

# Teaching Notes: You Can Hear The Voice Of God

## I. Introduction

### **A. Opening Remarks**

### **B. Review**

**January** focused on the idea that Christianity offers a new beginning, a new life. Through Jesus Christ – His life (the cross and resurrection), water baptism, the Holy Spirit, we can be born of the Spirit, and become a child of God, a new creature, and learn to function in a new and living way.

**February** I talked about what it means to live life God's way, to function in a new and living way.

**March**, we looked at the issue of life and death. God has given us a choice between the two, but do we know the difference between them?

**In April** I talked about Easter, the power of the cross & of the resurrection. If want to benefit from the work of Jesus on the cross, we must allow the Holy Spirit to bring us revelation of these realities. God's truth must be seen and known in our heart, as well as our mind, if it will benefit us at all.

### **C. Today's transmission**

Christianity offers more than a knowledge about God – it offers us an *experiential knowing* of him. Yet, most of us talk to God, but do not know if he is talking to us. Blackaby says in *Experiencing God*, "If a Christian does not know when God is speaking, he is in trouble at the heart of his Christian life."<sup>1</sup> God is not dumb, he has no problem communicating, he speaks to people everywhere. So, where's the problem? It must be in the hearing and listening.

Today, I want to talk about hearing the voice of God. Learning to recognize the voice of God is essential for anyone who needs God and His wisdom, counsel, instruction, and knowledge in their life, and for people who want to know God, please God, and do what He says – to bear fruit for God.

Listening to God is key to moving into deeper realms of spiritual growth and spiritual life, to developing a deeper and personal relationship with God.

### **Vital in our journey to wholeness**

Knowing what God is saying to us is essential to our well-being, because it directly relates to the restoration of our souls. It is through hearing God's voice that we are transformed and made wholly alive. It is key to an interior development, to allow the Holy Spirit to work at a deep level in our inner being, transforming our very identity.

### **Key Scriptures**

- My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me (John 10:27).
- They shall hear my voice (John 10:16).

Can God lie; Jesus lie? No! It is impossible for God to lie. Jesus said that his sheep shall hear his voice. So what can you expect? That you will hear his voice!

### **↳ Applied Learning**

- Do you want to hear God's word for yourself, or do you want others to tell you what God is saying to you? Underline your response.
- Do you believe God has something to say to you personally? Yes/No
- Pray for the Lord to give you a hunger and thirst to hear His Voice.
- Say aloud: "I am expecting to hear the voice of God for myself."

### **Pray**

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*Lord, I need You in my life. I want to live, to become fully alive. I need to know your voice, to hear what you are saying to me. Teach me to recognize your voice. Give me the courage to listen to you. In Jesus Name, I ask this. Amen.*

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## **II. God Wants Us To Hear His Voice**

The Almighty God wants to communicate with his creation. Woven through the Holy Scriptures is the story of how our Creator has actively revealed himself to mankind throughout the ages.

### **A. Restoration of garden fellowship**

Incredible as it may seem, God longs for *relationship* with us. Originally, in the pristine paradise of Eden's Garden, early man was intimately linked to his Creator. According to Scripture, Adam recognized God's voice as he strolled the garden at dusk.

In those warm evening chats, Adam likely received counsel and instruction on how to manage the earth and tend his lush new garden. Here in this unimaginably delightful place of love and beauty, free of guilt and shame, Adam and God enjoyed fellowship together. But then something broke, seemingly irreparably.

Sin entered the Garden, and mankind lost this precious gift of relationship with our Creator. The human race became separated from God by an insurmountable spiritual space. Adam was certainly the great loser – we all are – but God also must have missed the fellowship. Because he loved his creation so deeply, he made a plan to redeem it from its sinful condition.

God gave the world a New Adam, Jesus Christ, "...the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God..." so that fellowship could be restored between our Heavenly Father and us. At the cross Jesus dealt with the sin issue, removing every barrier that separates us from God and keeps us from knowing his voice.

## ***B. We can be a friend of God***

Abraham was called, “the friend of God,” because he communed with Him. Abraham recognized God’s voice, believed his words, and obeyed his instructions (James 2:23). The Lord God appeared to him in a vision and a dream, assuring him of a great future (Gen. 15:1-21). God gave promises to Abraham and his descendents, establishing a covenant with them. Abraham *experienced* God speaking to him, and it changed his life – and history.

So did the psalmist and the prophet Isaiah:

- I will bless the Lord who has counseled me; Indeed, my mind instructs me the night (Ps. 16:7).
- He awakens my ear, morning by morning...He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple (Is. 50:4).

### **↳ Applied Learning**

- Do you have a need for God’s counsel, instruction, and wisdom in your life? Yes/No
- Do you long to hear and recognize God’s voice as He speaks personally to you? Yes/No
- Say aloud: “I will practice listening for God’s voice when I first awaken in the morning.”

## ***C. Invited to hear his voice***

Over and over, we are invited to hear what the Lord wants to say to us. Here are a few Scriptures revealing God’s longing for us to hear his voice. Read aloud these Scriptures and listen in your heart to the longing of God:

- Call to me, and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know (Jeremiah 33:3).
- By loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice... so that you may live in the land which He promised to give you (Deuteronomy 30:20).
- He who listens to me shall live securely, and shall be at ease from the dread of evil (Proverbs 1:33).
- Ho, everyone who thirsts...Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance; incline your ear and come to me, listen that you may live (Isaiah 55: 1-9).
- Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord (Matthew 4:4).
- Behold I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with me (Revelation 3:20).

The Bible makes it clear that God longs for communion with us and seeks those who will listen to his voice and do what he says. We see portrayed there a God who wanted so keenly to communicate with his people that, when they failed to listen, he used a *donkey* to reach them (Num. 22:22-31). This supposedly dumb animal not only saw a vision from God, but also *spoke the word of life* to Balaam.

### **↳ Applied Learning**

- Is there is a place within you that is hungry and thirsty for God’s voice? Yes/No
- Meditate: “Behold I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears my voice and opens the

door, I will come in to him and sup with him" (Rev. 3:20).

- Using your imaginative capability, envision a door with Jesus knocking on it. Is the door open or closed? Circle your answer.
- Write a letter to the God telling him of your response to his invitation to hear his voice.

### ***D. What do we mean when we say, "God spoke to us?"***

When we refer to "hearing the voice of God," we are not talking about a literal, audible voice – if we seek a literal voice, we will most likely be misled. Although it is possible to literally hear God speak, apparently it is extremely rare.

God seldom speaks in an audible voice, like He did with Moses in the burning bush. People often say, "I wish that God would speak to me that way. I am waiting for Him to speak to me and to tell me what He wants me to do." They are looking for an audible voice, a burning bush experience.

Although my friend Ralph Nault has heard *the audible voice* of God twice in thirty years of ministry, most of the time the Lord speaks and guides Him through impressions in his spirit, images in his heart, dreams, thoughts in His mind.

When we talk about hearing God speak to us, we mean being aware in our spiritual senses – the eyes and ears of the heart – that God is communicating with us. Through pictures, visions, prophetic inspiration, spontaneous thoughts and images sent by God, in the day or night, we can sense what God is communicating to us.

I have never heard the audible voice of God, externally, but I have heard an *inward audible voice*, several times. And only a few times have I heard God speak to using tongues and then interpreting it. Most of the time, He is speaking to me through the still, small voice, gifts of the Holy Spirit, my faith, spiritual thoughts, and in dreams,

Hearing the voice of God is not an emotional high; it is not an emotional feeling. We will be deceived if we go by these things. So even though we refer to God speaking, God's voice, we do not go looking to hear a voice; if we do we will end up being misdirected.

*Be careful when "hearing voices" while awake in the night. It may be the voice of the deceiver!*

### ***We have a new covenant—written in our heart and mind***

Originally God wrote down his Word with his finger on the stone tablets Moses lugged down from Mt. Sinai. Later God said He'd make a *new covenant* with his people in which he would write his Word on the tablets of their hearts. The Word that we have now inked on paper tells us clearly that God has established this promised new covenant with his followers *in their hearts* (Jeremiah 31:31-33; II Corinthians 3:3b).

It's done, completed – and Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant (Hebrews 9:15). So where should I look to discover the Word that God wants me to hear? In my mind and in my heart (see Hebrews 8:10; 10:16).

### ***Examples***

- Spiritual thought: My friend in Braunschweig had the thought, "take out six pieces of chicken and cook them." But she reasoned the thought away. An hour later, she had two people arrive at her house during lunchtime, and she wished that she could have invited them to eat with them.
- Spiritual thought: I am driving down the highway, when a thought goes across my mind: "Go see this woman." Immediately, I start to argue and reason with this

thought. "She is working; beside I have my own plans." The thought continues to flow into my mind. Finally, I say, "Okay, I will go find out if this is God." It was.

- Still, small voice – intuitive knowing in heart: After receiving the infilling of the Holy Spirit, I kept having an impression in my heart to take a book back to the high school library. Fifteen years before, I had borrowed this book, but never returned. It was the still, small voice of the Spirit of God.
- Gifts of the Holy Spirit: Morning after David's death – I awoke praying in tongues and with it came the interpretation: "You can say David died, but I want you to know that my own never die, I came and took Him, I always come and take my own. The word is exultation; I allowed you to experience David's spirit as it entered glory." God also said, "To not question what went wrong, keep your eyes on Me, do not turn to the right or left, and I will heal your heart."

### ↪ **Applied Learning**

- Using a scale of 0 to 10 (0 not at all; 10 absolutely true) how true does this statement feel in your heart: "God wants to speak to me personally." Your response \_\_\_\_
- Ask, "God, Do you want to speak to me?" Write out the thoughts that spontaneously flow through your mind in response to the question.
- Say aloud: "God wants me to hear his voice. I like that!"

## III. Discovering Ways God Speaks To Us

### ***A. In Old Testament times***

God used many ways to get his message across to his people in the Old Testament, as varied as angels, pillar of cloud, Urim and Thummin, tablets of stone, still small voice, signs and fleeces, thunder, *dreams and visions*.

- Angels (Genesis 16:7; Exodus 14:19; Judges 6:11-22).
- Pillar of cloud by day (Exodus 14:19; Numbers 12:5).
- Judgment of the Urim & Thummim (Exodus 28:30; I Samuel 28:5-15; Numbers 27:21).
- The midst of darkness & blazing fire at Sinai (Deuteronomy 5:23,24,31).
- Tablets of stone (Deuteronomy 5:22; II Corinthians 3:3).
- Gentle whisper; still, small voice (I Kings 19:11-13).
- Miraculous signs and fleeces (Genesis 9:12-15; Exodus 8:20-25; Joshua 10:12-14; Judges 6:37-40; Jeremiah 32:6-8).
- Through the mouth of prophets (all the prophetic books).
- External audible voice (I Samuel 3:1-21).
- In the thunder, hailstones, coals of fire, lightning, tornado, nature (Psalms 18:7-13; 19:1-6).
- Dreams & Visions (Genesis 15:1,12; 28:10,12; Numbers 12:6; I Samuel 3:15; 28:6,15; I Kings 3:5-15; Judges 7:13; Jeremiah 1:11-19; Daniel 1:17; 10:7).
- In the ear (Isaiah 50:4).
- In the night (Psalms 16:7).
- Tests "fleeces" we devise (Judges 6:37-40)

## ***B. In New Testament era***

Likewise, in the New Testament God reached the hearts of his people in virtually unlimited ways – from the life and words of Jesus to the inner witness of the Spirit, from the sacraments to spiritual perception and intuition, from the evidence of creation to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and from *dreams and visions*.

Here are just some of the ways that God communicates with us:

- Words, teachings, life of Jesus Christ (image of the invisible God) (Colossians 1:15-16).
- God's son, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1-4; John 1:1-4; Colossians 1:15-16).
- Signs (Luke 1:19-20).
- Healing and miraculous acts (Matthew 5:23-25; 10:1,8; Acts 4:30-33; 13:11; 16:16-18).
- Angels (Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:26; 2:9-14; Acts 12:7-15, 23; Hebrews 1:14, 13:2).
- Dreams (Matthew 1:20; 2:12-13,19,22; Acts 2:17).
- Visions (Luke 1:11-22; Acts 2:17; 9:10; 10:3,19; 16:9; 22:17-21).
- Through what has been made; i.e., creation, nature (Romans 1:19-20).
- Audible voice (Acts 22:6-16; 26:13-16).
- The Holy Spirit (Matthew 4:4; Luke 2:25-27; 1:67; Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:18).
- Prophecy (Luke 1:67; 2:25-35; Acts 2:17-18; 21:11).
- The spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10).
- Old Testament writings, the prophets.
- Prophets (Luke 2:36-38; 1:13-17).
- Open & closed doors (Acts 14:27; I Corinthians 16:5-9).
- Drawing lots and prayer (Acts 1:24-26).
- Through his creation (Romans 1:19, 20).
- Circumstances; divine interruptions (Acts 22:6-16).
- Teachers, evangelists, pastors, apostles, prophets (Ephesians 4:11).
- Gifts of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:4-11).
- Leading of the Holy Spirit, spiritual perception (Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:18).
- Inner witness of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16).
- Spiritual thoughts in the mind (II Corinthians 3:3; Hebrews 8:10).
- Human heart (II Corinthians 3:3; Hebrews 8:10) promptings, intuition, impressions in the heart.
- Circumstances and situations.
- Peace in the heart.

## ***C. Ways God may speak today***

Christians living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are also privileged to hear from God in numerous ways. Although Kreider discusses 30 ways to hear God in everyday life, he emphasizes that we cannot limit how God may decide to communicate with us.<sup>2</sup> As Christian people with the presence of the indwelling Christ and the Holy Spirit, we can expect to hear from God through spiritual practices such as prayer, sacred writings, liturgy, Eucharist, praise, worship, and meditation – and in dreams and visions. According to the Bible, here are some ways that God has given us to help us hear him speak to us:

- Holy Scriptures (Hebrews 4:12; John 6:63; Acts 17:10-11; I Timothy 4:6,13; Proverbs 4:2,4).
- The church (Matthew 18:17; Hebrews 13:7; I Thessalonians 5:12-13).
- Teachers, evangelists, pastors, apostles, prophets (Ephesians 4:11-12; Romans 10:14-15; I Thessalonians 5:12).

- Other people (Hebrews 3:13; Matthew 18:19-20; II Corinthians 13:1; Romans 10:14; Proverbs 11:14; 15:22)
- Gifts of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:4-11, 14:1; Romans 1:11-12).
- Prophecy (Revelation 19:10; I Corinthians 14:1-3; 13:9; I Timothy 1:18; Thessalonians 5:19-22).
- Witness of the Holy Spirit in our spirit (Matthew 10:20; Romans 8:14,16; II Corinthians 3:3; Galatians 5:18; Ephesians 1:18; Hebrews 8:10; Proverbs 20:27).
- Peace in the heart (John 14:27; Colossians 3:15; Philippians 4:7).
- Spiritual thoughts in the mind (Hebrews 8:10).
- Dreams and visions (Acts 2:17; Joel 2:28-32; Job 33:14-17).
- Situations, open or closed doors
- The Sacraments
- Confession of the creed
- Life and words of the 12 Disciples
- Spiritual perception
- Eyes of the heart (Ephesians 1)
- Intuitive knowings
- Moments of grace
- By confirming our decisions
- Recognition of God's presence
- Visitation from angels

#### ↳ **Applied Learning**

- Using the above lists, underline ways God has used to speak to you.
- Are these ways sufficient for you? Yes/No

### **1. Holy Spirit to brings dreams, visions, prophecies**

According to Hebrews 1:1-2, in Old Testament times God spoke to His people through the prophets. In New Testament times God spoke to His people through His son, Jesus Christ of Nazareth. When Jesus returned to the right hand of God, the Father promised to pour out the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33). The promise of the Father is that he would send the Holy Spirit, who would be in us and would lead and guide us:

- I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you...and will be in you (John 14:16-17).
- He shall teach us all things and bring to our remembrance what Jesus has said (John 14:26).

In the Old Testament, God promised that he would pour out his Spirit and make his words known to us. The prophet Joel tells us that a time will come when the Holy Spirit is poured forth, and ordinary people will receive dreams, visions and prophecies.

- I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you (Prov. 1:23).
- I will pour out My Spirit...your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions (Joel 2:28).

At Pentecost it happened. St. Peter reminds them that the coming of the Holy Spirit results in God speaking through prophecies, visions, and dreams.

- ...it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, "I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:16-18).

## **The language of the Holy Spirit**

According to Cho, the language of the Holy Spirit is dreams, visions and prophecies.<sup>3</sup> Rev. John A. Sanford seems to agree with this – he titled his book, *Dreams: God's Forgotten Language!* If we want to know what God is saying to us, we must become familiar with the language the Holy Spirit uses: our nighttime dreams, visions, and the prophetic flow.

## **The Holy Spirit to reveal things the Father has for us**

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal the things that God has for each one of us, and one way he does this is through prophecies, visions, and dreams.

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit...Now we have received...the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God (I Cor. 2:10-12).

Our dreams, visions, and prophecies may reveal our potential, gifts, calling, and the divine purpose of our lives. Remember Solomon? It was in his dream that Lord imparted gifts to him (I Kings 3:5-28). It was in a dream that I (Judith) was taught how to release the anointing of God.

## **2. Gifts of the Holy Spirit—Prophecy, word of knowledge, discernment, etc.**

Much as already been written about the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit, so I will only share some things I have experienced.

- a) Just because a person can flow with these gifts, does not necessarily mean he or she is spiritually mature. Do not put the person on a pedestal, higher than you.
- b) Do not let other people control or manipulate you through their prophecies. You must have the confirmation in your own spirit; otherwise you will be led astray.
- c) Be careful about prophecies that are condemning or judging. The Bible says that prophecy comes to build us the church, edify the church, and comfort the church (I Corinthians 14:4).
- d) Recognize the spirit through which the person is prophesying. Is it the Spirit of God?
  - If I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.
  - If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

e) Never use prophecy to control or manipulate others.

7) Be aware when ever someone says, “I *had* to say that,” or “I *had* to give that” or the Spirit *made* me do it.” This is not biblical. “The spirits of prophets are subject to prophets (I Cor. 14:31-32). No, you must choose to deliver that Word. God’s Spirit never comes to control or pressure us; it may urge us, but this urging is experienced very differently from pressure or compulsion.

## **3. Testing the “Word” from God**

### **a) God’s voice does not condemn**

One way to know if our word is from God is whether or not it condemns us. Because of the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, we are no longer under condemnation – we are free from the law of sin and death. As you begin to listen for the voice of God, here is an extremely

important principle: the word from God should bring us encouragement, instruction, guidance, enlightenment – even if it does bring us correction.

Many mistakes can be made at this point – if a word is accusatory and brings you condemnation, it is likely not from the Spirit of God.

**b) God’s word doesn’t come to stroke our egos, telling us what magnificent creatures we are.**

If the word from God appeals to the ego or resists being tested, it is suspect immediately. A living word from God produces good fruit and humility, helping us to develop and mature into the whole person God desires us to be.

**c) Consider the following Scriptures**

- The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22).
- Jesus said, “I came that they might have life and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10b).
- Jesus said, “My yoke is easy, my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28).
- Jesus... said the kingdom of God is not coming with observation (*something you can see with your natural senses*); nor will they say, ‘Look here it is;’ or ‘There it is’.... behold the Kingdom of God is in your midst (*within*) (Luke 17:21).
- The Kingdom of God is ... righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).
- St. Paul said, “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:2).
- ...who also has made us able ministers of the new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life (II Corinthians 3:6).
- For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline (sound judgment) (II Timothy 1:7).

**d). Try this test for interpretation**

To check if a “Word” is from God assess it using the following biblical principles:

- ✓ Does it violate the nature of Christ or “the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus?”
- ✓ Does it produce pride, or humility in you?
- ✓ Does it bring peace, or pressure and anxiety?
- ✓ Does it give you comfort, or torment you? Bring hope, or despair?
- ✓ Does it bring inner freedom, or lay a heavy burden on you?
- ✓ Is your faith increased?
- ✓ Does it encourage, instruct, or enlighten you without lifting up your ego?
- ✓ Does it minister life or death?
- ✓ Does your heart witness to it?

## IV. “Abba, Father, I Can hear Your Voice”

A vital truth of Christianity is the understanding that God has come to dwell within the hearts of people. Because of the Spirit of Christ in us, we have more than a shadow. As

Catholic lay evangelist Ralph Nault says, "We have a reality, a *living word* in us, which is able to make itself known to us. We call it God speaking to us."

God sends his Holy Spirit into our hearts, enabling us to call 'Abba, Father' (Rom. 8:15) and enjoy direct encounters with him. We can recognize the witness of the Holy Spirit in our spirit and respond to the voice of our heavenly Father (Rom. 8:16).

### ***A. We can know what God is saying to us***

God is capable of speaking personal truth into our minds and hearts. Moreover, we are blessed by God with the capacity to *hear with spiritual ears*. Jesus Christ followed the Father's leading by doing and saying only what the Father wanted him to do (John 8:28). We also can be led by the Spirit to hear and respond to the voice of our heavenly Father.

...all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God (Rom. 8:14).

#### ***Requires regeneration***

As a result of regeneration, we now have the capacity to hear God's voice. Before regeneration or a new birth experience, our human spirit is not able to know God's voice. We cannot not sense His presence or know His thoughts toward us. Our spirit has lost its primary function toward God, for it is dead to God. The scriptures say that we are dead in our trespasses and sins; i.e., our spirit is separated from God's life until regeneration or the new birth. At regeneration, our spirit is quickened, made alive again.

#### ***Know Him through our spirit***

We are human souls, containing a spirit. When we receive Jesus Christ, our spirit becomes activated through the Spirit of God. Thus, it is not just our spirit anymore, but God's Spirit becomes fused with our spirit, bringing about a new creation.

Whoever "is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him" (I Corinthians 6:17).

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit;...Now we have received,...but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God...(I Cor. 2:10-12).

#### **Warning: Don't look to your natural man**

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness (locked out) to him and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually appraised (I Corinthians 2:14).

### ***C. Functions of the spirit***

Remember that God is a Spirit, and we can only know Him through our spirit. Jesus said God seeks for those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. God has ordained that He will deal with us through our spirit alone and that by our spirit we can know Him and receive His very life.

He can't be known through our intellect, our emotions, or our will. He can't be known by us trying hard to be good, to change ourselves, but it is only through our spirit by His Spirit can we know the things of God. St. Paul knew this; "For to us God revealed them through the spirit..." He had a revelation of Jesus Christ; He knew him after the spirit and not after the flesh any more.

### ***Three functions of our quickened spirit (The Spiritual Man, Watchman Nee)***

- **Communion** has to do with a person's capacity to relate to the Ultimate, a relationship with a something transcendent, usually to a supreme being or to creation.
- **Conscience** is a person's ethical guidance system that informs one what is just and fair.
- **Intuition** has to do with the insights that come from within ourselves, giving us knowledge of information without conscious processing—hunches to act, impressions to pray, flashes of insight. It is the voice of man's deep heart, his spirit.

### ***D. Spirit-man/inner man has spiritual senses/capacities***

This new creation—the inner man—has spiritual senses. It is not blind or deaf. It can hear; it has ears. It can see; it has eyes. It can speak, it has a voice. We call these senses *intuition, inward voice, inner guidance, inward witness*.

- **It can speak**—it has a voice. Call it intuition, inner guidance, or inward witness, but it is not a matter of listening to voices; it isn't a matter of praying to hear something.
- **It can hear**—it has ears.
- **It can see**—it has eyes, call it visions, spontaneous images and pictures.
- **It has feelings**--grieved in spirit, rejoicing in spirit

...I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling...(Eph. 1:17-19).

#### ***1. The inward witness, awareness, or perception***

We can recognize the witness of the Spirit in our spirit.<sup>1</sup> Something on the inside that perceives, senses. It can provide us knowledge, confirmation, correction, instruction, guidance. It is sometimes more distinct than others. It is simply a check or a go-ahead signal.

- Intuition—sense prompting of Holy Spirit and voice of God.
- Insight—revelation and illumination

The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God (Ro 8:16).

#### **Examples**

The spirit man witnessed to him. Later, St. Paul told the people that they should have listened to him. He didn't say "the Lord told me."

I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt (Acts 27:9,19).

While shopping in Bad Herrenalb, a *knowing* that I needed to go back up to the clinic, suddenly entered my spirit. I obeyed it, and God had an appointment for me with a woman who needed to know if there was a God.

#### ***2. The inward voice—a little more authoritative than the inward witness***

When the Holy Spirit speaks it is still an inward voice, but it is so real you almost look around to see who spoke—seems to be an audible voice, however do not hear it with our physical ears.

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<sup>1</sup> We recommend *The Spiritual Man* by Watchman Nee. This book has helped many people learn what it means to become a spiritual Christian, able to discern the living word from God that transforms us.

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide us into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he hears, that shall he speak (John 16:13,14)

### Examples

- I Samuel 3
- The Lord spoke to me in a very musical voice, "You are going to go to Jerusalem."

### 3. *The inward eye—visions, spontaneous images, pictures, dreams*

1. Spiritual vision: see with the eyes of your spirit, not with your physical eyes. Paul in Acts 9.
2. Trance: Peter's physical senses were suspended; he was unaware of what was going on around him, did not know where he was at. While Peter thought on the vision (Acts 10:9,10).
3. Open vision: actually see with your physical eyes open (Acts 8;26-29) Cornelius (Acts 10:1-3; 11:13,14)

### Seeing images in dreams

Acts 16:9—come over into Macedonia and help us

### The visual word of God

The messages God brings us in the Bible are presented in part as rational propositional truth and part as story, vision, symbol and narrative—that is, *image*. Both of these are necessary to God's revelation, and most of the time they are integrated with each other. However, Godawa estimates conservatively that 30 percent of the Bible is rational propositional truth and laws, while 70 percent of is presented as image.<sup>4</sup>

When we look at how God communicated with his prophets, we see that the very concept of "God's Word" is not an exclusively word-oriented concept. As Godawa says so colorfully, "God did not float Hebrew words in the air like ancient sky-writing."<sup>5</sup> God defines image-based *visions* as his *Word*.

- **Isaiah** reported his visionary experiences this way: "the *word* which Isaiah the son of Amoz *saw*" (Is 2:1; also see Is 1:1 & 13:1).
- **Jeremiah** described what he *saw* as the *word* of the Lord (Jer 1:11, 13; 24:3).
- **Micah** said "the *word* of the Lord which came to Micah...which he *saw*" (Micah 1:1).
- **Ezekiel** tells us that the *visions* of God he saw are "the *word* of the Lord" (Ez 1:1-3).
- **Zechariah** says that the "*Word* of the Lord" came to him, and then he recounts the *vision* he had (Zech 1:7-8).
- **Amos** says of God's revelation to him in several places, "the Lord God *showed me*" (Amos 7:1,4,7; 8:1).

Apparently God doesn't regard imagery as an inferior method for communicating truth as compared with words, or he would not have used so much imagery described as *his word*. So, are dreams and visions really all that different from words?

*"God's Word" is not an exclusively word-oriented concept.*

## ***E. Listen to & train our spiritual man***

Must be strengthened in our spirit (Eph. 3:16)

### ***1. Discover our spiritual senses***

We must rediscover our spiritual senses and reinstate them in our lives, thereby allowing the power of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit to heal, empower and guide us from within. Direct inner experiences with the Lord bring healing to the spirit, soul and body.

- Learn to hear God's voice and receive His living and personal word
- Learn how to perceive reality through our spirit, not only the mind.
- Intuition is the voice of man's deep heart, his spirit.

We must become spirit conscious, if we want to understand what God is saying to our spirit. We have trained the body & educated the soul, but we have left the spirit of man undeveloped & untrained.

Our spirit can be educated, built up in strength & trained. If trained, we would know inside with a "yes" or "no" just what to do in every area of life; even in minor things. The knowledge of the intellect and reason has taken the throne in our life. Our spirit, which should guide us is kept locked away in prison and not permitted to function.

We need to know the difference between our flesh, the outward man, or the inward man, the new creation.

*We are born again, not of corruptible, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which lives and abides forever. (I Peter 1:23) A desire to do wrong is not in our spirit!*

### ***2. Difference between spirit and soul***

When we cannot discern the difference between our soul and spirit, we are unable to function at this level with God's Spirit. Yet I believe this is where the Holy Spirit is manifested the most, right in our Spirit. We suffer great loss in this area, both as an individual and as the body of Christ<sup>6</sup> (see Ralph Nault's book, *Led By The Spirit*, available free online, <http://thenewli.ipower.com/books/LedByTheSpirit.html>).

There is a need for soul and spirit to be divided, because they are alike in their nature and activities. This scripture shows a definite distinction there between the two. This distinction is very, very important in our spiritual growth, to be able to discern, see, difference between the spiritual person and the natural man.

*The word of God is living, active, divides, separates, divides the soul and the Spirit, the bone and the marrow, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).*

- a) The natural man has all the natural abilities to think and function in this physical realm.
- b) The spiritual person has all the spiritual abilities to function in the spiritual realm. The spiritual abilities are all the same as the natural abilities, only they are spiritual.

We have natural thinking and spiritual thinking. We have natural emotions and we spiritual emotions. we have natural speech and spiritual speech; natural hearing and spiritual hearing—they are all the same, only one set of them is called spiritual and the others are all natural.

When the Bible speaks of the heart, it is speaking of the soul and the spirit. The word of God is able to pierce to & divide the soul & spirit.

Written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts (II Cor. 3:3).

For to us, God revealed through the spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God (I Cor. 2:10,11,12,13,14,15,16) (The tabernacle is a copy and shadow and a pattern for us: it shows us the way to approach God and hear His voice

The inward man or the hidden man of the heart (I Peter 3:4) is the spirit of man.

### ↳ Applied Learning

- Do you want a living, active word from the Lord that can do something within you, that can make some changes in your life? Yes/No

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*Lord, I thank You that You created me in your image, capable of hearing your voice. I ask You to awaken me to hear your voice in the morning, to open my spiritual ears to hear your voice. I want to be taught by You. Amen.*

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## V. Importance of Hearing The Voice Of God

### A. Brings blessings

We are promised blessings if we hear and respond to God speaking to us.

#### **1. Find our direction, know our purpose and path in life**

- For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God (Rom. 8:14). Send out Thy light and Thy truth, let them lead me; bring me to thy holy hill...to they dwelling places, I will go to the altar of God (Ps.43:3)
- The unfolding of Thy words gives light. (Ps. 119:130a)
- That we might know the things freely given to us by God (I Cor. 3:10-12).

Examples:

Judith— dream: “skilled talent”

Judith— dream: “director of marketing, map of Germany on wall”

#### **2. Prepare us for things to come**

- When He the spirit of truth, comes...He will disclose to you what is to come (John 16:13).

Examples:

Judith— dream: priest at the clinic says “I am not going to hire you”

Judith – dream: my mother’s illness

Judith – spiritual thought: “I am going to bring Jeff home for awhile.”

### **3. See ourselves, others, situations around us more clearly**

- To understand the thoughts of our hearts (your inmost thoughts) (Dan. 2:28-30)  
So we might be changed from the error of our way. may turn man aside from his conduct and keep man from pride (Job 33:14-18).

### **4. Know His will, receive guidance, direction in difficult situations**

- To give us counsel; indeed my heart (Lit. kidneys, figurative for inner man) teaches me night after night (Psalm 16:7).

Examples:

Judith – spiritual thought: “Don’t take that presidency in the new Aglow chapter”

### **5. May lead us in new pathways, enlarge us, make us bigger**

Examples:

Judith – Inward voice: “You’re going to Jerusalem”

### **6. May be healed, made whole, free, and fully alive**

German psychiatrist Dr. Walther Lechler told us he found that, if a person did not have “a healthy dialogue with a loving Heavenly Father,” he or she could not get better.<sup>2</sup>

- Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance; incline your ear and come to me, listen that you may live (Is 55:1-9).
- Revive me according to Thy Word (*a deposit, delivered in a visitation from God*) (Ps. 119:25b).
- He sent His Word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction’s (Ps. 127:20)
- My soul languishes for Thy salvation; I wait for Thy Word (*a deposit that which was delivered in His visit.* (Ps. 119:81)
- Receive the Word implanted, which is able to save your souls (James 1:21b)

Examples:

Judith – vision: saw a basket with three lies being pulled out of me.

Tim – vision: “Jesus is pulling the gray stuff out of my heart.”

### **7. Know how to solve our problems with people**

- To give us counsel; indeed my heart (Lit. kidneys, figurative for inner man) teaches me night after night (Psalm 16:7).

Example:

Judith – dream: “give me something from your purse – magnifying lens, needle and thread”

### **8. Know how to help others**

Words of knowledge and wisdom

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<sup>2</sup> Walther Lechler, *Personal communication*, Bad Herrenalb Klinik, Germany (1988).

## Examples

Judith – while praying for Jerry: “You have something to offer to others.”

Judith – while praying for someone: “Did you have an abortion?”

Jerry – out of the ashes of your life...

### **9. Emotional and psychological stability**

Jesus said the person who hears him and does what he says is like a wise man who built his house on a rock – when the storms of life hit, he does not fall apart, but stands firm (Mt. 7:24-27).

### **10. To bring us his truth; to become a spiritual Christian**

- I will make my words known to you (Prov. 1:23).
- For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God (Romans 8:14).

## Example

Judith – revelation of the cross, the ark of the covenant, etc.

### **11. To keep us from sin; to revive us**

- The Word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee (*6485 a deposit that which was delivered in His visit.*) (Ps. 199:11)
- Revive me according to Thy Word (a deposit, that which was delivered in a visit) (Ps. 119:25b)

## Example

Judith – inward voice: “If you don’t receive My grace, I will not give it to you again.”

### **12. Know God better**

- Eph. 1: 18
- I Cor.

### **13. Make us fruitful**

The Psalmist explains that the one who delights in the law of God will be *like* a tree which yields its fruit in season...and will prosper in whatever he does (Ps. 1:2-4).

### **14. May live, prosper, more abundant lives**

Many are afraid that if God speaks directly to them, they will die. Yet the living word from the Lord is meant to bring us life, and not death.

1. Ho, every one who thirsts...Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance; incline your ear and come to me, listen that you may live (Is 55: 1-3).
2. Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.
3. He who listens to me shall live securely, and shall be at ease from the dread of evil. (Prov. 1:33)

## ↪ Applied Learning

- Using the above Scriptures, list the blessings that come from hearing God's voice.
- Do you need these blessings in your life? Yes/No
- Journal the reasons why you need to hear God's voice.
- What blessings have you received as a result of hearing the Lord's voice?

## ***B. Why don't people hear from God?***

### ***1. Abraham's descendents refuse to hear directly from God***

Abraham's descendents rejected the option of hearing directly from God because of fear. Hear the words of Moses speaking to them:

- The Lord spoke to you, face to face at the mountain from the midst of the fire, while I was standing between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord; for you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain...(Deuteronomy 5:4-5).
- And you said...we have seen today that God speaks with man, yet he lives. Now then why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any longer, then we shall die... Go near and hear all that the Lord our God says; then speak to us all that the Lord our God will speak to you, and we will hear and do it (Deuteronomy 5:24-27).

Hear God's response...

- ...the Lord heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me...and said to me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people...Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me...that it may be well with them... (Deuteronomy 5:28-29).

### **Warned not to do the same**

The author of Hebrews warns us not to respond like the Israeli people did: "See to it that you do not refuse him who is speaking..." (Hebrew 12:25).

- ...just as the Holy Spirit says, 'Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart...' (Hebrews 3:7-8a).
- You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did (Acts 7:51)

### ***2. God speaks a lot differently than we expect***

The sad truth, God does speak to us more than we realized. More importantly, we often obey the voice of God without even realizing that it was Him who spoke the idea to you. But many people are waiting for the burning bush.

### **God speaks to Moses—through the burning bush**

Moses was pasturing the flock of his father-in-law, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush, and He looked and the bush was burning with fire, yet it was not consumed.

Moses said, I must turn aside now, and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up. When the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him, from the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, here I am. Then the Lord spoke to him and called him and told him what He wanted Him to do. *Exodus 3-8*

### **God speaks to Elijah—at Mount Horeb**

When Elijah was despairing of life and afraid, he ran for his life and asked the Lord that he might die. While he slept an angel touched him and told him to eat and drink because the journey was too great. Then he went to Mt. Horeb, the mountain of God, and hid in a cave. The word of the Lord came to him and told him to go and stand on the mountain before the Lord.

Behold, the Lord was passing by. And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire, and after the fire a sound of a gentle blowing (I Kings 19:1-14).

### **The still small voice**

When Elijah was on Mt. Horeb, he learned that God was not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but in the gentle whisper, the still small voice. This is the place in which the Lord spoke to Elijah. It was when Elijah was able to lower his ego energy, get out of the way, that he recognized the voice of the Lord. He learned a valuable lesson about how the Lord speaks.

Be still and know that I am God. Let go, relax, and cease striving. Ps 46:10, 4:4

Mt Horeb: mountain of God. Desert or mountain of dried up ground, barren place, waste land, desert, a whole mountain range of which Sinai was one of the summits. ‘

### **3. Age of reason**

With the advent of the age of reason in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, rational thinking crept in, jostling the Church from its position as the “powerful, untamable, Spirit-driven, Mysterious Body of which Paul spoke.”<sup>7</sup>

As the Church embraced a rationalistic worldview, the idea of hearing the voice of God through dreams, visions, and other supernatural means was dismissed as archaic. A purely rational philosophy insinuated itself deeply into the Christian church, and people were left starving for meaningful relationship with our Creator.

Today much of what we hear intellectualizes our relationship to God – everything is upstairs in our thinkers, not down in our hearts where it can truly affect our lives. With our thinking all trussed up by rationalism, we miss the opportunity to commune with our Lord in true worship and fellowship, to exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and to receive God’s guidance through dreams, prophecies, and visions.

### **4. Fear of the Holy Spirit**

Many Christians are terrified of spiritual experiences. Rejecting visitations from God, angelic beings, speaking in tongues, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, if it sounds spiritual, they run the other way in fear. Cutting from the Bible all passages that deal with supernatural events and

the surrounding spiritual activities results in a pretty skinny book. But, isn't that in effect what we do?

Preferring the "safety" of our church pews, we simply ignore the spiritual realm. Yet, our Christian homes are afflicted with marriage breakdowns, addictions, pornography, abortion, sexual aberrations, violence, abuse—all results of the kingdom of darkness. You call that safety?!

### **5. Some reasons why**

1. *He doesn't speak to just any ordinary, everyday person, but to only a few.* God speaks only to a few special people, who are very holy. Only they can hear from God. However, God speaks to sinners too. He speaks to anyone who will listen. You can know God's voice!
2. *I am not worthy. God can't speak to me because I am a rotten sinner.* God speaks to sinners!
3. *I can't enter into the Holy of Holies. God is just too Holy for Him to speak to me.* Jesus made you righteous and holy!
4. *I am afraid of what He might say, might ask of me.* Many times we really are not too anxious to hear Him, because of what He might require from us. Jesus said His burden is light!
5. *I am afraid that He will strike me dead.* When we listen to God and do what he tells us we end up becoming a blessing!
6. *I may be deceived. I may not recognize it is Him. I might make a mistake.* Put your mind to rest. We are all going to make mistakes. The experience of learning to recognize God's direction and guidance, His voice, is new to most of us.
7. *I don't seem to hear Him.* Your spiritual senses are not operating; you may be dull of hearing, blind, deaf. Pray St. Paul prayer for the church: "Open the eyes of our hearts (Eph. 1:18).
8. *I don't know the leading of the Holy Spirit.* Spiritually ignorant. Not accustomed to being led by the Holy Spirit, only know how to be fed by someone else. "Teach me Lord Jesus, to know Your voice."
9. *I don't take the time; I don't need to hear God.* Apathy, complacency, did not pay attention, hate knowledge, neglect. Want others to hear from God for you; you don't want to hear for yourself (Proverbs 1:24-30).
10. *I lack faith in God.* "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

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*Heavenly Father, deliver me from the fear of hearing you. Please open my spiritual ears to hear, my spiritual eyes to see, and my heart to know your truths. Teach me to recognize your voice, your thoughts. Give me the courage to listen to you every day, moment by moment, to be led by your Spirit. I thank you for hearing me. In Jesus name I ask this. Amen.*

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1 Henry & Richard Blackaby, & Claude King, *Experiencing God* (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Press, 1990/2007), 73.

2 Larry Kreider, *Hearing God 30 Different Ways* (Lititz, PA: House to House Publications, 2005), 13.

3 Paul Youngi Cho. *The Fourth Dimension*, (Gainesville, FL: Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1979).

<sup>4</sup> Brian Godawa, *Hollywood Worldviews: Watching Films with Wisdom and Discernment* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 53.

<sup>5</sup> Brian Godawa, *Hollywood Worldviews: Watching Films with Wisdom and Discernment* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 56.

<sup>6</sup> Ralph Nault, *How Are We Led By The Spirit* (Barton, VT: New Life Books, 1986). Read it free online: <http://thenewlife.us/books/BK-05.html>

7 Chris Armstrong, "The Future Lies in the Past: Why evangelicals are connecting with the early church as they move into the 21st century," *Christianity Today*, February 2008, 29.