

Hearing God

How do we hear God as individuals? - "Grant in me a pure, obedient heart."

God has much to say and He longs to work things out through personal relationship. Whatever stage you are at God can take you on further. Life is continually changing so we need to continually check to make sure we are hearing Him. God's ways and thoughts are higher than ours so we are always learners of this subject.

Extreme 1 - Dreams, visions, feelings and impressions

Some Christians continually insist that the Lord told them this and that but the outworking of their lives does not line up with reality. What we hear must be grounded in reality.

At one extreme our entire guidance could be only from dreams, visions, feelings and impressions. There can be dangers in just following what is happening in our imagination. Peter had a very strange vision when the sheet was let down with unclean animals on it (Acts 10). This vision was out of line with scripture as Peter knew it - it did not make sense but it was undeniably from God as it was immediately related to the appearance of the men from Cornelius. This made it more than a vision - a sign.

Extreme 2 - Facts, analysis and knowledge

At the other extreme our entire guidance could be based only on knowledge, the facts and analysis. When Israel sent out the spies they came back with many facts which introduced fear and a failure to obey God. It would have been better if they had not sent out the spies.

Joshua 9:1 The Gibeonite Deception – Joshua only looked at the facts – he relied on knowledge - **failed to ask God!** He did not do his homework and was out of line with reality.

Knowledge is important

Col 1:9 Paul & Timothy asking, *God to fill you with the knowledge of his will in **all spiritual wisdom and understanding**, so that you may live worthily of the Lord and please him in all respects.*

Phil 1:9 Paul prays that the Philippians' love *may abound even **more and more in knowledge and every kind of insight** so that you can decide what is best, and thus be sincere and blameless for the day of Christ*

The work of the Spirit

John 16:13 *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into **all truth**. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to **guide you into all truth**. Clearly we must be open to the Spirit for guidance including 'what is yet to come'.

John 14:25

*But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will **teach you all things** and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*

The bible is all true but it does not contain all truth. The Holy Spirit must be the One that guides us into all truth. The truth comes to us as we prayerfully study the scriptures.

The word of God

Our guidance must not be in conflict with the word of God yet there is much in the church that is out of line with the word of God. We need to understand how Constantine has changed the church and break with the man-made traditions and assumptions that we have inherited.

Psalm 12:6 *The words of the Lord are **pure words**, like silver refined in an earthen furnace, purified seven times.*

Ps 18:30 *As for God, his way is perfect: The Lord's word is **flawless**.*

These verses should inspire us to pay very careful attention to what is in the bible and to highly value every thought and concept presented.

Ask the Holy Spirit for scripture passages and verses.

How do we hear the Holy Spirit?

Guidance is a skill to be learnt but if God wants to give specific guidance he can - if He can guide two cows (ark of the covenant 1 Sam 6:7) He can guide you. He can speak through: an audible voice (Samuel), the scriptures, other Christians, Non Christians, donkey (Balam), circumstances, common sense, pictures, visions, dreams, mental impressions, spiritual giftings – prophetic, word of wisdom, word of knowledge.

3 main tests

- Does it conflict with the word of God – the bible - the Logos- the written word?
- Have you had a sign or word from God – the revealed, NOW word - the Rema - the package with your name on it.
- Do you have inner peace from the Holy Spirit?

Circumstances can guide - but not all ways. Sometimes we need faith to overcome circumstances.

Be dedicated to prayer

Mark 1:35 *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Be real in prayer.*

Colossians 3:1 *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, **set your hearts on things above**, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. What are your plans Father?*

We have choices to make all the time – don't follow the world and just do whatever comes along.

Carried along

2 Peter 1:21 *For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were **carried along by the Holy Spirit.***

Motives

Prov 16:2 *All a man's ways seem innocent to him, but **motives are weighed** by the LORD.*

Are your motives correct? Is there any sin in the way?

Prov 16:3 *Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.*

Proverbs 21:5 *The plans of the **diligent** lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty. - Care about what you do. Carefully, diligently read the scriptures. Notice the detail.*

Trusting

Matthew 18:3 *I tell you the truth, unless you change and **become like little children**, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. - Completely trusting and dependant.*

Counsel

Proverbs 15:22 *Plans fail for lack of **counsel**, but with many advisers they succeed. Sometimes God will use other people to give you guidance. Usually it will be mature believers. Don't be overly independent.*

Problem Areas

Beware of bitterness against God because life is too tough and things have not gone your way. We are called to trust God through all circumstances.

1 Timothy 4 *The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and **follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.** Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.*

Ps 101:2 *I will pay attention to the way of integrity ...
I will live with a heart of integrity in my house.
I will not set **anything worthless before my eyes.***

One of the biggest attacks on Christians is through the media. He uses the media to bring worthless images and occult and immoral concepts **before their eyes**. The enemy is also out to use the internet, and all sorts of deceptive supernatural "healing" to deceive. We must be very determined to stick to the character, flavour and detail of scripture.

Presumption

Understand the difference between faith and presumption. Presumption is deciding to do something with no specific direction from the Lord. Doing something automatically because that's the way it worked last time or just doing things without thinking. Be aware of the subtle influences of the world which cause us to be presumptuous..

Beware of a spirit of divination – foretelling all sorts of things (mostly frivolous) that you don't need to know. “I bet this will be the outcome”. Do you really need to know?

How desperately do you need to hear God?

Matthew 6:16-18 *But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*

Sometimes fasting is needed to break through in situations.

There may be seasons in your life when God has much less to say than others – depending on what He has called you to do. Realise and work with the season you are in.

Hearing God is a skill to be learnt. We need to be very intentional about hearing Him, continually asking Him questions, being in prayer, asking ourselves the right questions, very carefully reading the scriptures, listening to other believers, avoiding complacency and presumption, keeping a humble and submissive attitude. We must make sure our guidance is in line with Gods word and we should expect the Holy Spirit to give us dreams, visions, signs and inner witness that we are doing the right thing.