

Hearing God (4)

“Testing for the Right Voice”

God speaks to His people many ways!

- 1) God speaks through nature.
- 2) God speaks through the Bible.
- 3) God speaks through visions.
- 4) God speaks through dreams.
- 5) God speaks through prophets and teachers.

The most effective way to hear God is “Spirit to spirit” - the Holy Ghost impression.

Seven Ways to Test the Voice

1 John 4:1 TLB - *Don't always believe everything you hear just because someone says it's a message from God. Test it first to see if it really is...*

If a prophetic message comes during a meeting, Paul says let 2 or 3 prophesy but then let others weigh in (1 Corinthians 14:29).

- 1) Does it agree with the Bible?

Luke 21:33 - *Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away.*

- a) God will never violate anything written in His book.
- b) God will never tell you to ignore or disobey anything in this book.
- c) If He said it in the past, He's going to say it in the future.
 - i) Example: If the Bible says to pay your taxes, God isn't going to give you an impression... “the government wastes too much money you should stop paying taxes...”
 - ii) Jesus was asked this very question in Matthew 22:21 (...render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's). Pay your tax and honor God with your tithe.
- d) Build your life on the Bible.
 - i) You shouldn't have to pray about going to church... it's in the book, just do it.
 - ii) You shouldn't have to pray about tithing... it's in the book, just do it.
 - iii) You shouldn't have to pray about telling the truth.... It's in the book, just do it.

2) Does it make me more like Christ?

Phillipians 2:5 NCV - *In your lives you must think and act like Jesus Christ. The NLT says, "you must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had."*

a) Christlikeness...this is the goal of the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:18 NLT says, *"...reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image."*

b) A practical application of what Christlikeness is may be found in James 3:14-17.

But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. v.15 This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. v.16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. v.17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

- i) You will know the "impression" doesn't come from God if it causes bitterness, jealousy, or selfish ambition or boasting.
- ii) Here is a list of filters: the Bible calls it "wisdom from above, pure, peaceable, gentle, open to reason (submissive), full of mercy, good fruits, impartial and sincere."

(1) Pure and sincere - When God speaks to you there will not be any deception.

(2) Peaceable - A word from God will always come from a peace-loving heart. Even a word of direction that is hard for another person to receive, should be given with the goal of coming to peace.

(3) Submissive or "open to reason" - what would this word do to other people?

Some people have the attitude "God told me to do this" and they just bowl over everybody... doesn't matter who gets hurt! God told them to do it!

(a) Here is a major problem with the "God told me."

- (i) I have seen people shipwreck because they won't submit their "word" to not only the Bible, but people of authority... parents, pastors, other church leaders.
- (ii) Hebrews 13:17 - *Obey your leaders and submit to their authority... they watch for your souls...*

The absolute words "God told me..." shuts down prayer and accountability.

(4) Full of mercy - A word from God will always be flavored with mercy.

(5) Impartial - Does it cause you to show favoritism to special relationships?

This is the Spirit of Jesus: pure, peaceable, submissive, full of mercy, impartial.

3) Does my church family confirm it?

- a) Understand this...when you become a believer you not only get a new relationship with God, you get family, the church.
- b) The Bible says *smart people get advice. Fools don't (Proverbs 12:15). In a multitude of counselors there is safety (Proverbs 24:6).*
- c) The biggest reason people mess up their lives is they want to live their life without any accountability to anybody else, without any confirmation, any guidance.

But when you think your own thoughts and make your own decisions, you will often be left with no support. Don't sacrifice the support of a family.

- d) Is there a wise person or mature Christian in your life that you can bounce things off of?

4) Is it consistent with my design?

Ephesians 2:10 - *we are God's workmanship...*

- a) God has created and designed us for a purpose! We have certain giftings and a personality that perfectly fits His will for our lives!
 - i) You are not an accident.
 - ii) There is a purpose for you in this life and it fits you.

Example: Rick Warren says a chair is designed a certain way and it reveals its purpose... You were designed a certain way and often times it reveals your purpose.

- (1) You may be good with words.
- (2) You may be good with animals.
- (3) You may be good with mechanical things or computers.
- (4) You may be good at making money!

The will of God will operate well within your gifting.

- b) God doesn't contradict His basic design for your life! Find what you are good at and begin to listen to God!

5) Does it concern my responsibility?

- a) If it is not your responsibility, why would God talk to you about it?

There has to be a good reason for God to randomly give you a word to speak into something you are not even a part of.

- b) In John 21, Jesus is talking to Peter about how he is going to suffer and die for the Kingdom... Peter asked him, what about that guy, John... Jesus tells him, that is not your business Peter... I will do what I want with him.

Be very careful about giving people a personal word from God...

(1) God told me your secret sin. He did...why?

(2) God told me to tell you to invest your money here.

(3) God told me you are going to marry me.

- c) Guidelines to follow when God speaks to you on behalf of someone else:

- i) God will use you to confirm what He's already said to them.

- ii) God will often speak to you so you can help them without them even knowing. This way your ego does not get involved.

- iii) Trust God to speak to that person first!

- iv) If God does talk to you about something outside of your responsibility... think intercession first.

- 6) Is it convicting rather than condemning?

- a) Conviction is from God; condemnation is not! Conviction points the way to change while condemnation just makes you feel bad.

- b) The voice of God always gives you hope for a future through repentance.

The voice of the devil makes you feel worthless.

- c) Should a Christian ever feel guilty? Yes! For a nanosecond! That is about how long it takes for you to realize you have blown it and now must make it right with God!

If you are battling a sin stronghold, seek out some help!

- 7) Do I sense God's peace in this word?

1 Corinthians 14:33 - *God is not the author of confusion...*

- a) If you are confused, pressured, overwhelmed, and driven to make a hasty decision, it is not God speaking to you!

- b) There is not a single example in the Bible of God dealing with His people this way!

- i) Philippians 4:7 - *...the peace of God guards our hearts and minds...*

- ii) Again, the exception to this is intercession! Sometimes God will allow you to see or hear things that need warfare prayer!