

# The Lifestyle

OF A

# Prophet

A 21-DAY JOURNEY TO EMBRACING YOUR CALLING

JAMES W. GOLL

FOREWORD BY JOHN LOREN SANDFORD



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## Dedication and Acknowledgments

This book is dedicated to my four miracle children, now all grown adults—Justin, GraceAnn, Tyler and Rachel. This book is about something that is coming—something on the horizon, something not yet fully here. You will see; it will be your generation, and perhaps the generation after you, that will fully come into the contents written in this devotional book of yearnings. My prayer is that you will be right in the middle of the greatest authentic move of God that has ever hit Planet Earth.

Thank you guys for sharing and releasing me to the nations over the many years and believing in your good old dad. You have sacrificed so very much. Thank you for your prayers and patience with me. You make my heart glad. May you each be the unique vessel that God has created you to be. May you carry the generational prophetic anointing to impact the cultural mountain God and you choose together. I love each one of you so very much! You are each amazing!

And as your dear mom used to say, “I’m gonna take that mountain!” She was always so trusting and tenacious. So follow in her footsteps and always believe—“Ain’t no mountain high enough—to keep me from You!” And that You, of course, is

## Dedication and Acknowledgments

all about our passionate pursuit of the God who first loved us and has proved Himself over and over again that He alone is more than enough!

I also wish to thank the editorial and marketing team of Chosen Books with which I have had the honor of working for the past fifteen years. I thank the Lord for my excellent assistant, David Sluka, who has helped me take the original manuscript and shift it into this format. I thank the Lord for all the mentors over the years who have poured into my life so that I could bring forth equipping materials to further God's prophetic purposes throughout the earth.

With joy, I dedicate this book of devotion to my four kids.

Your Cheerleading Dad

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## Foreword

James Goll has written a magnificent book. Many prophetic books may overflow our personal libraries—most good but few deserving to become classics, valuable for each succeeding generation. I hope *The Lifestyle of a Prophet* comes to be regarded as such. It deserves it.

The first section, “The Lifestyle of Intimacy,” calls all who would serve God in the office of the prophetic into a discipline of daily intimacy. Few have stressed this area as much as it should have been stressed. We prophetic types sometimes become lax. But I can confirm James’ word that only if we are walking close to our Lord moment by moment can we trust that what we think we are hearing from God, and what we think we are being called to speak, really is from Him. There is a vast difference between a word from God and a word of God. Many may take what we say as a word from God, but it is of God only if we have, through intimacy, allowed Him to speak what He wants to speak through us.

The second section, “The Lifestyle of Wisdom,” is well worth the purchase of the book. The list of advice in “Reading for Day 10” ought to be required not only for new prophetic types but

for older prophets like me who need to be reminded of what we have known and too much forgotten. Those who feel called to present God’s words—wherever and to whomever—would do well to refresh their minds in the wisdom of Day 11, “The Anatomy of a Prophetic Word.” The fences of wisdom in this chapter are urgently needed to corral the wild horses of most prophets’ sensitivities and imaginations before we speak what may not be of or even from God, as He and we would want.

There is balance and corporateness in what James Goll has written in the remaining days of Section 2 and in the final section, “The Lifestyle of Revelation.” Keep *The Lifestyle of a Prophet* handy, to refer to as a doctor uses a manual to check proper vitamins and doses. No one can remember all the dos and don’ts stated wisely in this book. It will, therefore, be a handy and invaluable reference.

Those of us long weathered in the serene days and stormy seasons of the prophetic can resonate with James’ statement in “The Anatomy of a Prophetic Word”:

The ultimate goal of the prophetic is to reveal Christ. So the lifestyle of a prophet or those who walk in the prophetic should pull back the veil that the god of this age has put on the minds of unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Jesus Christ (see 2 Corinthians 4:3–4). When these wisdom parameters are in place, they will create a safe atmosphere where we can walk into fruitful prophetic maturation and faith can move freely.

John Loren Sandford, bestselling author;  
co-founder, Elijah House

# Introduction

“Where do I begin to tell the story of . . . ?” A famous love song started out with these words many years ago. I am left in such a position as I ponder taking what has already been sixty-plus years of life and close to forty years of full-time vocational ministry and boiling it down into an inspirational devotional seasoned with sound teaching that will be an aid and not a boring, heavy exposition.

My book *The Coming Prophetic Revolution* (Chosen, 2001), was a meaty treatise written a bit ahead of its time. Though one of the most complete and thorough books I have ever written, it also was one of the most overlooked manuscripts that sat there on the shelf, per se. Forerunners can suffer from running too far ahead of the pack at times—though to them, they are right on track.

So we felt the need to revisit, update and shift the rich content within the original book. The outcome is *The Lifestyle of a Prophet*—a prophetic teaching and equipping devotional with readings for 21 days to help you embrace the prophetic calling of God on your life.

But how did I get started on my prophetic journey?

There are always those who go before you. For me it was primarily the prayers of my mother and the devotion of my late wife, Michal Ann. They are some of my heroes and belong in my modern Hall of Fame and the great cloud of witnesses that surround us today. There have been many other positive influences as well in my journey of developing a prophetic lifestyle.

Then there was the solidity of the teachers of the charismatic renewal—the crazy infectious zeal of the Jesus People culture mingled with the impact of the integrity of the Third Wave movement. Then I rode the tidal wave that hit the shores of the Body of Christ in the prophetic movement and the role I played in those formative years in Kansas City. This, of course, has been followed by the apostolic reformation, which in my perspective is still in its formation. All of these movements and their various leaders have impacted me greatly. I have been exposed to many lessons about what to do and what not to repeat. Someday, when I am older, I want to compose a book entitled *Lessons from the Woodshed!* But that is for another day.

None of these great movements or trailblazers and fore-runners ever takes the place of cultivating your very own personal walk and talk with the Holy Spirit by your side. He personally directs you to be more like Jesus by teaching us through life's journey that God the Father is good all the time. Whew, that says a lot! Yep, you heard me. One of the biggest lessons New Testament prophets today must learn and exhibit is that God is good—period. Now that is a revelation worth living! I have already seen a lot of good fruit and, well, I have also seen some things I personally do not want to see repeated. Many of the lessons I have learned along the way are contained in this book.

So whom is this book for? With the title *Lifestyle of a Prophet*, I want to make it clear that this book is not just about the making of a prophet or even just a great company of prophetic ministers. It is first and foremost about being a disciple of the

Lord Jesus Christ—following in the lifestyle of One who did only what He saw the Father doing and said only what He heard the Father saying (see John 5:19; 8:28). If your heart says, “Not my will, but Yours be done,” you will receive much as you read the following pages.

Obviously I believe that prophets are for today, but part of their role is to raise up a community of believers who live a prophetic lifestyle. I will let you read the book for yourself and learn some lessons from one who has walked this journey all his life.

You will notice I have divided the lifestyle journey into three sections: “The Lifestyle of Intimacy,” “The Lifestyle of Wisdom” and “The Lifestyle of Revelation.” Please make note of the order. Many people make the mistake of promoting the prophetic lifestyle first and foremost as being about pursuing higher-level gifts. From my vantage point, that is a recipe for disaster.

So let’s dive right in and cultivate a lifestyle of intimacy, wisdom and revelation. Maybe this book will help you discover your own personal calling in God. I sure hope so! After all, it is not just a few good prophets the Holy Spirit desires. He longs for an entire prophetic generation to arise that loves truth and is centered in the character of Jesus and releases the fragrance of Christ into every facet of society. After all, a true prophet does not point to oneself, but to the One. He alone is worthy. He alone is the reason I live.

May you be blessed!

Dr. James W. Goll, Encounters Network



# The Lifestyle of Intimacy

*“I have made Your name known to them, and will  
make it known to them, so that the love with which  
You love Me may be in them, and I in them.”*

JOHN 17:26



## John—Prophet of Beloved Intimacy

“There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother,” says Proverbs 18:24. Jesus did not have too many of those friends during His greatest hour of need. Did you realize that John was the only disciple of the Twelve specifically named as having been at Jesus’ crucifixion? We know Simon of Cyrene helped to carry His cross, and that a group of women followers of the Messiah were present (see Luke 23:26–27). It is also well documented that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was looking on, accompanied by her sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene (see John 19:25). I wonder where the others were.

But John, the beloved, the friend of Jesus, was there. No wonder he speaks so much in his writings about the love and forgiveness of God and was the only disciple to record the words of Jesus, “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). This John actually saw the crucifixion. He witnessed the effects of the crown of thorns piercing the brow of the Savior. He saw the face of Jesus marred. He saw the results of the 39 lashes on His lacerated, raw back. John witnessed firsthand the nails piercing His hands and feet. He heard the desperate cries of the Son of Man, the only Son

of God, for help. The sound of Jesus' words from the cross probably echoed in John's heart and mind all his life.

According to John 21:20, the John who was at the cross was the same John who had laid his head on the chest of the Messiah at the Last Supper. I wonder what all he heard when his ear was so close to Jesus?

John's journey with his Lord took a different turn from that of the others. He laid his head on the chest of the Creator of the universe. He saw the excruciating ordeal of the criminal death of an innocent Man. He was also given an amazing stewardship—the ongoing care of Jesus' mother, Mary (see John 19:27). I would give over the care of my mother only into the very best hands.

I wonder what Jesus saw in John. What was different in him? Did he have an uncommon love for his Master?

Later in life this same disciple spoke of simple things. He groomed the next generation, and generations to come, whetting their appetites by penning his epistles with words of love. I wonder why.

Let's pause for a moment. Why bring up the apostle John in a book entitled *The Lifestyle of a Prophet*? You would probably expect another John—John the Baptist—or an Old Testament prophet like Elijah, Isaiah or Daniel. Why John the Beloved?

I begin with John because the lifestyle of a prophet must begin with love. No one's life or writings better exemplify a lifestyle of love and intimacy than that of John. I believe that it was from that place that John also received and delivered a prophetic revelation the Church anticipates to this day: the Second Coming of King Jesus. We must remember that keys like intimacy, devotion, faithfulness and friendship with God are how you embrace the One who calls you and ultimately discover your calling. So let's look more closely at the life of John, the beloved disciple, to find some keys to a lifestyle of intimacy.

## John's Radical Surrender

In the following Scripture we see the cost of enlisting in a revolutionary army.

Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

Matthew 4:21–22

John, who was transformed into a passionate lover of God, had lost everything he knew in order to come into that which he did not yet know. Oh, the cost of authentic discipleship! Now muse with me for a while. . . .

Zebedee was raising his family to be God-fearers. Like other good fathers, he was also teaching his sons a trade that they, too, would be expected to pass on to their sons. Zebedee, a Jewish man, had probably studied the Torah and the prophets and had been taught that one day the Messiah would come. He would also have read in Isaiah that there would come a forerunner calling for every crooked way to be made straight.

Then some strange man wearing a coat of camel's hair emerged from the wilderness. He had a peculiar diet and an even stranger demeanor. Word was already circulating for the Jews to be leery of this on-the-fringes prophet called John the Baptist who was paving and pointing the way toward another whom he said was greater than he. He was preparing the way, so the Baptist said, for the Messiah. The whole region was in an uproar. Zebedee probably felt he needed to steady the boat a bit as people were getting into a frenzy.

Then the old man's worst dream came true. The One the prophet was pointing toward came and pointed His finger at Zebedee's heart. Jesus was on a pilgrimage to pick His own

group of men to disciple. Sure enough, the young thirty-year-old appeared on the Galilean shores, came straight toward Zebedee's boat and did not even ask permission to speak to his two sons. Bypassing authority, the young zealot spoke right to the hearts of the young men: "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). Immediately James and John jumped from the boat, left their father and started off on a new trek—the process of becoming a disciple.

Do you realize the cost they paid when they surrendered to their new Lord? No money, no job, no understandable future. They had just hurt the one person they had been trained all their lives to honor and whom they never wanted to bruise—their father. They left him to finish the fishing. They left him with no inheritance. But something in their hearts said, "Go." So they left all they knew to become something that their minds could not comprehend.

James and John understood fishing for fish. But what was fishing for men? What kind of bait do you use to do that? Sounds like a setup for a wrong interpretation of words of revelation, for misunderstanding what the Nazarene was really saying. Do you think there was the potential for false expectations?

Nonetheless off they went. And off went John in radical surrender to join an emerging new army of radical men who would jostle for position and misinterpret the sayings of their Leader. Mercy! Think John ever wanted to turn back and go home? I imagine so. But when you have been exposed to the real thing, there is no turning back.

So it is today with the emerging prophetic army our Lord is calling forth. Jesus said that no one can put his hand to the plow and look back (see Luke 9:62). You must keep looking forward. That is what John did. That is what you must do as well. Get ready to jump out of your comfortable boat. Make a radical surrender and become a catcher of men!

## The Broken Vessel

Have you ever been scorched by the hot words of Jesus? Has He ever spoken something so deep into your heart that you were cut to the very core of your being? I think this is exactly what happened to John in the passage below. I believe he was pierced by God in his fleshly strength, never to recover.

When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” But He turned and rebuked them.

Luke 9:54–55

John started out like most of the rest of us—zealous, jealous and on hot fire. But along the way he became a broken vessel in the Lord’s hands. Remember, through the culture of grace, disciples are made, not born. This John had made a radical surrender to his new Commander-in-Chief. Imagine having to learn new ways, a new vocation, hanging out with a bunch of men day and night, and following some itinerant around the country. Yeah, it would be exciting for a while. But when you get a prophetic word like, “You don’t know what spirit you are speaking from!” that might set you back for a while.

Realize that most of these new followers were probably just in their early twenties. John and James were even named *Boanerges* by the Lord, which means “Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:17). After they had followed Jesus for almost three years, they were still jostling for position, and their mother, Salome, was even stirring them up to do it. They were contending to see which one could sit on Jesus’ right hand and which on His left (see Mark 10:35–41). Sounds as if John and his brother had more zeal than wisdom. Does that sound familiar?

But every “son of thunder” needs the wisdom of a father to help nurture and love him into all God has created him to be.

Did you ever have more zeal than knowledge of God's ways? Ever get in His way instead of out of it? Ever have the wrong concept of what prophetic ministry looks like, and you just wanted to call down fire on everyone? After all, you are called to be a prophet of judgment, and you know God has chosen you to call it down. (And in your opinion, sooner would be better than later!)

Maybe mercy needs to triumph in your life, as it did in John's. We need prophets who love mercy and who want to call *that* kind of fire down on people, cities and nations. Judgmental, prophetic lone rangers do not last long; team ministry is the higher pathway. Are you in this for the long haul or just the short run? To judge a city or build one up?

Yes, there are valleys to avoid and wisdom to be gained. There are valuable lessons to grasp, like the fact that selfish ambition is not the Kingdom way. Promotion does come from the Lord, but normally after you have been in the game and endured a few rounds. John became a broken vessel, and it was pleasing to the Lord. See him—and yourself—yielded, merciful and leaning on the Master's chest.

## John's Testimony of Jesus

As an aged man, John was exiled in solitude on the Isle of Patmos. He seems to have nothing left in his life. He is abandoned by men—but not by God. Not at all by God and His brilliant presence! God is now his constant companion.

I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Revelation 19:10

First John 1:1 wonderfully states, “What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life. . . .” Is this the same man? How did this transformation take place? The motivation seems different; the focus of the message is distinctly changed. This man is not talking about calling down judgment. He is not just teaching about gifts and ministries. He is speaking about a life consumed by the Person of God Himself.

In the midst of all this, he gives us a revolutionary concept concerning the central issue of what authentic prophetic ministry is all about: *Worship God!* Worship God, and you will be walking in the opposite spirit from that of this world. And as you worship God, someone—the great Someone—will inhabit your praises, and the Holy Spirit’s revelatory presence will be poured out. Yes, the true heart of the prophet is the testimony not of how great you are, but of how awesome He is! The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Do you want to become a true messenger of the Lord with fire burning in your bones? Then have the Man of fire dwelling in your heart. Abandon any attempts to build your own kingdom or ministry. Forget about building your own empire; build His instead. Worship God passionately. Consecrate yourself to Him to be His holy dwelling place.

John, the “Son of Thunder,” was changed. John the fisherman became a wisdom spout for the purposes of God. He taught people how to forgive, how to love, how to cover one another. In fact, his last writing is not as much a scenario of end-times cataclysmic things as it is a profound epistle concerning the revelation of Jesus Christ Himself.

Do you want to experience the lifestyle of a prophet? It begins with intimacy. Surrender to Jesus and worship Him.

The next six readings are focused around aspects of a lifestyle of intimacy. At the end of each reading is a devotional section to help you process what you have read and embrace its application for your life.

The book of John records the following prayer of Jesus spoken to His Father on the night of His betrayal. He asked that “the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them” (John 17:26). What a glorious, intimate love that is! Jesus is longing to be your intimate Friend. Will you be His?

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*Father, I present myself to You right now. I surrender to Jesus as my Lord and Savior, and also as my Friend. I lay down my life before You and ask that You would pick it up and lead me on Your paths for Your name's sake. Heal my brokenness and make me whole. Thank You that You do not just tolerate me, You love me and delight in who I am. As I read the words of this book, breathe upon me and draw me close to encounter You. Like John, I desire to walk in intimacy with You. Come, Lord, and embrace me. Lead me into a more intimate lifestyle of love. I love You and want to love You more. Take me on this journey to be more like You. For Jesus' sake, Amen.*

## ≡ Embracing Your Calling—Day 1

1. Consider the kind of friendship you desire to have with Jesus. What do you want that relationship to look like?
2. What comforts have you surrendered to follow Jesus?

3. How has God produced brokenness in your life so that you can live with passion but also with wisdom?
4. Take a few moments right now to worship Jesus. Thank Him for His goodness in your life. Be specific. Then tell Jesus of your desire to live a lifestyle of intimacy with God.