

If It's God Speaking

Based on the command of Christ #24(Pt.1) – "Hear God's voice".

Illus: Teaching safety orientation and guy who listened to the radio program often recognized my voice.

Today, we want to learn how to recognize when God speaks.

John 10:2-5

2 The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep.

3 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice.

He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and His sheep follow Him because they know His voice.

5 But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice.

Isaiah 55:8-11

8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD.

9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

10 As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,

11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Not all thoughts are God's thoughts.

It can be our own thoughts, from our fleshly desires.

Sometimes, we like to talk to ourselves.

Like one guy said, "I like to have intelligent conversation, so I talk to myself!"

We can easily confuse our own desires with God's will.

Or it can come from Satan.

The Bible says there are false prophets and 'the spirit of anti-christ' can also plant thoughts into our mind.

So how do you know when it's really God?

This may not be a big issue if you're just trying to decide what restaurant to go to... although it could be...

But if you're talking about who to marry or a major career change, this is a major issue!

Illus: A young man applied for a job as a Morse code operator. Answering an ad in the newspaper, he went to the address that was listed. When he arrived, he entered a large, noisy office. Sound of a telegraph clacking away. A sign on the receptionist's counter instructed job applicants to fill out a form and wait until they were summoned to enter the interview room.

The young man completed his form and sat down with 7 other waiting applicants. After a few minutes, he stood up, walked across the office and entered the interview room.

Naturally the other applicants sat up and started wondering what was going on. How can this man be so bold? They muttered among themselves that they hadn't heard any calls yet. This young man would surely be reprimanded for budging into the room like that.

After a few minutes the young man emerged from the inner office escorted by the interviewer, who announced to the other applicants, "Gentlemen, thank you very much for coming, but the job has been filled by this young man."

The other applicants began complaining. And then one spoke up, "Wait a minute! I don't understand. We were here earlier and never even got a chance to be interviewed. Yet he got the job. That's not fair."

The employer responded, "All the time you have been sitting here, the telegraph has been clacking out this message in Morse code: 'If you understand this message, then come right in. The job is yours.' None of you heard it or understood it. This young man did. So the job is his."

You need to recognize when God speaks!

God wants to talk to you!

So how do I know when God speaks to me?

1. If It's God Speaking, it will always honor Christ!

John 15:26 - "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

John 16:14 - He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.

1 John 4:1-3

1. Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

2. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,

3. but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

The implication here is in regards to prophetic counsel more than practical;

That is to say, I believe God's natural wisdom can be spoken to us by those who don't even know Him...

Parents, authors, and such;

Advice on how to do something that they have expertise in.

But spiritual insight which claims a spiritual source, must be spiritually tested.

If it's from the Holy Spirit, Christ will be acknowledged as Lord;

If not, it didn't come from Heaven and you don't want it!

Someone may even claim to be a Christian,

But if they're not portraying Christ in both their words and actions, you don't want it!

And I'm not just talking about that they don't drink, smoke, cuss or chew or run with girls that do,

I'm talking about, "Does the love and light of Christ shine brightly from their lives to others?"

Needless to say there are a lot of people offering "spiritual" guidance today.

And even though many may simply be charlatans, I don't doubt that there are spiritual powers at work, but they're the wrong spirits!

GOD'S VOICE WILL ALWAYS HONOR CHRIST!

Do their words line up with and honor the character of Christ?

2. If It's God Speaking, it will always be consistent with His Word!

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

God will never tell you to violate anything in this book... Never!

If it doesn't agree with God's Word, it didn't come from God at all!

If it's condemnation that leads to hopelessness instead of conviction that leads to hope and faith,

If it's building up your flesh instead of building up your spirit,

If it leads you into remorse or rebellion instead of into repentance,

It's not from God and you don't want it!

Don't take a bite from that fruit!

It comes from the wrong tree!

God does not change; "Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

His counsel will not contradict itself!

Rather, God's spirit will speak to us in a way that will apply the counsel of His word to our personal and specific situations.

Being consistent with his word, does not simply mean applying a quotation from Scripture.

Remember when Christ was being tempted in the wilderness...

The devil quotes Scripture (i.e. jump... doesn't it say angels will catch you?)

Jesus knew the counsel of his Father and the inappropriate use of His word...

So we also can discern as we learn God's word.

2 Timothy 3:13-17

13. while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

14. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it,

15. and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

16. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

17. so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

By the way... Whatever is plainly stated in the Scriptures, you don't even have to pray about it.

I don't pray about tithing, I just do it.

I don't pray about going to church on Sundays.

I just get up and go.

I don't pray about telling other people the good news, I just do it.

Because it's right here in God's Word.

3. If It's God speaking, it will many times conflict with human wisdom and the human will!

That doesn't mean that everything God says will conflict with all common wisdom or thought...

But it will often transcend or be higher than common wisdom or thought.

Pastor Mike Mille' – "God wants to do things in your life and take you to places in your walk with Him that will make your brain mad for six months because it didn't think of it!"

More than any other point, this stands out in my experience of hearing God.

It's very rarely what I would expect.

There's always something deeper and more intense, that God wants to impart, than what I was looking for!

In following God, sometimes, you don't necessarily look for paths.

Instead, look for God... That will many times lead where there is no path!

And then leave a trail for others to find.

4 If it's God speaking, it will always challenge your faith!

Romans 10:17—Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God

Faith is trust in God, and God is always in the process of deepening that trust.

This is where I think people usually get confused in their approach to discerning God's voice.

Usually, people have a tendency to ask God questions about decisions or direction such as marriage, job, etc...

But God will speak more to the issue of character...

How much can I love this person?

How much can I give?

GOD'S MORE INTERESTED IN OUR DEVELOPMENT THAN OUR DIRECTION!

He's more interested in the minister than the ministry!

He's more interested in His people than their purpose!

He's more interested in building our faith than He is in seeing what can be built by our faith!

Although God ultimately does want those things in our lives, like any good father would...

He's always more interested in you!

And He wants us to be able to trust Him in every situation!

5. If it's God speaking, it will usually find confirmation with spiritually mature people in your life!

Proverbs 13:20 - "He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm."

Proverbs 12:1 - Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid.

When I believe I've heard from God, especially for a major decision,

I look for confirmation from those whom I know have Godly wisdom and can discern God's voice as well!

There should be people in your life who serve as "traffic lights" starting with spiritual authorities God has placed in your life.

Not that you need their permission, but it's good to seek out confirmation before major decisions.

But before you seek out any person, go the Holy Spirit first!

In significant decisions... after seeking the Lord,

Seek the spiritually wise...

Not just someone who you know will always agree with you because they don't want to hurt your feelings!

6. If it's God speaking, it will always produce godly fruit!

Matthew 7:15-16 - Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them.

This doesn't refer to whether or not these false prophets can gather people...

Or whether our leading brings outward success.

Cult leaders can gather people and seemingly have success!

It's about what kind of character is produced as a result of that voice!

If a voice is not producing good fruit in those who are hearing and applying it, than something's wrong!

I want to always be a person who hears and speaks from the true voice of God!

Anything else is a waste of time!

Galatians 5:22-23 - The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

And so it follows that if it comes from God it will be consistent with one or all of these fruits.

Finally...

7. If it's God speaking, it will always bring peace to your spirit!

Now remember, I said it will always bring peace to our spirit...

Not our mind!

In fact, many times, it will very much disturb our mind!

Unless our mind is submitted to the spirit!

Rom. 8:5-8

5 Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

6 The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.

7 The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

8 Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

1 Corinthians 14:33 - For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace.

Peace = (i-ray'-nay) prosperity, quietness, rest, set at one again.

Opposite of confusion... con-(against) - fusion (united or melted together to make one)

Confusion is a breaking or pulling apart.

That's why they say that a person can't get their thoughts together, they are mentally confused.

Remember what we just read in...

Rom. 8:6 - The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.

Marriage, for instance was intended by God to be a fusion.

So the devil likes to bring confusion into a marriage so he can break it apart!

The devil loves to use confusion!

The Bible says in:

1Cor.14:33 (KJV) - For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace

You see, those two things are opposite.

James 3:16 (KJV) - For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

John 14:26-27 - 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. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

The Holy Spirit provides God's peace for the child of God even when they find themselves in the midst of confusion and chaos,

It has been made available, but you must take hold of it by faith!

He gives an inner knowledge that is sure, no matter what our outer circumstances are!

Isaiah 55:12 - You will go out with joy and be lead forth in peace.

Isaiah 32:17 - The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever.

And listen... peace is not just feeling happy because you're getting your way!

Real peace comes when you don't get your way, but God gets His way!

There can be no true peace apart from that!

When we rightly discern God's voice, we're like the old boat captain who was asked to explain how the wind works.

He responded, "I don't know about the wind... I can't control it's direction... but I know how to hoist and direct a sail, and use a rudder to get where I need to go."

Listen, as the wind of the Spirit blows...

And as we get direction from God on how to hoist and direct the sail and use the rudder...

That wind will bring us right into the fulfillment of our God given destiny!

There will be plenty of good adventure if we keep our sails up and rudders in the water under the direction of the Captain of our salvation!

The more you seek Him, the more you know Him.

The more you understand Him, the easier it is to hear His voice when He speaks to you.