

HEARING GOD'S VOICE CLASS (WEEK 8)
HEARING GOD IN DECISIONS WE MAKE

I. Introduction: Serving God effectively depends on discerning and following God's voice. This is how we know and stay in God's will.

"Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is." (Eph. 5:17)

A. In review: A few keys to living a lifestyle prepared to hear God's voice and be used by God in hearing His voice:

1. In the last two weeks, we talked about prophecy and the key to learning how to hear and receive encouraging prophetic words to build up, strengthen, and bring God's healing to others. My appeal is that this will go from being a rare occurrence to an ongoing lifestyle. We can prophesy to people continually by having a heart to grow to be the best encourager we can be and then leaning into the Spirit to help us go to an even higher level.

Isaiah 35:4-6 reveals the value of this:

"Say to those who are fearful-hearted, be strong, do not fear! Behold your God will come and save you, then the eyes of the blind shall be open and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like the deer..."

2. We mentioned the primary way God wants us to live in a conversation with Him is through His Word. We are to dwell in the Word, meditate, and speak it over and over to ourselves in a way that God is able to turn His "Logos" into our "Rhema."

Joshua 1:8 NKJV

"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."

3. If we want to hear God often, we should especially listen to hear what God wants to reveal and speak to us about. There is no question that one of the main things He wants to reveal is Who He is to us, in the situation we are in.

The names of God were one of the most common revelations He gave people. A great question is, “Which of your names and attributes do you want to remind me of in this present situation?”

“Be still and know that I am God.” (Psalms 46:10)

4. If we want to hear from God consistently, we should develop disciplines on a regular basis to still and train our hearts to listen: daily times of waiting, asking, and reflecting (Daily Office).

Example of a 10 Minute Tune-up (Activation)

- A. Identify ways you recognized God at work in your life-give thanks. Affirm with praise that you know God is always talking and you are expectant and excited to know what He’s saying to you today.

“Lord, I saw you at work in giving me favor when I suddenly remembered that I had set down my bag-thank you for shepherding me.”

Ask Him to reveal Himself to you: What do you want me to recognize, affirm, and praise about You, in this special moment?

- B. Tell Him you are listening and want to hear from Him. Ask Him to remind you of anything He wanted you to notice today or something He was doing to get your attention. (Was there a problem, opportunity, an unusual circumstance or thought that came to your mind, or a person you saw or thought of that He wanted to say something to you about? This is something so helpful to be ready to journal about.)
- C. Lay before Him any decisions or situations that you’d like to hear from Him; praise Him for His promise to do so.
- D. Just be still and listen for a few minutes for His gentle whispers as you acknowledge that He is God.

II. Hearing from God and decision-making

- A. Realize this is an area where God has given you lots of promises to have hope and confidence.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” (James 1:5 NKJV)

“Commit your works and activities to the Lord and your thoughts will be established.” (Proverbs 16:2)

“Many are the plans in person’s heart but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.” (Proverbs 19:21 NIV)

“The mind of a person plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps. (Proverbs 16:9)

- B. It is also a place where the enemy will try to get us off track, tempt us with doubt or confusion, tempt us to position ourselves to miss God and make bad decisions (*“Hath God said”*).

Examples of ways we can sabotage our ability to partner with God in good decision-making practices.

- Being “feelings driven”, impulsive and impatient
- Making decisions when we’re too tired, hungry, or angry
“The anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God...” (James 1:20)
- Being driven by people’s opinions and expectations, being motivated by guilt
- Being ignorant of God’s Word, listening to people’s foolish suggestions
- Fear, self-doubt, being passive, not owning the responsibility to make wise and confident decisions for the Lord.

- C. The Bible emphasizes the importance of operating in bold faith in the area of decision-making. This is such an important skill to grow in your leadership ability. I feel there is nothing I do more important than being a CDO (chief, discerning officer). We are all called to be a CDO wherever we lead.

Some important points about faith and decision-making

(James 1:6-8 NKJV) *“But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”*

(I Kings 18:21) *“How long will you halt between two opinions?”*

When we choose to live in the land of wishy-washy and uncertainty, we open the door for the enemy to sow doubt, confusion, compromise, and following the crowd (10 spies).

1. Entering what God has for us always starts with right believing. Right believing is the key to right receiving. For all of us, it is important to

recognize the things we need to stop believing, so we can begin the right believing that will lead to right receiving.

Some examples of bad believing:

- I'm a terrible decision maker; I always mess up important decisions.
 - God rarely speaks; I just can't imagine that He would speak.
 - I'm afraid to make decisions because I will probably get it wrong.
2. Good decision making requires faith because often we make decisions forward with the clarity we have, but not the certainty of what will happen next. God told the Israelites to leave Egypt but didn't tell them how they would get across the Red Sea.
 3. Being double minded will keep us in a place of passivity, being stuck and never having peace necessary to keep moving forward.
To be double minded is like a batter who half-way swings at a pitch; his uncertainty ensures failure.

It is better to make a bad decision by faith than no decision because of fear. God can work much better in redeeming mistakes than not being allowed to work by indecision. When we make a clear decision by faith, we can let it go and put things in God's hands (kind of like when we receive a tracking number on a purchase order we made).

4. God commands us to make faith decisions, refusing doubt. That means attaching faith to whatever decision we make in dependence on God.

Acts 11:12 "*The Spirit told me to go with them doubting nothing.*"

Peter had great favor, when by faith he went to the house of the Gentile. In Galatians 2:11-13, when he shied away from Gentiles out of doubt, he was rebuked by the Apostle Paul.

In Romans 4:21, the Bible says, Abraham was "fully convinced" that God would do what He promised.

In Romans 14:5, when it came to decisions about things like what foods to eat, how to celebrate Sabbaths, Paul said, "*Let each one be convinced in his own mind.*" He goes on to say, "*whatever is not of faith is sin.*"

III. How you make a decision by faith

When it comes to important decisions made by faith, the decision is most often best made by a process and not just an impulse.

(Acts 16:6-10) *“We concluded the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to those in Macedonia.”*

A. Some general principles

1. The bigger the risk, the more the confirmations you can expect.
2. As we begin a major decision, it is very good to start with the big picture. Remembering the “Why” is important as we begin to sort out the “What.” If I have a clear view of the goal line, I’m far less likely to go out of bounds.
3. A corporate decision requires more participation and confirmation than a private decision.

“For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.” (Acts 15:28)

“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.” (Acts 13:2-3 NKJV)

B. An example of a process of decision-making with dependence on God’s voice:

Six Steps

1. Clarify options.
What options do I see possible in this situation, option A, option B?
2. Reflect
 - What Scriptures in God’s Word are relevant to consider?
 - What is the original vision God called me to? What was clearly revealed in this regard in the past?

“Don’t doubt in the dark what you have seen in the light.”

3. Ask what God stories relate to this decision. This could include dreams, visions, divine appointments, prophetic words.

One question people ask is about “fleeces” from the story of Gideon. Gideon asked God to confirm a prophetic word by making a sheep’s fleece, supernaturally wet and supernaturally dry.

There are many examples of God bringing supernatural confirmations to callings and impulses.

- a. Genesis 24, the servant sought a sign in choosing a wife for Isaac.
- b. Moses was told to throw down his staff and it became a snake.
- c. Elijah asked for a cloud as confirmation rain would come, and saw a cloud the size of a man’s hand.
- d. Peter had three men knock at his door as he was finishing the dream about going to Cornelius.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 13:1

“In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.”

God is willing to confirm His word, so it is not an act of doubt to ask for and expect confirmation if we do it in faith, with a commitment to go forward.

5. Ask for input from people that God has called to speak into your life. When we are part of a team, it is right to present thoughts to the team in the decision-making process and let them be part of owning the decision with you for God.
6. Make a decision by faith. God wants us to bring more and more of our decisions into the realm of faith. Many of us become guilt driven; we make decisions not to hurt people’s feelings or because we don’t like to say “no”. Often this hinders our service to God. As hard as it is, we should say “no” by faith just as we say “yes” by faith. This will not only allow us to be more in God’s will, but will give us freedom to live more effectively and peacefully.

Closing thoughts.

As we grow in the Lord, it is God’s plan to mature our decision-making capacity in a way that can bring forth amazing works for God. As we grow, we should be aware that God is going to lead us more as partners than as children. Much of our maturity is learning to make decisions by the wisdom He has taught us, helping us become more confident in leading by His grace.