

Steps to Hearing God's Voice Clearly

"8 Listen to me, O my people, while I give you stern warnings. O Israel, if you would only listen to Me! 9 You must never have a foreign god; you must not bow down before a false god. 10 For it was I, the Lord your God who rescued you from the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it with good things. 11 But no, my people wouldn't listen. Israel did not want me around. 12 So I let them follow their own stubborn desires, living according to their own ideas. 13 Oh, that my people would listen to Me! Oh, that Israel would follow me, walking my paths! How soon my hands would be upon their foes! 15 Those who hate the Lord would cringe before him; they would be doomed forever. 16 But I would feed you with the finest wheat. I would satisfy you with wild honey from the rock." Psalm 81:8-16

Clearly, God is **desperate** for us to hear His voice! He does not want us wondering through life in confusion, employing a "hit or miss" strategy to find solutions to our problems. God wants to show us the way out of our difficulties and He wants to lead us into a place of success and prosperity. That is God's will for you!

There is however a cost involved. In order for me to receive the **good** life that God wants to give me, I have to lay down my **own** one! The real issue here is LORDSHIP. Have I really surrendered to my entire life to Jesus? Will I really do whatever it takes to walk in obedience to Him?

In the passage above, God commands us not to give any place in our lives to "foreign gods" or idols. God sees an idol as anything that competes with Him for first place in our affections.

One of the central principles of learning to listen for God's voice is that **we will hear what we want to hear**. That principle will either work for or against us, depending on where our hearts are. In other words, if we really, desperately want to know the will of God, regardless of the consequences or the personal cost, we will hear God's word to us. If however, we say that we want to hear God's voice, but there is something that we really desire to have, more deeply than the God's will in that matter, we will probably hear what we want to hear. ie. If I really want to have a Ferrari more than I want to hear how God feels

about it, I will probably come to the conclusion that God is telling me to buy a Ferrari!

God speaks in many ways and these can include slight impressions, mental pictures, thoughts, and intuitive knowledge. God communicates to our spirits but this has to be filtered through our souls which consist of our mind, will and emotions. It is like looking through a window of thick glass. If the window of our soul is dirty, it will distort the picture that we see of who God is and what He is saying to us. This is why it is so important to renew our minds.

2

"9 The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is. 10 But I, the Lord, search all hearts and examine secret motives. I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions deserve." Jeremiah 17:9-10

David was well aware of his own human frailty and prayed continually. *"23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life." Psalm 139:23-24*

Paul sums it all up very well in Romans 12:1-2

"And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all He has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind He will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship Him." Romans 12:1

Worship is not just about singing in Church. It's about surrendering every aspect of our lives to Jesus.

*"2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, **but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.** Then you will learn **to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.**" Romans 12:2*

Revelation is progressive or, as Bill Johnson puts it, "there are levels of truth". We can not shoot for the **perfect** will of God which is very specific, if we are not already living within the broader boundaries of the **good** will of God by obeying the basics of His written word.

"22 But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are fooling yourselves." James 1:22

Knowing God's Word and choosing not to obey it in any given situation will cause us to be led further and further down the path of deception. We need to align our thinking and living with God's written Word, repent of all known sin and trust in the Holy Spirit to bring to our attention any actions or motives in our lives that are not in line with His Word. This will keep us safe and protect us from demonic deception.

Matthew 5:8 gives us an amazing promise. *"8 God blesses those whose hearts are **pure**, for they will **see** God."*

Hearing God is not just a one time thing for a once off situation. There is a better way!

James Goll said: " But to really grow in the very subjective art of hearing God for myself, I need to be like John the beloved and lean my head upon the chest of my Messiah and Master, listening for the very heartbeat of God. You and I need to cultivate a friendship with Jesus. Then we will be able to hear God in all His multifaceted modes of expression. . . Hearing the voice of God depends on having a lifetime relationship and that can never be taken away."

3

Revelation 22:1-2 speaks of the River of God which flows from Heaven. *"1 Then the angel showed me a river with the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb."*

Psalm 36:8 says that we can come to that River to find refreshing in the Presence of God.

"You feed them from the abundance of your own house, letting them drink from your River of delights."

If we come to the River of God and stay in the flow of intimacy and fellowship with Jesus, the River of God's Presence will carry us effortlessly to the heart of God's destiny and purposes for our lives!

Group

Ice breaker.

- In 5 minutes find out how much you have in common with someone else in your group. Things such as the same make watch, size shoe, birth month etc. The "twin" with the most things in common is the winner. Share the kind of things you have in common.
- Have you ever tried to hear something but there is an overpowering noise in the background? How do you respond?

What's the Word on it?

Acts 9:1-19; Psalm 81:8-16

It is so important that we hear the Lord's voice for ourselves. Some folk are quite content to have a second hand (through someone else) relationship with the Lord. The Word is vital but the Holy Spirit is irreplaceable, through Him the Lord reveals to us His will for us. If we want to be in the will of the Lord we HAVE TO hear His voice. He speaks in different ways and because He is Spirit we need to tune our spiritual ears to hear Him. As you look at this account in Acts ask the Holy Spirit to help you to hear the voice of the Lord clearer.

1. What are the different ways the Lord speaks to men in this passage?
2. I counted 6 different ways like; blinding light, vision, voice, laying on of hands, blindness – in the body and showing - which others do you see?
3. What do you think the outcomes would have been if the different men in these passages couldn't hear the Lord's voice?
4. What aspect of the response of these different men made it possible for the Lord's will to be done?
5. God is clearly most interested to use Saul (Paul) for a specific Kingdom task, what is it?
6. What do we miss out on if we do not hear the Lord's voice?
7. How clearly do you hear the Lord's voice?
8. How can you grow in this area?
9. How can you encourage one and help one another to hear the Lord's voice in the group?