

## I. Independent Ivan

### a) *Profile*

Independent Ivan has an authentic passion for Jesus. He seeks Him for hours through prayer and the Word. He is sincere, hungry, and yearns to walk intimately with the Lord.

But there's a few issues with Independent Ivan. First, he doesn't have a heart for the corporate. In his mind, it's just him and Jesus. The corporate doesn't really matter to him. He just wants to be locked away in his prayer closet with the Lord.

That doesn't mean he isn't interested in the larger body of Christ. Ask Independent Ivan what the popular prophets, apostles, teachers, and influencers are saying and he can quote them word for word. Independent Ivan consumes their blogs, books, podcasts, and sermons. And he regularly hops from conference to conference. In Independent Ivan's mind, he's not called to a local church. He's called to the larger body of Christ. But here's the problem: Independent Ivan is very familiar with what's going on in the body of Christ worldwide, but he's clueless to what the Spirit is doing in his local church.

Because of his independence, Ivan's corporate expressions are typically out of sync with what the Holy Spirit is doing corporately. During a service, Independent Ivan frequently expresses what the Spirit is doing with him. Please understand: The Lord is truly touching him. But this is a private work that is not meant to be expressed in the corporate setting.

Lacking understanding of this, Independent Ivan wants to express himself week after week. So, sometimes he shares words. However, because Ivan's heart is disconnected from the corporate, it's rarely what the Lord is saying to the local church. It's usually just an echo of what he has heard the popular prophets speak.

Other times he delivers a tongues message, prays loudly, or travails. Rarely do any of these manifestations benefit the corporate. Because of Ivan's independence, he's unteachable and unable to hear what the Lord is speaking through the elders who are called to watch over him, shepherd him, and disciple him.

A few years ago, Ivan's independence culminated in an awkward and Spirit-quenching moment. Here's what happened. During a Sunday morning service, the Spirit was moving in a powerful way. Deeply moved by the moment, Independent Ivan stood up and shared a word from the Lord for what seemed like 10 minutes. The problem was there was a lot of error in his "prophecy." It was an awkward moment because the elders knew it was not biblically sound and much of the church was troubled by it.

Taking his responsibility to shepherd God's people, the pastor did what he had to do. He stopped Independent Ivan from speaking and publicly corrected him. With kindness, gentleness, and grace, the pastor pointed out the unbiblical statements that he made and highlighted the places where he took the Scriptures out of context. Needless to say, Independent Ivan was deeply offended and stormed out of the meeting, never to return. He immediately started posting to all his social media accounts how mean-spirited the pastor was and how little he walked in love. To this day, Independent Ivan roams from church to church, refusing to ever be planted in a local church again.

### b) *Lessons*

1. The corporate is greater than you and Jesus.
  - God established an immutable law in His eternal council that can never be violated. Namely, the fullness of Christ can only be experienced corporately—not merely individually (Eph.

1:22-23; Eph. 4:13). If you care about the fullness of Christ, it's imperative to develop a heart for what the Spirit is doing and saying corporately.

- The Lord's agenda for His church is so much greater than your individual agenda or your individual ministry. The day of independence and isolation must end if we're ever to see the fullness of Christ.
  - Jesus desires a united bride, not a harem of isolated, me-and-Jesus seekers. The Lord is preparing a corporate man, a unified son, to place into His eternal inheritance—not a scattered and independent group of children doing their own thing.
  - In the book of Ephesians, which beautifully articulates Christ dwelling within and working through His body, the words "together," "we," "us," "body," and "church" are used 55 times in 155 verses. So, 35% of the verses in this epistle are focused on the corporate expression of Christ's indwelling life. This underscores the truth that the corporate expression of Christ's indwelling life always trumps "me and Jesus."
  - Lone ranger Christians, who never develop a heart for the corporate, will never come into the fullness of God's eternal purpose—no matter how much they love Jesus, no matter how abandoned they are, no matter how much they pray, fast, and seek God, and no matter how nice they are.
2. Seek to build up the local body.
- If you believe that you need to express what the Spirit is doing in you in the corporate gathering—whether by speaking a word, praying, travail, a tongues message, or a song—it's vital that you develop a heart for the corporate.
  - Paul said, "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Cor. 12:7). We only want to express what the Spirit is doing in us corporately if it benefits the body.
  - Paul said, "But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what will I profit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching?" (1 Cor. 14:6). Notice Paul's desire to "profit you." That should be our goal when expressing what the Spirit is doing in us or saying to us. We want to profit the local body of Christ.
  - Before sharing anything publicly, make sure it's the right expression of the Spirit for the right moment. We don't need to share corporately everything the Lord is doing or saying to us privately.
  - Speaking of a tongues message, Paul said, "If there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God" (1 Cor. 14:28). Here's the point: If your expression of the Spirit doesn't benefit the church, keep it to yourself.
  - Each of us need to learn how to separate what the Lord is speaking to us privately from what He intends to be expressed corporately. Ask yourself, "Does this word, spontaneous song, prophecy, tongue, or travail benefit the whole church or is it just for me?" If it is only between you and the Lord, keep it to yourself.
3. Being planted in a local church results in spiritual growth.
- We will only grow if we are planted in a local church. People who repeatedly go from one church to another will remain flaky and immature. See Psalm 92:12-15.
  - The reason why many believers have been saved for thirty years but are still in spiritual diapers is because they have hopped from church to church. They have been transplanted from church to church rather than planted for long periods of time in one local church.

- Many believers are so sensitive that the smallest offense causes them to seek refuge at another church. Others are so addicted to something new and exciting that they run from meeting to meeting and conference to conference to hear what the hottest prophet of the month has to say. Believers with attitudes like this will not grow because they are not planted firmly and deeply in the house of God.
  - Being planted in a local church means that we want to serve the body. We are not here to change the way things are done, to work our way up the leadership ladder, or to draw people to ourselves. Nor are we serving with an ulterior motive of gaining influence or to use our gift for selfish purposes. We lay everything down so that we can serve in the local church and be a blessing to the body.
4. We are accountable for whatever we express corporately.
- 1 Corinthians 14:29 states, "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment."
  - One of the biggest issues with the modern-day prophetic movement is that we rarely obey this Scripture. While people should be free to speak what they feel the Lord is saying, we also have a responsibility to pass judgment on what is said and done. Failure to do so allows flakiness to flourish in Charismatic churches.
  - There is a way to pass judgment on prophetic words with love, grace, and kindness.
  - Here's what we have to realize: Whatever we express corporately is subject to correction if it's unbiblical or out of order. That means, as messengers, we have to take responsibility for what we speak and what we express. We can't be irresponsible if we want to express Christ's life in a corporate setting.
  - Whenever we have freedom to express what the Spirit is doing corporately, we are influencing God's people. We have to realize how serious this is. Influencing God's people is a serious responsibility. If we cause one of God's children to stumble by what we do or what we say, there are serious repercussions (Matt. 18:6-7). This is why influencers, teachers, and leaders will have a stricter judgment (James 3:1).
  - This is why it's a safeguard to submit the words we receive to the elders for input and evaluation before sharing. We should also evaluate what we say, looking for errors and inaccuracies. Like Paul said, we should judge ourselves so that we are not judged (1 Cor. 11:31).

## II. Wrong-Flow Joe

### a) *Profile*

Wrong-Flow Joe truly loves the Lord and desires to please Him. He seeks Him regularly through prayer and the Word. He also knows how to hear His voice in the secret place.

The main issue with Wrong-Flow Joe is that he always seems to say the wrong things at the wrong time. He is out of sync with the flow of the Spirit through the body during the corporate gathering.

A few years ago during worship, the pastor felt prompted to share that the Lord was drawing people to Himself by revealing His goodness. He shared from Hosea 3:5 that "they will come trembling to the Lord and to His goodness in the last days." Everyone could feel the anointing of the Spirit upon this word. This led the pastor to ask if anyone else had words to share related to God's goodness. One person shared from Romans 2:4, stating that "the kindness of God leads you to repentance." This inspired a woman in the congregation to sing, "God, You're So Good." Following this, the worship team started playing a different version of this song. As word after word was shared about God's goodness, you could sense the tangible presence of God moving in the room. People were

crying. Others were filled with joy because they had been under a heavy weight of depression and despair.

It felt as if heaven had come into the room until Wrong-Flow Joe stood up and shared his “word.” He said, “During worship, I read about the breaking of the seven seals from Revelation 6. Listen—half the world is about to die because of God’s end-time judgments. We need to repent and start warning everyone that Jesus is coming soon and that the world is about to experience God’s wrath.”

Though what he said was true, it was not the right word for the right moment. Immediately, the anointing of God’s goodness lifted and what the Spirit had been doing was quenched.

b) *Lessons*

1. Make sure you have the *right expression* in the *right mood* at the *right time*.

- If the mood of the Spirit corporately is somber, serious, and holy, it would be an inappropriate time to bring an over joyous expression of the Spirit. Likewise, if the mood of the Spirit is joyful and He is revealing God’s goodness, it would be an inappropriate time to bring in a heavy, somber expression of the Spirit.
- Ask yourself: Is this the right expression at the right moment? Am I being overly loud or too quiet? How is what I’m expressing affecting those around me? Is my expression beneficial to the body or am I being disruptive? Is what I’m saying or doing drawing attention to myself or building up the body?
- It would be inappropriate to travail when the corporate mood of the Spirit is joyful. It would be inappropriate to laugh if the corporate mood is serious and somber.
- We want to be sensitive to the Spirit’s leading for that service and never fall into learned Charismatic behavior.
- Also, we want to make sure, whether we lead a spontaneous song, give a tongues message, travail, etc. that we don’t interrupt the worship song presently being sung, the message, or someone else ministering. There are times during the worship when those leading the worship have times to wait on the Lord. This is the appropriate time to give expression of the Spirit’s leading.

2. Be sensitive to the person leading the gathering.

- Try to flow with the person who is leading the gathering. If for some reason you sense a word or direction that is not in harmony with the current mode and flow of the Spirit, submit what you sense to an elder to evaluate before sharing.
- This would apply to a church gathering, a prayer meeting, or a home group.

3. Learn to feed off one another.

- As an interdependent body, learn to be inspired by others giving expression of the Spirit. For example, a tongues message might inspire an interpretation in you. Or a spontaneous song might inspire the worship team in a song.
- Someone’s word might trigger you to deliver a word, so pay attention to what others say. Don’t zone out into a “me-and-Jesus” mode, where you miss what the Lord is doing corporately.