

KNOWING GOD'S VOICE - PART II



KNOWING GOD'S VOICE BY THE RESULTS IT PRODUCES

One of the surest ways to recognize God's voice is the effect the words produce in you. The results of hearing God's voice center on increased faith and gratitude.

God's Voice Will Bring You Encouragement

God encourages me in so many ways. It maybe from a scripture recalled from my memory bank, a scripture interpretation for a present circumstance, or a new scripture-one I never noticed before. Sometimes I'm encouraged through His reminder of his promises to me. Or a word for the moment. Sometimes it's just a fresh look at things from His point of view.

Whatever the method, the Lord encourages me to keep on keeping on. He assures me everything will turn out well and according to His plan. He spurs me on to take the next bold step, so without hesitation I can join Paul in saying, "Not me but Christ in me, he does the work."

On the other hand, the **enemy** attacks us with discouragement. This is one of Satan's main weapons. He constantly seeks to discourage us and thereby rendering us ineffective, He wants us to stop what we're doing or to do them in a halfhearted way.

The **enemy** will point to and distort present appearances and experiences. He will punctuate his attack with a full-color show of your past failures.

Be aware of Satan's tactics. And remember that a sure sign that you have heard God's voice is that you are comforted and uplifted-encouraged to love, trust and follow Him.

God's Voice Will Bring You Peace

What God says will never cause you to worry or fret. A sure sign you have heard from Him is the peace you feel even in the midst of the storm.

The "peace" is an inner tranquility in a situation clamoring for attention. A light in the impenetrable darkness. A calm assurance in impossible circumstances. An unexplainable rest in the middle of chaos.

Jesus, who often commanded his disciples, "Fear not," will not in any way cause you fear or worry. You can have peace because of the Lord's presence, His promises and His power. "In the world you will have tribulation," take courage; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

This peace for God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ is often inexplicable to others. It's a sign you have heard from Him, so continue to listen to God until you have reached a place of peace. Remember too, that any thought of worry or fear is not from the Lord but from the **enemy**.

God's Voice Will Bring You Sympathetic Understanding

You will know God is speaking to you about others because of your new attitude of understanding toward them and the actions you want to take. You will begin to want to love them. Then, as he continues to speak and you listen, the Lord will supply the love.

You will feel compassion for other people. Want to be with them. Want to extend mercy to them, forgive them, and be a blessing to them. You will find yourself interceding for them and expressing love to them through words of encouragement and helping actions. When God speaks to you about others,

He will cause you to see them as He sees them, to love them as He loves them.

But the enemy again moves in against us, with attacks on your mind that are aimed at contradicting what God has told you:

1. The enemy puts thoughts in your mind that cause you to judge someone. Remember the admonition: "Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand" (Rom. 14:4).

2. The enemy puts thoughts in your mind that cause you to despise someone. Paul, in writing to the Roman believers, questions us, too: "But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God" (Rom. 14:10).

3. The enemy puts thoughts in your mind that cause you to reject someone. There is a measuring stick about rejecting someone that we rarely use: Christ accepted you with lovingkindness; so you should accept others in the same spirit. This will bring glory to God.

4. The enemy puts thoughts in your mind that cause you to speak evil of someone. James, who had much to say about the Christian use of the tongue, warned us about this, too, in his letter to believers:

"Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother, or judges his brother, speaks against the law, and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge of it." (James 4:11).

5. The enemy puts thoughts in your mind that cause you to carry a grudge against someone. James also said, "Do not complain, brethren, against one another, that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the judge is standing right at the door" (James 5:9).

When you are listening to God, you will hear Him say, "Try to do what makes peace and helps one another." If you receive those words, you will not judge others nor hold them in contempt nor despise them nor reject them nor criticize them nor curse them. These things are not from the Lord. You may surprise yourself because you will have compassion for others. You will receive them and be merciful to them. You will forgive, seek to save

them, bless them, and intercede for them.

You will find yourself praying things like: "Father, but for your grace, I would be there." Or "Lord, show me how I can help." Or "What do you want me to do for them, Jesus?" Love, mercy, and compassion will rise in you, as will a desire to draw closer to others in order to help them.

You can be absolutely sure that God, who has clearly commanded you not to judge another, will never tell you things about other people for the sake of judgment. If He tells you anything about others, it will be so that you can intercede in their behalf and reach out to help them.

When God speaks, do you hear a loving father who forgives you and has a real interest in you? Or do you hear a demanding parent who is always expecting you to measure up to higher and higher expectations?

When you pray, do you do so as to a loving, accepting father? Or do you feel condemned and never able to live up to God's expectations? The God of the Bible is love, which brings hope. And when he speaks, the results will flow out of his love for you.

The years of 1982 to 1986 were the very hardest I had ever experienced in my life. I know now that God was doing a work of purifying and pruning in my life during that time.

The attacks of the enemy allowed by God - left me with a sense of hopelessness about my life. I was often filled with despair. What kept me afloat, what kept me going, were the times I shared alone with God. Times when He gave me hope and a reason to live.

The situation did not really change much. But in those times, when I let Him, God always lifted me up:

...with hope that He was there
...with hope that He was doing the best He could for me
...with hope that He was giving me what I had asked Him for:
a Christian character.

Of course, I wanted it all in a painless, costless, quick way— but that is not God's way. And I have been able to see something of the reasons why He doesn't work that way.

"Hope." What does this word mean in God's vocabulary? If we can conclude

what God means when He uses that word in the Bible, it will help us identify His voice.

Unger's Bible Dictionary defines "hope" as "the expectation of good." Vines says, "It is a favorable and sure expectation. It has to do with the unseen of the future. The happy anticipation of good. The blessed assurance."

The opposite of hope is "hopelessness," which Webster says refers to "having no expectation of good or success; despairing; despondent."

How do you know where hope about the future comes from? Is it from God? As in the other results of listening to God's voice, here, too, God has given signs to direct you:

1. Joy and peace accompany hope from God. This interactive circle is emphasized by Paul's prayer to the Roman believers: "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13).

2. When hope is from God, there is rejoicing. "Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus... Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass" (I Thess. 5:16-18, 24).

3. Hope brings boldness of speech. Referring to the much greater glory is Christ's new way, which will continue forever, Paul says, "Having therefore such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech" (2 Cor. 5:12).

4. Steadfastness is also a part of this hope. Imagine praying for someone and saying, "We always thank God for the things you have done because of your faith. And we thank him for the work you have done because of your love. And we thank him that you continue to be steadfast and strong because of your hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thess. 1:3).

5. There is no disappointment in this hope from God. We have been made right with God because of our faith, and we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through our faith, Christ has brought us into that blessing of God's grace that we now enjoy. Our happy hope of sharing God's glory "does not disappoint, because the love of God has poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Rom. 5:5).

By way of contrast, consider the enemy's tactic of putting thoughts in your

mind that cause you to feel hopeless and discouraged. Hopelessness manifests itself with such thoughts as: "It will never work out." "Nothing good is ever going to happen." "It's no use." "I'll never change." "It won't do any good." "Nothing will make a difference."

Based on God's Word, you can say to the **enemy**, "It is God who makes the difference!" God will fill you when you allow Him to, so that you may abound in hope by the Holy Spirit.

Hope coming from the Father is the assurance that what we are trusting Him for —on the basis of His character and word —will come to pass. The object of the hope brought by the Father is such a sure thing that we can rejoice in it before it actually comes, for its coming is as certain as the dawn. His promise is always "I will not fail you."

This hope is not wishful thinking. Neither is it daydreaming nor optimism. This hope comes to you as you listen to God's voice, because the Father will reveal Himself to you. This hope comes to you as He reveals His intention for you and renews His promises.

God's Voice Will Create and Sustain Your Faith

The point I want to make here is that when God speaks, you have faith. It's a faith you cannot explain to others or to yourself. It's just there. As long as you reflect on His words, the faith remains.

The Scriptures picture faith as all-important to our God and Lord:

1. He is the God who demands **faith**: "The righteous man shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17).
2. He is the God who desires **faith**: "Where is your faith?" (Luke 8:25).
3. He is the God who delights in faith: "Without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. 11:6).
4. He is also the God who gives the basis and reason for **faith** when He speaks with us: "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17).

One sign that you have heard from God is that **faith** rises in your heart. You believe! You believe in spite of what you sense or perceive and in spite of

what your reasoning tells you. You believe easily and naturally, for you have heard the One whom you know as God. Faith is both created by the Lord's word to us and sustained by that word. He initiates our faith and is also the completer, the finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2).

Enemy Tactic - Thoughts of Doubt, Unbelief, Suspicion, Anxiety, and Skepticism. Satan wants you to listen to him and depend only on your feelings. These distortions — if allowed to prevail — will lead to disobedience:

- 1.The disobedience of inactivity caused by doubt
- 2.The disobedience of wrong activity
- 3.The disobedience of complacency

However, when the Father speaks and you listen and accept what he says, you will find faith rising up in your heart. You will have these assurances:

1. Hopeful assurance that what is now invisible will become visible when God is ready to show it to you
2. Joyful assurance that makes you sing at midnight
3. Obedient assurance that causes you to cooperate in whatever way he asks

One of the sure results of hearing God is faith: resting faith, steadfast faith, rejoicing faith.

God's Voice Will Produce Gratitude in Your Heart

One morning I was meditating on Psalm 138:8: "The Lord will accomplish what concerns me; Thy loving-kindness, O Lord, is everlasting; do not forsake the works of Thy hands."

The Lord spoke to me and said: Melva, I have invested too much in you to forsake you. You are the object of my creative and redemptive plan. It is fellowship with me that I designed you for, created you for, reclaimed you for.

When I sent my Son into this world, it was to demonstrate to you the

possibility of fellowship with me where you are. It was also to make fellowship possible by taking care of sin that prevented it.

As you read the Scriptures, do you not see that my Son Jesus and I always had fellowship together? That is why when He bore your sins, and I had to forsake Him, He suffered such agony.

Would it have been agony if He had not been used to having fellowship with me? No! In eternity He had fellowship with me. In a human body on earth, among people and conditions like you live in, He had fellowship with me. And so can you.

No, I will not forsake you. More than that, I will finish the perfection for which I called you — both as an individual and as part of my bride, the church.

Your need is not to be concerned about my forsaking you, but about your being too preoccupied and forsaking me.

My heart overflowed with thanksgiving and praise to God for those 'Rhema' words to me. And always when I listen to Him, I am grateful and full of thanksgiving to Him for Himself and His words.

Thanksgiving and praise flow from grateful hearts. A grateful heart cannot help overflowing with thanks and offering praise.