesus. It’s not forced on you. It is your decision.

“Take up”

The heart which Satan has tried to give us not only wants to sit on the throne, it wants to sit in comfort and ease. Yet the heart which Jesus offers us is one of struggle, of walking in his footsteps, of taking up the pain and cost of following him. We are to take up the cross, with all its joy and with all its suffering. Those who do this need have no doubt about what will happen. **Read John 15: 18-20**

“Follow”

Read Mark 10: 32-34 We are followers. We walk his way, rather than expecting him to walk our way.

This is the heart of Jesus – the servant heart – which is our priceless treasure. As we take on this heart, so we are able to follow Him, to serve Him, and to be with Him.

Teaching suggestion: Finish by reading John 13: 1-17. This is to be our heart. Is it yours?

WEEK 3: Session 1 Knowing true from false

Teaching suggestion: The emphasis of this teaching is TRUE prophecy. To get an understanding of that, we have to look first at the false. Take time to study this yourself, before you teach it.

The false:- Ezekiel chapter 13

1. “Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit.” (v.3)

False prophets prophesy from their own selfish hearts, saying and sharing what they feel to be right. Their ministry is built on their own needs—for power, for position, for support and love, for feeling a vital part of God’s work. The message they bring often sounds good and encouraging, but it lacks the one essential ingredient—it does not flow from the heart of God.

2. “You have not gone up to the breaks in the wall, to repair it for the house of Israel so that it will stand firm in the battle on the day of the Lord.” (v.5)

False prophets do not love the Church. They may pretend to, but they cannot hide their basic nature. Their lack of love and concern will show itself in a number of ways:-

An unwillingness to be committed to one local fellowship.

An unwillingness to be involved with the everyday life of the Church.

Speaking words which are sweet and easy to receive, but which have no substance to them.

Speaking harsh, condemnatory and judgmental words to the Church, which lack any sign of encouragement, blessing or hope.

3. “Their visions are false and their divinations a lie.” (v.6)

If a prophet does not love the Church, then he soon loses the focus of his spirituality. For a lack of love for the Church reflects a lack of love for Jesus. It’s only a short journey from this dangerous position to straying into occult practices.

4. “They say “Peace” when there is no peace”(v.10)

False prophets always tell us what we want to hear. Their words are always comfortable, encouraging and friendly. The reason for this is simple—false prophets want to be thought of as nice people. This way they get the adulation and respect which they so desperately desire. Jesus makes it clear what he thinks about this attitude—“Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for this is how your fathers treated the false prophets.” (Luke 6:26)

5. “Flimsy wall” (v.10)

The true prophetic word warns of danger ahead, and helps the people of God avoid it. The true prophetic word strengthens the people of God for all that is to come. The true prophetic word cleanses the people of God, so that the Spirit of God can work more fully in them. The false prophets are the complete opposite to this. They fail to point out weaknesses, imperfections and lack of righteousness, and as a consequence they weaken and spoil the people of God. This is not always apparent at first. But when trouble comes, those who have depended on false prophecy will be revealed—and they will be washed away. What good is it then to say “If only we had known..!”

6. “Magic Charms..” (v 18)

This means that there is to be no use of anything occult—no voices, manifestations, amulets, charms, spells, incantations or other occult paraphernalia.

Signs of true prophecy

- 1. True prophecy puts Jesus first. (Rev 19:10)**
- 2. The true prophet loves the body of Christ. (Eph. 5:25)**
- 3. A true prophet has, or is trying to live a pure life. (Ps 24: v 3-4)**
- 4. A true prophet loves and uses the Bible for his ministry. (Ps 119: 105)**
- 5. A true prophet respects the leadership. (1 Thess. 5:12)**
- 6. A true prophet has a humble heart. (Phil 2: 5-11)**

7. A true prophet wants the testing of the Church. (1 Thess. 5:21)
8. A true prophet is willing to serve. (Mark 10: 45)
9. A true prophet wants to belong to the body. (Heb. 10:25)

Teaching suggestion: This list of signs of true prophecy is the heart of this session. If possible, get it copied and given out. You have permission to copy any of this material.

WEEK 3: Session 2 Testing the words & men

Teaching suggestion: This is a very practical session. It is trying to give some way by which we can test both the man and his words. At the end, I have included a short word, which you might like to test, using the suggestions here.

1. Test the man. Ask these questions. Does he:-

Belong to the Body?

Submit his word/ministry to the leadership of the Body?

Submit himself to the testing of other prophets in the Body?

Have a desire to unlock the gift of prophecy in others within the Body?

Does he attend worship, and share in the local ministry of his local Church?

2. Test the word. Ask these questions:-

Is this word Biblically correct? Every prophetic word from God must be rooted in the Bible and must not contradict or add to that revelation?

Do any of the words in the prophetic word remind us of particular verses/passages ?

Do any of the words in the prophetic word remind us of biblical stories or people ?

Does anything in the prophetic word remind us of anything we have come across recently in a

sermon, a home group teaching, or in our own private study time ?

Does this word encourage, direct, rebuke, build up?

What is this word asking us to do?

3. Plan a response.

The question is - “What does this word ask us to do?” Only when we know the answer to this question, can we work out our response. For example:-

A surrender/deeper commitment.

A change of direction.

An encouragement to proceed with more/less caution.

Discovery of an error or sin in the body.

A relationship problem within the body/between bodies.

A lack of repentance.

A command to wait/listen more.

A warning of some impending event.

The uncovering of a truth that has been hidden / lost /forgotten.

4. Make a response to the word.

There has to be some decision about what to do about what God has told us. Otherwise, we are wasting his time.

Test this word.

As a practical exercise, practice what you have learnt on this word:-

I call you to be servants – servants of me, servants of each other, servants of those who do not know me.

The servant heart I value more than any other offering, because it is the heart which is closest to mine, and which I am able to use.

If I visit you, will I find this heart in you, or will I find pride, deceit, jealousy, envy ?

Examine yourselves before me, and I will show you your heart.

WEEK 3: Bible study - Recognition.

ACTS 13: 1-4

Teaching suggestion: You choose whether or not to include this Bible study. Here we look at how prophets, and indeed all ministries, have to be recognised by the body.

A prophet has his call from God. But in New Testament prophecy, that call has to be recognised by the Church. In Acts 13, we see one of the ways in which that can be done:-

- 1. The leaders pray.** If this does not happen, then how can God direct?
- 2. God speaks.** It is necessary for God to make his will known.
- 3. The leaders pray some more,** to get clarification and confirmation that what they are hearing is from God.
- 4. The Church recognises the call,** by the laying on of hands. In this way, the Church is identified with the call, as well as confirming it.
- 5. The ministry** begins to flow.

Teaching suggestion: How does this work out in practice? See if your school can come up with ideas.

WEEK 4: Session 1 Releasing ministries.

Teaching suggestion: The purpose of this course is to release people into their ministries. That means discovering prophets, and releasing people into prophecy. The two are not quite the same. So all we can do in this final week, is to outline some teaching. It's up to each Pastor to decide how to proceed from here.

1. Gifts and ministries.

When we are looking for release in prophecy, we are looking for two different, but related blessings.

* **We are looking for God to raise up prophets.** See Ephesians 4: 11-12. Prophets are one of the foundation ministries of the Church. They are given to embody the prophetic

gift. They have their calling to build up the body, and to release gifts and ministries in others.

* **We are looking for the release of the gift of prophecy.** See 1 Corinthians 12. Here we learn that the one Spirit gives the gifts. (v4) We see that there is a great variety of gifting, and among those gifts is the gift of prophecy. (v 10) This gift is given for the blessing of the whole body. (verses12-13)

* **1 Corinthians 14:1** “Follow the way of love, and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.”

* **1 Corinthians 14:5** “I would like everyone of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy.”

2. Key principles.

As we begin to release the gift of prophecy, there are key biblical principles involved:-

* **It is the will of God. (Acts 2: 17-18)**

* **It is the work of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 13:2)**

* **There has to be individual response. (Acts 13:4)**

* **There has to be a leadership response. (Acts 13:3)**

3. Time to pray and act.

There is little more I can write. As this course comes to an end, it is time to seek God together, for a release of prophecy and the raising up of prophets.

Some suggestions.

* **You might have a time of prayer, and invite people to prophesy, under the authority of the leader.**

* **You might offer to pray with laying on of hands for any who want the gift of prophecy.**

*** You might invite any who feel the call of prophet to speak with you after the course. Only you can decide what steps to take with these people. I can suggest:-**

- 1. You contact us, for additional material.**
 - 2. You visit our website, where you can see what books are available, and order them free.**
 - 3. You look out for our teaching courses, which take place regularly in Ghana and Francophone countries.**
- You can e mail me, or contact us through our Accra address. Contact details at the end of the book.**

Here I must end, and leave the rest to you. May God bless us all, and God bless Africa.

OPTIONAL Bible study: Psalm 51

What is repentance?

Every prophet must have a good theology of repentance. Here is a Biblical foundation for prophets to study, based on Psalm 51.

1: “Against you, you only have I sinned” (Ps 51: 4)

It is against God we have sinned. No amount of discussion or debate can change this basic truth. Accepting it is the starting point for true repentance. However, it is the hardest point for a Christian to find.

2.“Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Ps 51:7)

Once we know our sin, we need the cleansing of God, which comes through the blood of Jesus – “The blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin.” (1 John 1: 7) But in order to be washed, God will make us aware of what we have done.

How else can we know the true cleansing, if we are not made aware of the shame of the nation, the darkness of the nation, the weakness of the church, the failure of leadership? This is a most painful experience, but it cannot be avoided if we want the fruits of repentance. This is also the step that many want to avoid, or make easy. But to know the true nature of our sin is a painful and even frightening experience. Without this, we can never know true repentance.

3. “You desire truth in the inner parts.” (Ps. 51: 6)

As we are praying and thinking about these things, the enemy will do all he can to spoil our repentance. He knows he must, because this is such a powerful and life giving moment for us. (See 1 Samuel 7:7)

While we are repenting, we need to hear words of truth from the Bible, to counter the lies of the enemy. Words like:

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart O God you will not despise.” (Psalm 51 v 17)“Cleanse me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.”

(Psalm 51 v 7)

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”(1 John 1 v 9)

4. “Create in me a pure heart” (Ps 51:10)

Repentance has to result in a new way of living. We cannot repent and continue in the same way as before. What does God expect?

A commitment to a new way of life. Even though we do not know the implications, we must be willing to let the Holy Spirit make the changes. Working out this new way of living is easier if we think, pray and talk with others.

A willingness to pay the price of repentance, and the changes it will bring personally, in church life, and beyond.