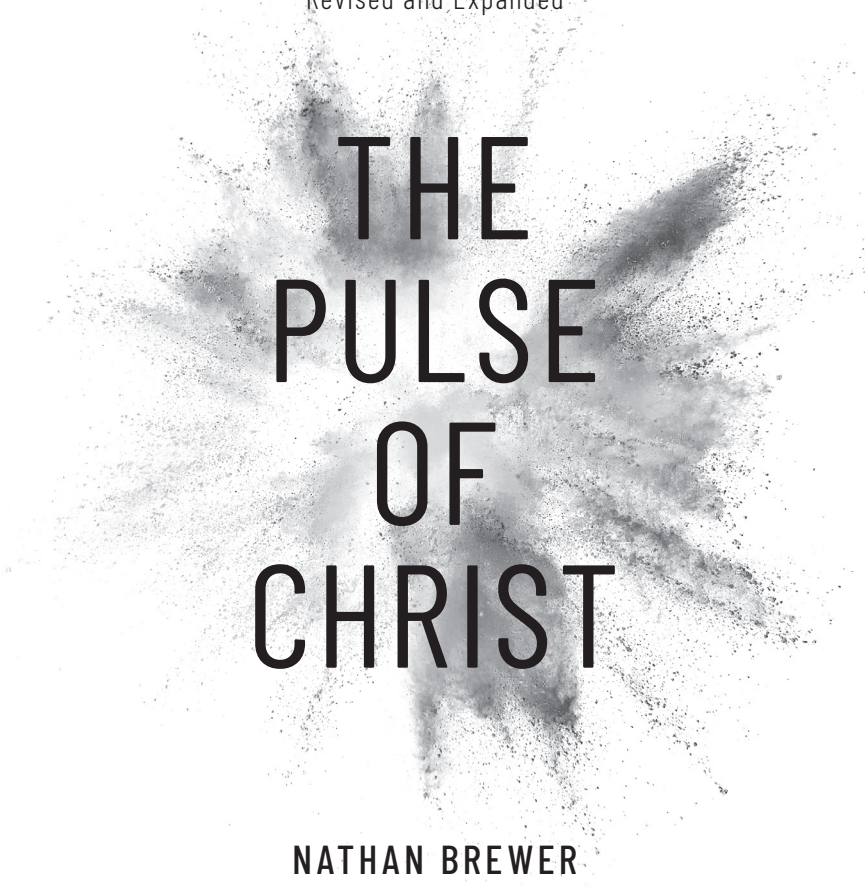


A Fivefold Training Manual

Revised and Expanded



THE  
PULSE  
OF  
CHRIST

NATHAN BREWER

**100**  
MOVEMENTS  
PUBLISHING

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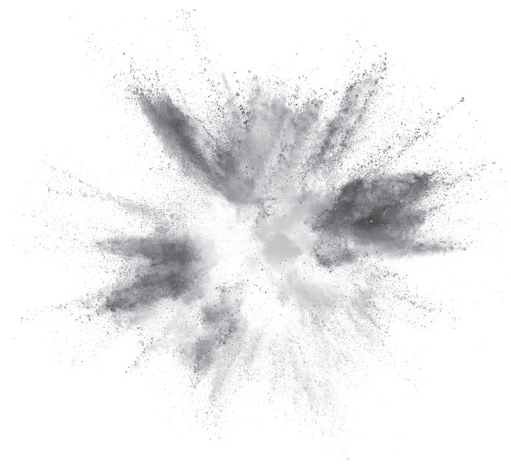
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To Betsy, Joey, and Anna—thank you for your efforts in editing and providing valuable feedback to make this training manual coherent and full of life.

To Jesus—you are fascinating and so is your church. Thank you that you will build your church and nothing will overcome it. I hope this training manual glorifies you through your body, the church.

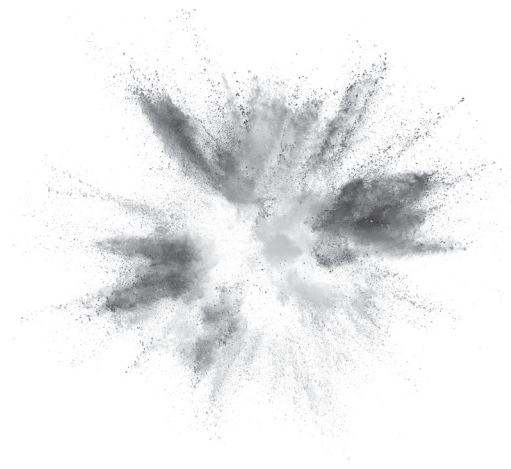




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## Preface to the Second Edition

You may already be familiar with the first edition of this book, which was published in 2016. I'm delighted this revised and expanded edition is now available. Over the last three years, I have led numerous training events, workshops, and one-on-one coaching, all focusing on the fivefold ministry of Christ. This has been a significant learning experience for me—training others is not only a benefit for the trainee but also for the trainer. Inevitably, the content becomes sharper over time as others feedback their experience and learning. I'm confident this training manual reflects this honing, and I hope it will be a blessing and benefit to you, your ministry, your church, or your organization.

In particular, a number of areas have been revised or added, including:

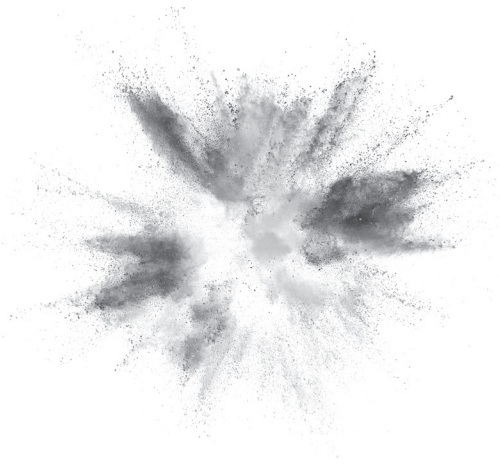
- Improvement of every exercise, each of which has been optimized for group dynamics.
- Many pages of new content, including a fuller gospel message, which is clearer and more accurately reflects the gospel of the kingdom.
- Brand new exercises.
- A reworking and expansion of the matrix table, created to compare and contrast the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4.
- Additional key concepts and diagrams, gleaned from being trained in “5Q” and becoming a trainer on the 5Q Collective team.<sup>1</sup>
- A revamp of the layout into a wider workbook format, with space to write responses, key thoughts, and reflections.

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1 [www.5qcentral.com/about-5q](http://www.5qcentral.com/about-5q) .

- The translation and publication of the book in German by Grain Press. I'm thrilled this content and the activation exercises are now available in the heart language for individuals, churches, and organizations in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland.





## Preface

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.  
I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

—Jesus, John 10:10

I love this verse for several reasons. For starters, within one verse, it succinctly explains the goal of the enemy in comparison to Jesus' desire for us: the goal of the kingdom of darkness versus the goal of the kingdom of light. Second, it's inspiring because it speaks of an abundant life with no limits. Most of all, though, I love it because it became my "life verse" when I was sixteen. Although I had accepted Christ to forgive my sins and give me new life several years before, it wasn't until I was at a Christian youth camp that I decided to get baptized and go fully "all in." It was then I really came alive in my faith, and my spiritual pulse increased in rhythm and strength. While this was an authentic experience, the spiritual "high" hit reality upon returning home, and I posed the following questions to the Lord alone in my bedroom, "How does this work now? How do I practically live the Christian life?" I sensed a response in my inner spirit, "The answer is in your hands." I looked down at the Bible in my hands and committed to reading God's Word and spending time in conversational prayer with God every day to receive his direction and empowerment for my life. I then opened the Bible, and it fell to the verse from John 10:10. I immediately read it, and although I didn't fully grasp what an abundant life could look like, I declared, "Jesus, I want the abundant life you are offering." I sensed him replying to my heart again, "Follow me, and I will show you life in abundance."

I can honestly say life in abundance has been the reality of my life thus far as I've followed him: a deep sense of satisfaction and contentment in Jesus, a joyful heart, fulfilling relationships, inner peace, and a clear purpose in life, as well as the privilege of visiting thirty-four countries. Though your abundant life may look very different to mine, one thing is for sure: an abundant, overflowing life has Jesus at the center. I have experienced, am experiencing, and long to experience more of this abundant life in the future—more for the sake of others than for myself.

This verse in John 10:10 thus formed the purpose and calling I now have to lead others into the abundant life with Jesus Christ and is also my motivation for writing this book. There are many people in the world who do not have the source of life, Jesus, living inside of them, and there are also believers who are saved and know Jesus but are not living in the fullness of life that Jesus offers. I long to help both groups of people experience the pulse of Jesus pumping through their veins, invigorating their body and soul.

This book is aimed at people who are already walking through life with Jesus. Yet I realize there may be some reading who are not yet walking with him, and so I really want to encourage you, if you do not have the source of life, Jesus, living inside of you, to pause for a moment here. If you have never made a conscious decision to have the pulse of Jesus pumping through your veins, giving you spiritual life, then stop for a minute. Turn to the bonus material on page 229 at the back of the book and read more about the fascinating invitation to have “His Pulse in You—The Gospel of the King(dom).”

An essential key that unlocks the abundant life is discovering your role in the kingdom. King Jesus invites us to be his kingdom-agents; he invites us to be part of his team to redeem and restore this world. To do so, he empowers his special agents to be special gifts. These gifts are five facets of the gospel and are specifically referred to in Ephesians 4:11–13. This book will unpack these five gifts, commonly known as the “fivefold” or “APEST.” Like different facets of a diamond, they are all part of the same object, yet each reveal a different and beautiful dimension:

- The facet that Jesus was sent by the Father to redeem us and then release and send us to new places to establish his kingdom, his rule, and reign is *apostolic*.
- The facet that Jesus restores our relationship to a holy, just, passionate, faithful God, even when we’ve been unfaithful is *prophetic*.
- The facet that Jesus rescues us from sin, Satan, and death, reconciling a lost son or daughter to their heavenly Father is *evangelistic*.
- The facet that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, laid down his life for his sheep and satisfies our soul is *shepherding*.
- The facet that Jesus is the way and the truth and shows us the way and the truth is *teaching*.

These five facets, or dimensions, of the gospel display the inextricable connection between the gospel of the kingdom and the fivefold ministry. You and I can be those facets, those dimensions.

There's a latent potential in you waiting to be unlocked. I invite you to join me in this discovery of John 10:10 life in abundance...



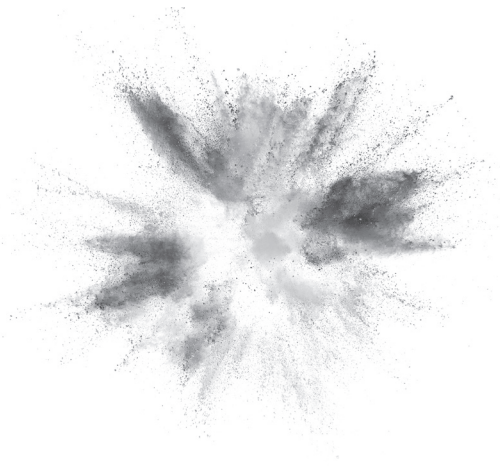


# Part One

## **Checking the Pulse**

Core Fivefold Concepts





## Introduction

### The Necessity of “How”

In the summer of 2015, I was hosting a ministry team in Vienna, Austria, that had traveled from Calgary, Canada. On one particular sightseeing day, we were approached by a ticket vendor dressed as Mozart, selling tickets for a classical concert. As we got chatting, I discovered he was from Kosovo. Over the previous four years, I had organized youth soccer tournaments in his home country, and as I shared this with him, his expression changed, visibly touched that I would pour into the youth of Kosovo. Out of gratitude, he offered me two free tickets to a concert on a date of my choice!

Despite being taken aback by his response, the Holy Spirit helped me to recognize the moment and the opportunity it presented. With the two Canadian leaders on either side of me, I shared the concept of grace with the Kosovar—a free gift of Christ, just like the tickets he had given me. He was once again touched, this time in a spiritual sense, and promised he would deeply consider accepting the grace that Jesus offers in the form of forgiveness and eternal life. We parted ways that day, but this encounter with the Kosovar Mozart ticket vendor led me to an interesting revelation shortly after.

I was skeptical I'd be able to redeem the tickets, but just under two weeks later, I found myself in line at the famous seventeenth-century Schönbrunn Palace concert hall, where two €69 “Category A” tickets were waiting for my wife and me! In wide-eyed wonder, we took in the grandeur of our surroundings—the crystal chandeliers hanging overhead, the walls and ceiling finely decorated with white and gold stucco, and the intricately painted ceiling frescoes. A sixteen-member orchestra masterfully played pieces from Mozart and Strauss, accompanied by opera singers and ballet.

My eyes zoomed in on the particularly talented top violinist, and the Lord began to speak to me in my heart: “This is how many churches currently operate.” I meditated a little on what God

was trying to show me and began to see the parallels between the church and the violinist. The professional top player (in our churches, this might be the pastor, for example) beautifully plays the instrument while the audience sits passively in their seats and thinks, “Wow, that’s awesome; I’m so inspired” or maybe even, “I could never do that.”

Imagine the violinist handing you the instrument to play. “Whoa,” you exclaim in a moment of shock. “I don’t know where my fingers go on this violin, and I don’t even know how to read music. And I definitely don’t know how to play in an orchestra with the other instruments.”

What’s needed is for the top player to come alongside and show you *how* to play, that is, *how* to live the Christian life. That’s the essence of discipleship: a coming-alongside to show the practical *hows* of the Christian life: how to pray; how to share your faith; how to study the Bible; how to give an encouraging word; how to pray for healing; how to think apostolically. These *hows*—and more—will be the focus areas of this training manual.

Our contemporary culture is overloaded with information. As a result, we no longer internalize the data flow that is dumped on us daily; we simply remember where to access it, whether on the cloud, a website, or an email. Unfortunately, this trend has crept into our spirituality and our understanding and practice of discipleship. We think the more information we can accumulate for ourselves or impart to someone else, the better. We tend to believe that somehow this information will transform individuals and communities. Yet Paul was clear in 1 Corinthians 8:1 that “knowledge’ puffs up,” so knowledge alone should neither be our method nor our goal. Transferring information to people, in the hope that it will change their lives is like providing all the necessary information for what it takes to win the Tour de France, and then expecting someone to be able to hop on a bike and become a world-class cyclist. That would be really cool, but it’s not realistic! Or, in a team context, it’s like giving someone all the details of what it takes to be a world-class soccer player, and then expecting them to excel individually *and* interact well with the flow of ten other teammates on the field—not to mention succeed against an opponent. No chance!

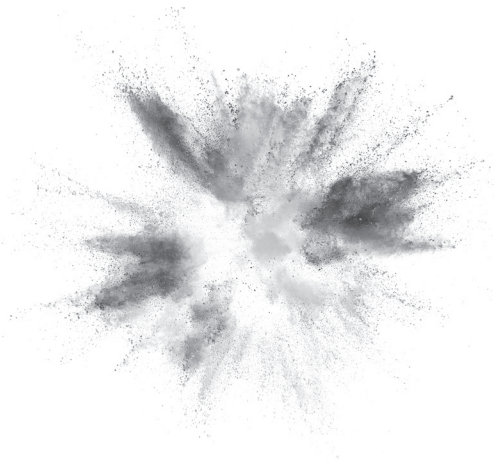
Similarly, information alone cannot be the extent of our discipleship. *True discipleship involves practical application.* Jesus modeled this for us—he equipped his disciples by allowing them to learn from him as they followed him, and then he gave them practical opportunities to apply what they had learned.

Discipleship via learning by doing—not passive information transfer—is at the heart of this training manual. It offers a series of equipping exercises—the “how”—in the five areas of Jesus’ ministry: the apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, shepherding, and teaching. Listed in Ephesians 4:11 as five gifts Jesus gave to us, the church, each will be unpacked in detail in the subsequent sections.



Those free concert tickets were a gift of grace, and led to an eye-opening experience and revelation. That is my hope for you, your team, your church, and organization. As you open your mind and heart to receive his grace, his pulse will pump through your veins as you become active. We need to move beyond learning new information and engage in practical application. If we are to pursue the fullness of Christ, we must explore “the how” of the fivefold ministry, and we begin that journey as we turn to chapter one.





# 1

## The Full Representation of Christ

I'm glad you are holding this training manual in your hand. Jesus is building and transforming his church, as he promised in Matthew 16:18, and I believe he wants to use *you* to help him build it. Together we are his body, “the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way” (Ephesians 1:23 NIV), and he desires his body to be growing, strong, and mature. The exercises in this training manual will help you to grow and be strengthened in your faith, continuing upon the path of maturity we are all on. Several great books have already been written on the topic of fivefold ministry, all of which have a broader scope and go much deeper theologically than this one.<sup>2</sup> The focus of this training manual is helping you *practically apply* and live out the fivefold ministry. Before we go on to the practical application, it is helpful to explore in some detail what the fivefold is and why it's important.

Ephesians 4 tells us that Jesus gave *five* types of people as spiritual gifts for the equipping and building up of the church to represent him in his fullness to the world, but, as we will see in a moment, and in subsequent chapters, we are dramatically underrepresenting him.

But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift... And he gave the *apostles*, the *prophets*, the *evangelists*, the *shepherds* and *teachers*, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

Ephesians 4:7,11-12 (Italics mine)

Some of the five italicized terms above may be familiar to you, and some may be a little more foreign. In order to provide a common foundational understanding to work from, I offer succinct definitions here:

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<sup>2</sup> See page 235 for further recommended fivefold reading.

- **Apostolic** individuals are uniquely gifted by Jesus to innovatively start new ventures in new places, inspiring **expansion of the kingdom of God**.
- **Prophetic** individuals are uniquely gifted by Jesus to creatively connect to and express the Father’s heart, inspiring **faithfulness to God and justice in the world**.
- **Evangelistic** individuals are uniquely gifted by Jesus to powerfully proclaim the good news of the gospel, inspiring **repentance and salvation**.
- **Shepherding** individuals are uniquely gifted by Jesus to care for the soul and create connections, inspiring **community and healing**.
- **Teaching** individuals are uniquely gifted by Jesus to give instruction in the Word of God, inspiring **clear understanding and application**.

Alan Hirsch, perhaps the most respected leader on the topic of the fivefold ministry, or “APEST,” offers a helpful definition of the fivefold in his recent book *5Q*: “Fivefold ministry is the way, or mode, by which Jesus is actually present in the church, the way by which he extends his own ministry through us.”<sup>3</sup> I also like how one local church planter and pastor in Vienna defined the fivefold: “They are five ways peoples’ lives and ministries together show who Jesus is, what he does, and how he transforms others as they experience Jesus through them.”<sup>4</sup> I humbly offer my own definition here:

Fivefold ministry is five dimensions of Jesus’ character and ministry that he gave to us, the church, to enjoy, live out, and equip others to display his fullness in this world.

In his fullness, Jesus represented all five of these roles: he is the supreme *apostle* (Hebrews 3:1), the most powerful *prophet* (Luke 24:19), the divine embodiment of the *evangelistic* good news (John 5:39), the chief *shepherd* (1 Peter 5:4), and the *teacher* with unrivalled authority (Mark 1:22). Picture a pie chart divided into five sections, each section representing 20 percent of Jesus and the summation of the full pie being 100 percent of Jesus. In today’s church, only two of these sections (40 percent) are primarily used—shepherds and teachers (“shepherd” is a synonym for “pastor”). We are not fully and accurately representing Christ.

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3 Alan Hirsch, *5Q: Reactivating the Original Intelligence and Capacity of the Body of Christ* (Georgia: 100 Movements Publishing, 2017).

4 Pastor and Church Planter Daniel Zuch, via written feedback form from my Fivefold Ministry Training Cohort, 31 July, 2018. Used by permission.

To illustrate, imagine I'm sitting across from you. Hey (*fill in your name here*), you have many different roles in your life, although you are one person, right? For example, you are a child of God, an employee, a child to your parents, a brother/sister to your siblings, and friend to others. Five different roles. Imagine I think you're the greatest person in the world, so I start hanging around you and want to become more like you. I begin to learn what it means to be a good friend ... and an amazing employee. And that's it. I do a great job of it. In fact, I become the best employee and the best friend possible. So, that's it, I've done it. I've become like you. Wait ... that's ridiculous, right? I've completely ignored the roles of sibling, child of God, and child to your parents. Would you feel that is an accurate, full representation of you? Of course not. Similarly, the church is not fully representing Christ.

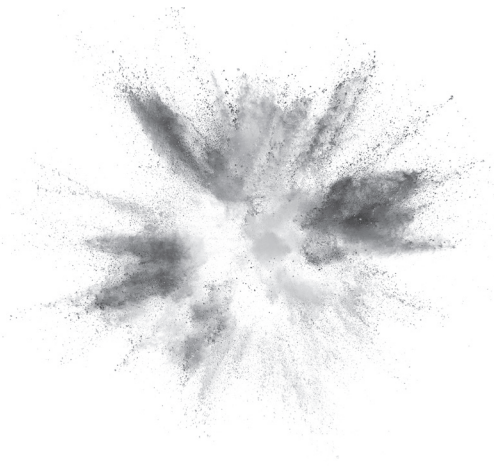
Consider some simple general examples of what happens when only two of the five are present and active:

- Try typing with two fingers on one hand instead of five. The typing will be slow and ineffective.
- Try playing a five-on-five basketball game with only two on your team. Would you win?
- Try ingesting only two food groups for several years. Your body will be malnourished.

Can you imagine the power of the missing 60 percent in the church—apostles, prophets and evangelists—being activated as well? Surely, embracing the other 60 percent would result in a healthier, more holistic, ever-expanding, incredibly powerful worldwide church!

Since Christ is our ultimate role model, we should desire to emulate him in all five of these aspects, both on an individual level and on a corporate church body level. On a personal level, each and every believer can develop and mature in these five areas that fully represent Christ. Through the indwelling Spirit of Jesus, we each have inherent, latent potential to do so, and God works lovingly in us to enable us “to be conformed to the image of his Son” (Romans 8:29). You might be thinking, “I don't have chance to become a shepherd,” or “I'm too shy to become an evangelist,” or “I feel I'm too worthless to become any of these.” Take heart: you are valuable to God, and there's no need to be concerned. It is entirely up to Jesus Christ in his sovereignty to give these gifts, and in the proportion that he wills. And with the empowerment of his Spirit, it's possible for all believers to grow in all areas. Echoing Paul's words to the Philippians, “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6). Furthermore, in 1 Thessalonians 5:24, “He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.”





## 5

### The Prophetic Exercises *Presence, Prayer, Perspective*

Though often misconstrued, misunderstood, and unfortunately at times, abused, the prophetic is biblical and can be exercised in a healthy and beautiful way ... so beautifully that the recipient and others around know it's divine. The essence of the prophetic ministry is receiving from God his love and perspective of a person, church, city, or nation, and communicating it for the purpose of encouragement, strengthening, and comfort. The original Greek "*prophetes*," literally means "one who hears and listens to God." When we look at the simplicity of 1 Corinthians 14:3, "the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation," it helps remove much of the stigma attached to this gift and function.

Let's back up for a moment and begin at the beginning, with God himself. The roots of the prophetic are found in God's character: he is holy, just, righteous, faithful, full of love and passion, and while very personal, he is also mysterious. Psalm 33:5, for example, points out his character, "He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD." Psalm 146:7 reveals him as a God "who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free." And because of who he is, we, as his people, should reflect and exemplify his nature, as commanded in 1 Peter 1:15–16: "but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'" In a very practical sense, James 1:27 exhorts us that, "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world." These verses, and many more, point towards a prophetic Father who loves to be in covenant relationship with his people.

In the Old Testament, God gave individual prophets a message of repentance to a rebellious or corrupt nation or individual. Prophets like Jonah, Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah, to

name a few, carried the burden of an uncomfortable message and were often a lone voice. In the New Testament, John the Baptist was the last of these Old Testament style prophets, pointing to someone and something greater to come, Jesus Christ, who initiated a new covenant as the first prophet in the New Testament.

Jesus perfectly modelled the prophetic ministry for us, and was recognized as a prophet by those around him. On the road to Emmaus, two of the disciples declared Jesus as “a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people” (Luke 24:19). As a prophet, he spoke and acted on behalf of God. Jesus demonstrated prophetic ministry through his close connection to the Father—only doing what he saw his Father doing (John 5:19)—and regularly withdrawing to spend time in prayer with his Father, for example in Luke 6:12, “In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God.” In a whirlwind of passion, he contended for righteousness and justice, a key function of the prophet, as he cleared the temple, flipping over tables and driving out money changers (John 2:13–25). He verbally rebuked the religious leaders of the day on numerous occasions, criticizing any misrepresentation of the Father’s heart. And in several encounters with individuals he set a captive free, all the while calling them to a holy life. The woman caught in adultery, about to be stoned by her accusers, is one such example:

Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”

John 8:10-11

Amazing! Indeed, Jesus was the perfect prophet prototype.

The role of the prophetic voice shifted with Jesus in the new covenant, fueled by his gospel of grace and his kingdom purposes. Likewise, there was also a shift in the way the Holy Spirit worked: in the old covenant, the Holy Spirit came upon the prophets for specific tasks and periods of time in order to prophesy. They had to be 100 percent correct or they would be deemed a false prophet and potentially face death. However, in the new covenant, the Holy Spirit indwells believers, giving everyone the ability and possibility to prophesy through his prompting, and the grace to learn and grow in this gifting as part of a discerning body of believers. Although there has been a shift in the new covenant, the call to repentance remains. In Matthew’s Gospel, John the Baptist preached in the wilderness, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (3:2). Shortly thereafter, Jesus is baptized by John and began his own ministry with the same exact call, “From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’”



(4:17). Hence, we see that repentance (Greek *metanoia*: “a change of mind”) is a key aspect of the prophetic in the new covenant as well as the old.

Prophets were instrumental in the birth of the New Testament *ecclesia*, as Ephesians 2:19–20 tells us, “you are [...] members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.” Beyond that, they were crucial in the explosive growth in Acts. Continuing into today—as Jesus has given the gift of prophets to his church—healthy prophets love connecting with God’s heart and communicating his love and perspective. Far from being isolated stars, those graced with the gift of the prophetic are part of the larger body of Christ and should be part of a local church body, meaning they are to function in fellowship, accountability, and in cooperation, with the other gifts and parts of the body.

The individual’s prophetic spiritual gifting is expressed in both a *vertical* dimension of focus on the Father’s heart as well a *horizontal* dimension of focusing on people.

A healthy *vertical* prophetic culture in a church will generate a strong loyalty and faithfulness to God. There will be a hunger to connect with his heart in worship and prayer, and a sense of holiness, righteousness, and justice will be present. This will result in conviction of sin, and a good understanding and practice of repentance. Through prophetic culture, the body will be regularly encouraged and built up, and when specific prophetic words are given, they will be tested and discerned together. The church will be led by the Spirit with regular rhythms of seeking God’s will in all areas. A mature prophetic church will express the prophetic into the world, living out God’s prophetic nature in the city or local area, such as taking a stand for justice in some way.

The *horizontal* dimension of the prophetic relates to sensing the Father’s heart for a specific person, group, church, or situation in society in order to put it into action to help people via avenues of social justice, such as anti-human trafficking. Prophets are guiding voices for people and for the church. Formerly referred to as “seers” in the Old Testament, today’s prophetic eyes also see issues in the spiritual realm that help guide the person or church into God’s alignment. They are gifted in challenging the status quo, yet because of that, can be in danger of becoming critical when they see the cracks in a system or shortcomings of a person. Because their natural tendency is to bluntly “tell it like it is,” it is all the more important to first go to God with what they perceive and seek his thoughts and his heart about the person, situation, or church before verbally communicating any message. The challenge of the prophet is always to communicate that message in love. Without love, it is “nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:2).

While some specific people have been graced with a large portion of the prophetic (Ephesians 4:7,11) and will mature to the point of equipping others in the gift, it is biblical to

expect all believers who are filled with the Holy Spirit to have the ability to prophesy and should desire to do so. In Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, he exhorts believers to “Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy” (1 Corinthians 14:1 NIV). Therefore, the gift of prophecy involves a spectrum of growth and maturity over time.

Because their inclination is to be alone with God, waiting and listening, prophets more than others need to intentionally seek out the other four of the fivefold for health and full synergy in order to “[build] up the body of Christ, until we all attain to [...] the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12–13).

Prophets often tend to be gifted creatively—they may be artists, musicians, writers, designers to name but a few—and potentially live out their calling within those industries. Alternatively, they may work in the business world as a consultant, or within an organization seeking social justice.

**Prophetic individuals** are uniquely gifted by Jesus to creatively connect to and express the Father’s heart, inspiring **faithfulness to God and justice in the world**.

The following exercises will help everyone grow in awareness and application of prophecy.

### **Preview of prophetic equipping exercises:**

**Equipping Exercise 1:** Receiving from God Our Father

**Equipping Exercise 2:** Forming a Prophetic Word for Another Person

**Equipping Exercise 3:** Handling Negative Impressions

**Equipping Exercise 4:** Taking a Stand Against Injustice

**Equipping Exercise 5:** Functioning Together as a Body

## Shepherding Equipping Exercises

### Equipping Exercise 2: Creating a Life Timeline to Share

Healthy, mature shepherds create community in such a way that good relationships are formed and the sheep feel connected and cared for. A key component to bring about depth in community is to create a safe place where people can show their weaknesses, be vulnerable, and receive healing in their soul.

What does a safe place look like? The foundation that needs to be established to enable people to feel secure and open up is an atmosphere where all are attentive, present in the moment, and patient. An essential element is therefore active listening—not advice giving. In this exercise, we want to learn what it feels like to share personal things from our life timeline with other people, even if we don't know them so well yet, as well as practice giving undivided attention as others share their own timelines, giving them a sense of security.

**SUGGESTED TIME:** 60 minutes (including a bit of buffer)

**SUPPLIES:** Paper and pencils for each person (ideally colored pencils or markers)

**GROUP SETUP:** Face-to-face, conducive for sharing

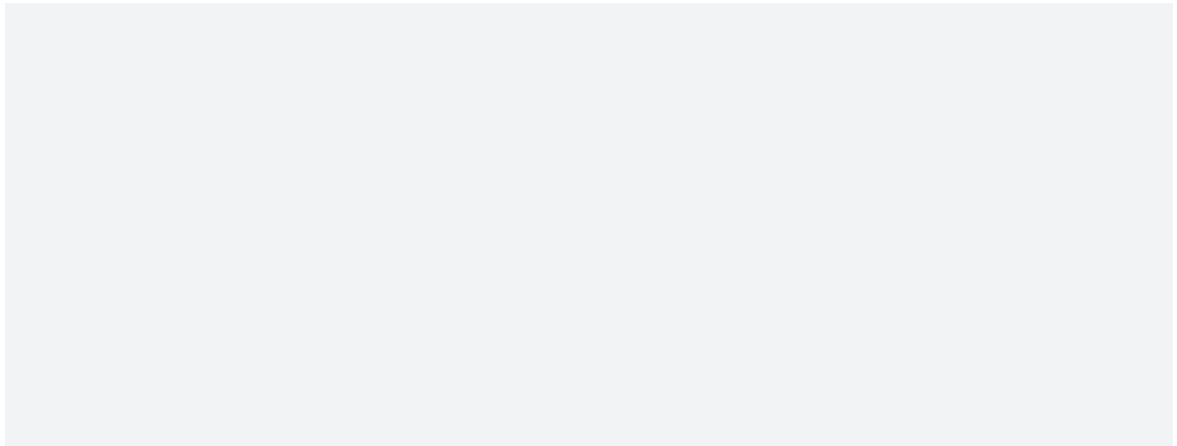
**GROUP LEADER PREPARATION:** None

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- To personally reflect on the grand overview of your life by zooming out and recognizing how distinct events in your life have shaped and formed you as part of God's plan for you, working all things together for good (Romans 8:28)
- To practice actively listening to others
- To be intentional about going deeper in forming community by sharing highs and lows of your life

**DIRECTIONS:****Warm-Up Stage** (5 minutes):

1. Think of one person in your life—could be recent or long ago—who has influenced you positively and how? Write your thoughts down in one or two sentences in the space below.

**Working Stage Part I** (15 minutes):

2. Draw your life story as a timeline on the template arrow provided on page 168. Draw hash marks on your timeline at five key events that impacted you. These can be positive or negative experiences. Write key words or phrases or draw pictures *above* the positive experiences regarding why they impacted you, and how God used them to shape and form you. Similarly, write key words or phrases or draw pictures *below* the negative experiences regarding why they impacted you, and how God used them to shape and form you.
3. Draw two hash marks on your timeline at two points in the future that you hope or expect to happen. Write key words around those hash marks.

*Life Timeline*



**Working Stage Part II** (30 minutes):

4. Share your key events with the group. Depending on size of group, sharing length will vary; it's important that each person gets equal time to share. If the group is quite large, then dividing into subgroups of four is helpful. It is also helpful here to appoint a moderator who keeps track of the time.
5. After an individual shares their timeline, listeners in the group can summarize what they have heard to promote active listening (for example, what touched them) or ask questions, yet should refrain from analyzing someone's life or giving them unsolicited advice.

**Cool Down Stage** (5 minutes):

6. Think of one person in the group whose Life Timeline you could particularly relate to? In what way could you relate? (Keep in mind that, statistically, not everyone will have a personal connection with another person; therefore, don't take it personally if no one chooses your timeline).
7. What are you taking away from this exercise in general? Write your thoughts below.

