

KNOWING GOD'S VOICE - PART VI



KNOWING GOD'S VOICE DEPENDS ON AVOIDING HINDRANCES

A 'hindrance' is something that slows or makes difficult our progress. It holds us back. It delays, impedes, or prevents action.

The Hindrance of Runaway Emotions

At 11:00 P.M. one night, I was called by an anxious mother who had discovered her 16-year-old son had sneaked away from the house through the window of his room. She was angry, tired and afraid of what might happen to him.

It is times like these that a parent needs to hear from God, both for inner peace and in order to be able to give the right discipline. An inappropriate reaction by a parent to a child's misbehavior is just as wrong as the child's behavior and perhaps more destructive.

But there was no way that this mother could hear from God as long as anger and fear were hanging around inside her head. And unfortunately,

sometimes when we most need to hear from God are the times we least want to.

The mother conveyed to me later that it took nearly two hours, while waiting for her son to come home, for her to get quiet enough to hear the Lord say, "Don't discipline him tonight. Wait until tomorrow when you have a clear mind."

She did wait until the next day. The guidance she received from the Lord in dealing with her son was far different from what she had anticipated. The Lord told her to give him a full pardon this time, without punishment. And at the same time instructed him in the area of grace, unmerited favor.

The results of disciplining her son God's way produced immediate behavioral changes. By faith, she believed there would be long-term results as well.

Runaway emotions are our 'uncontrollable' feelings about situations and people around us. They distract us from prayer. Anger, worry and fear are runaway emotions just like bitterness, hate, lust, doubt and unbelief. God has given us some guidelines to help harness our emotions and let them work for us, instead of against us.

- ◆ Accept the fact that emotions are direct reactions from within us to the world outside of us. They are a part of our inner make up, cultivated since birth.

Most of our lives are constricted by half-conscious fears of some kind that keep us from dealing adequately with the world around us. One person withdraws from being hurt because everything seems so hopeless while another strikes back in anger at whatever seems to be causing the hurt. It is not easy to accept the fact that these disturbing and sometimes violent emotions are a part of our being.

If we deny our emotions, we do one of two things. We may successfully repress them and so cut ourselves off from a very vital source of energy, becoming zombies, half dead. Or else we cover them up to the point where they break loose on their own and use up energy, usually in very destructive ways. The loss of this valuable energy can also cause us to be vulnerable to sickness and disease.

- ◆ Do not be deceived into thinking that God will automatically

want the opposite of what you want. This sadistic view about God is obviously satanically implanted.

- ◆ Remember your emotions are much harder to control when you are physically down. If possible, it is a good rule to wait to make decisions based on the will of God when you are rested and your body is restored.
- ◆ When you are seeking to communicate with Lord, admit your emotions. Yes we are to speak the Word at all times, but don't deny your emotions. Do not repress them. Confess exactly how you feel. Tell the Lord your own personal preferences and feelings. He knows them anyway! Remember He loves you, He's touched by your infirmities (weaknesses). So often we speak the Word, with emotions that are totally opposite of what we're saying. Don't think you're fooling God, what you're doing is called "mentally ascending to the Word." There's no real faith present. What we should do is shine the light on that runaway emotion. Highlight it and deal with it! Then immediately get back on the Word. I can't express how important it is to have honest and open dialog with the Lord.

We have been taught in recent years, to always confess the Word! Don't misunderstand me, faith does come by hearing the Word. What I am saying is, it will come a lot faster when you deal with unresolved emotions quickly and decisively! If you're fearful of a situation, a place, or person you can quote scripture until eternity but until you deal with that emotion it will forever hold you captive and all Satan has to do is push the right button and that emotion is off and running again. That fear has a root, and you've got to get at that root.

- ◆ Ask the Lord to help you deal with your emotions. He may have allowed them to surface just so you can present them to Him and deal with them. When you take this approach to emotional health, God can transform your runaway emotions and get glory out of them. This may be difficult for you; it is for most people. We never want to admit we feel a certain way, especially if the feeling doesn't seem to be 'Christ-like' to us.

To back off at his point because you do not like what you see and do not

want to deal with it will hinder your communication with God. Push on through your feeling, knowing that He brings light into darkness and order into disorder. He will change and heal those runaway emotions.

The Hindrance of Wandering Thoughts

Wandering thoughts—who has not had problems with them while praying? Only the folks who have never prayed!

When our thoughts jump from one thing to another during our prayer time, it shows that we are unable and/or unwilling to set our minds on the Lord. This is a challenge we all face when we set out to pray, only to find our minds wandering unto totally unrelated subjects. Although we are all learning to bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, we may have unresolved conflicts that make it easy for the devil to interfere. Perhaps we have weaknesses we refuse to admit; a certain lust, a fear of job loss, of being alone in life or we may just be physically tired and worn out.

You see, we bring all the baggage of our past experiences to our prayer time. We have strong inner dispositions of likes and dislikes. Ideas and situation scream loudly from our inner being and keep us from hearing God speak. The two main causes for our inattention are (1) the distraction darts of thoughts thrown by the enemy and (2) an undisciplined mind.

The latter refers to a mind that has been habitually allowed to wander or has been 'untaught' to concentrate. The first thing you must do is to reject all useless thoughts.

At the point, a useless thought starts-mischief begins.

The time to reject them is the moment they reveal themselves as useless to the matter at hand. Reject those thoughts quickly and return to your inner communion with God! Here are some practical ways that I've learned to control wandering thoughts.

- ◆ **Reject thoughts that are the darts of the enemy. Rejection is a definite act and differs from ignoring them. To reject these thoughts you need to make a positive statement, such as "Satan get away, in the name of Jesus, I claim the blood of Jesus over your mind."**
- ◆ **Conquer thoughts that deal with the realities of daily living. It is often hard to reject thoughts that have to do with things**

that you need to remember; things that are very important to your routine. I've found it helpful to have a little notebook at hand. I quietly record the thought and return to a place of stillness. If the thought keeps on returning, I push it aside and say to it: "You are taken care of, now stop bothering me." There is a great deal of difference between avoiding a thought and laying it aside after taking a moment to record it. Once the thought or emotion is recorded the mind is then satisfied that it has been processed and resolved.

- ◆ **Concentrate on the indwelling Christ.** This is the most important thing in rejecting wandering thoughts. Turn inward to Him again. The mind can only grasp one thought at a time. Realize that there will be distractions, especially at the outset. How do you deal with those things that distract; how do you handle those things that draw you away from the inmost part of your being? What should you do? You must instantly turn within to your own spirit and connect it to the Holy Spirit. The more you are able to concentrate on Jesus, the easier it becomes to avoid the hindrance of wandering thoughts. When my concentration is way off, I find it necessary to whisper His name several times; Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

As a child of God, know that the enemy will attack your prayer life. But know also that our Lord stands by His Word and that He will keep you focused on Him and His promises. Victorious though faith! Paul said it all, "We do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but the at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (II Corinthians 4:16-18). I invite you to join me in "fixing your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith." (Hebrews 12:2)