

COURSE

Discerning the Signs: A Course

A 6-Week Course on Biblical Prophecy, Prophetic Discernment, and Reading the Times

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Equipping pastors and leaders to serve with excellence, integrity, and lasting impact.

About This Resource

In every generation, the church has grappled with the question of how to read the times in light of Scripture. This six-week course equips believers with a biblical and theological framework for prophetic discernment -- understanding the signs of the times without falling into sensationalism, date-setting, or fear. Grounded in both Old and New Testament eschatology, it offers a mature, hope-filled engagement with the prophetic tradition.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

Read each section carefully, engage the reflection questions, and apply the practical frameworks to your context.

Complete Resource Guide and Study Content

Why This Resource Matters

In every generation, the church has grappled with the question of how to read the times in light of Scripture. This six-week course equips believers with a biblical and theological framework for prophetic discernment -- understanding the signs of the times without falling into sensationalism, date-setting, or fear. Grounded in both Old and New Testament eschatology, it offers a mature, hope-filled engagement with the prophetic tradition.

This resource has been carefully designed to serve the needs of pastors, ministry leaders, and serious disciples in the contemporary church context. It reflects both the timeless wisdom of the Christian tradition and the specific challenges and opportunities of ministry in the present moment.

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."

-- 2 Timothy 2:15

Part One: Biblical and Theological Foundations

Every ministry resource that is genuinely helpful must be rooted in Scripture and shaped by the theological convictions of the Christian tradition. This section establishes the biblical and theological foundation for everything that follows. Before developing strategy or implementing practice, we must understand the "why" that gives meaning to the "how."

The Scriptures speak with remarkable clarity about the subjects addressed in this resource. The Old Testament provides the narrative and wisdom foundations; the New Testament provides the fulfillment, clarification, and apostolic application. A careful reading of both testaments together provides a comprehensive framework that is both authoritative and adaptable to diverse contexts.

Key Theological Themes

- The character and purposes of God as the ultimate foundation for all ministry practice. We do what we do because of who God is.
- The nature and mission of the church as the community of the redeemed called to embody and proclaim the Kingdom of God.
- The role of the Holy Spirit in empowering, guiding, and equipping believers for every dimension of ministry and life.
- The eschatological hope that gives present faithfulness its ultimate meaning -- we labor now in light of what will be then.

Part Two: Core Competencies and Skills

Foundational Skills Assessment

Before developing new competencies, it is essential to honestly assess your current level of skill and knowledge in this area. Use the following framework to evaluate where you are starting from:

(continued)

- I have a clear theological framework for this area of ministry. Rating: ___/5
- I have practical experience in this area that I can draw from and build on. Rating: ___/5
- I have at least one mentor or peer who models excellence in this area. Rating: ___/5
- I regularly read, study, and stay current in this area. Rating: ___/5
- My congregation currently has adequate structures to support this ministry. Rating: ___/5

Developing Core Competencies

Competency development follows a predictable progression: awareness (knowing what you do not know), structured learning (acquiring new knowledge and skill), application (putting the learning into practice), reflection (evaluating the results), and integration (making the practice natural and sustainable). This resource is designed to move you through each stage of this progression.

The most effective learning is always experiential and relational. Reading this resource is valuable; applying it is transformational. Look for immediate, small ways to put each principle into practice rather than waiting for the perfect opportunity or the ideal conditions. Real formation happens in the mess of actual ministry, not in the ideal conditions of a planning document.

Part Three: Implementation Framework**Stage 1: Awareness and Assessment (Weeks 1-2)**

During the first two weeks, focus entirely on honest assessment. Do not try to fix anything yet. Simply observe, reflect, and document what you are seeing. Talk with trusted colleagues, ask probing questions, review any available data, and pray for clarity about the current state of this ministry area.

Stage 2: Learning and Planning (Weeks 3-4)

With a clear assessment in hand, move into focused learning. Identify the 2-3 most important changes to make and research best practices for implementing them. Develop a specific 90-day action plan with clear owners, timelines, and success metrics.

Stage 3: Implementation and Adjustment (Weeks 5-12)

Implement your action plan, but hold it loosely. Real-world implementation always reveals gaps and surprises that planning does not anticipate. Build in bi-weekly review sessions to assess progress, celebrate wins, and adjust what is not working. The goal is not to execute the plan perfectly but to make meaningful progress toward the goal.

Stage 4: Sustainability and Multiplication (Ongoing)

The final and most important stage is building the practices, structures, and culture that will sustain this ministry over the long term, and eventually multiply it beyond your direct involvement. Ministry that depends entirely on one person's energy and attention is not sustainable. Build teams, develop systems, and cultivate leaders who can carry this work forward.

Discussion and Reflection Questions

(continued)

1. What dimension of this resource has the most immediate relevance to your current ministry situation? Why?
2. Where do you see the greatest gap between the principles in this resource and your current practice? What is one step you could take this week to begin closing that gap?
3. Who in your community needs to engage with this material? How could you share what you are learning?
4. What support (training, resources, relationships) do you need to implement the principles in this resource effectively?
5. What does faithfulness in this area look like for you over the next 12 months? How will you know if you are succeeding?

Application Action Steps

- Complete the foundational skills assessment above honestly and share the results with a trusted colleague or mentor.
- Identify the single most important action step in this resource and commit to taking it within the next 7 days.
- Schedule a 90-day review with your accountability partner to evaluate progress and adjust your approach.
- Identify one person in your congregation who would benefit from engaging with this resource and share it with them this week.

The measure of any ministry resource is not whether it increases your knowledge but whether it changes your practice. Knowledge without action is just information. Wisdom applied is transformation.

LiveWell by James Bell

Equipping leaders. Empowering ministry. Transforming lives.

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