

# Faith and Hearing God



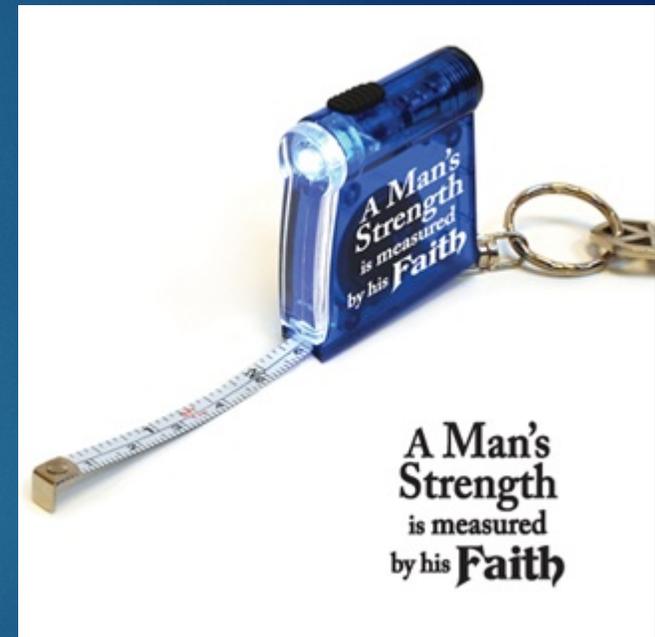
# Faith Comes by Hearing

- ▶ Romans 10:17 declares that faith is the result of **hearing** God speak through the Word [*rhema*] of God.
- ▶ Romans 10:14 questions, "... how shall they believe in him **of whom they have not heard?**"
- ▶ We see that salvation is contingent upon **hearing** His word, therefore, the Word of God must be preached. This will produce faith in the hearer:
  - ❖ <sup>17</sup> For Christ did not send me to baptize, but **to preach the gospel**—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. <sup>18</sup> For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, **but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.** (1 Corinthians 1:17-18 )
- ▶ If we cannot hear from God, we will not have the right vision. Proverbs 29:18 says, "*Where there is no vision (or revelation), the people perish; but he who keeps the law, he is blessed.*"



# Hearing Requires Understanding Your Measure of Faith

- ▶ **Romans 12:3** – *"For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each **a measure of faith**"*
- ▶ A **measure of faith** has been given to **every person**. Through the grace of God this "measure" **has "come"** to every person who believes in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8). What we do with this "**measure**" is up to us.
- ▶ The ability to exercise faith has been built into the human spirit by the Lord, because faith is the means of "**exchange**" in the spiritual realm. Faith is like a **spiritual currency**. Faith pleases God so He has made full provision for human beings to operate successfully in the "faith" realm.
- ▶ However, this measure of faith can only come to its full fruition when it is brought into subjection to the Word of God.
- ▶ Since faith comes by hearing, then we can conclude everyone has a "measure" to hear God.



# Hearing God: The Many Voices We Hear

► There are four voices that we can hear on any given occasion:

1. The Voice of Self
2. The Voice of Others
3. The Voice of Satan
4. The Voice of God

Let's look at each of these...



# 1. The Voice of Self

- ▶ The voice of self is our own inner dialogue that we have with ourselves.
  - ❖ In the parable of the unjust steward (Luke 16:1-13), the unjust steward, who is about to be fired, incurs favor with his master's debtors by forgiving some of their debts. He says to himself: *"What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg"* (Luke 16:3).
  - ❖ In Jonah 4:8, the prophet wished to die after the inhabitants of Nineveh came to repentance. His hatred for them and anger towards God for showing them mercy caused him to lament: *"Death is better to me than life"* (Jonah 4:8).
- ▶ The Bible warns concerning the voice of self:
  - ❖ *"I know, O LORD, that **a man's way is not in himself,** Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps"* (Jeremiah 10:23).
  - ❖ The mind is a battleground where wrong thinking in our internal dialogue must be put to death, and a renewed mind and thought pattern, based on His Word, must emerge.



## 2. The Voice of Others

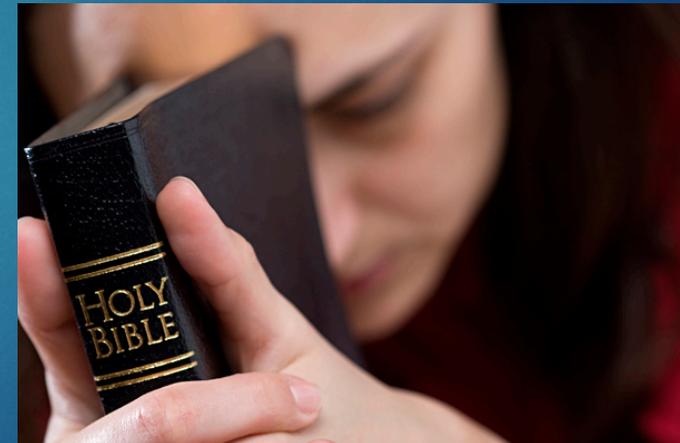
- ▶ The voice of others is easy to recognize. It is the audible voice of another human being to whom you listen.
- ▶ Sometimes the voice of others may give wise advice (**Proverbs 15:22**), but anytime the voice of man conflicts with the voice of God, you must obey God.
  - ❖ When Peter and the Apostles were put into prison by the High Priest and his associates and told not to preach in Jesus' name any longer, they refused: *"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, 'We ought to obey God rather than men'"* (**Acts 5:29**).
- ▶ You should not listen to the voice of others *before* listening to the voice of God. Others may lead you astray from what God desires from you, even when they are trying to be helpful.
- ▶ God many times uses others to **confirm** a word he has already spoken to your spirit.

# 3. The Voice of Satan

- ▶ The voice of Satan was first heard by man when he spoke to Eve in the Garden of Eden ([Genesis 3:1,4,5](#)). Satan's voice is full of lies, deceit, and always attempts to lead man into sin and away from God. You can easily recognize this voice when you read about the temptation of Jesus by Satan in [Matthew 4:1-13](#).
- ▶ Evil spirits (demons of Satan) also have voices:
  - ❖ *"For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them..."* ([Acts 8:7](#)).
  - ❖ *"In the synagogue there was a man possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, 'Let us alone! What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!'"* ([Luke 4:33-34](#)).
- ▶ Most often, however, Satan speaks in an inaudible voice. He speaks lies, deceit, and sinful thoughts into your mind. Many times, if you wonder, "Where did that thought come from?", it may have been planted by the enemy. Whether or not the thought is from self or Satan, if it does not line up with God's Word, it should be **rebuked** and **cast down**.
  - ❖ *"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ* ([2 Cor. 10:5](#)).

# 4. The Voice of God

- ▶ The Good News – Jesus said believers could know God’s voice and distinguish it from other voices:
  - ❖ John 10:3-5 – *“<sup>3</sup> The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.”*



# Hearing the Voice of God: From the Beginning

- ▶ From the beginning of Creation, we were created for fellowship with God. Meaning, we were meant to hear the voice of God.
- ▶ God gave specific instruction to Adam and Eve:
  - ❖ *"The LORD **God commanded the man**, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.'" (Genesis 2:16-17)*
  - ❖ God could only command them if Adam and Eve could hear. By the voice of God they knew the will of God.
- ▶ Adam and Eve did not follow God's plan. They listened to the voice of Satan and ate of the forbidden tree. When they realized what they had done, they hid themselves from God:
  - ❖ *"And they heard the **voice of the Lord God** walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife **hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God** amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where are thou?" (Genesis 3:8-9)*

# Hiding from the Lord's Voice

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- ▶ It is **sin** which separates man from God. Because of sin, man **hid** himself from the presence of God. Sin results in a hardened heart.
  - ❖ *"As has just been said: 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion.'" (Hebrews 3:15)*
- ▶ If there is unconfessed sin in your heart, resulting in hardness of heart, you will have a hard time hearing the voice of the Lord. You are, in essence, hiding from the Lord. Additionally, if you have unconfessed sin the Lord will not listen to your prayers:
  - ❖ *"If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened" (Psalm 66:18)*
  - ❖ *"Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. <sup>2</sup> But **your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.**" (Isaiah 59:1-2)*
- ▶ Unconfessed sin then is a double whammy: you cannot hear God and God will not listen to you! Be quick to confess and repent of your sins before the Lord, then.



# The Voice and the Will of God

- ▶ God wants you to know His will:
  - ❖ Ephesians 5:17 states: *"Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is."*
- ▶ If you recognize His voice, then you will understand His will as He speaks it to you. Learning to receive divine guidance is about learning to walk in intimate fellowship with God:
  - ▶ *"Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."* (Matthew 4:4)
  - ▶ Notice that we are to live on every word that comes from the **mouth** of God. To know what comes from the mouth of God, we need to hear His voice, only then can we understand His will.
- ▶ So the million-dollar question is – how do we hear God's voice speaking to us?

# HOW TO HEAR THE VOICE OF GOD

# Four Ways You Can Cultivate Your Ability to Hear from God

- ▶ There are four components that help cultivate an environment where one can hear from God. You can cultivate your ability to hear through:
  1. Faith
  2. Desire
  3. God's Word
  4. Discernment

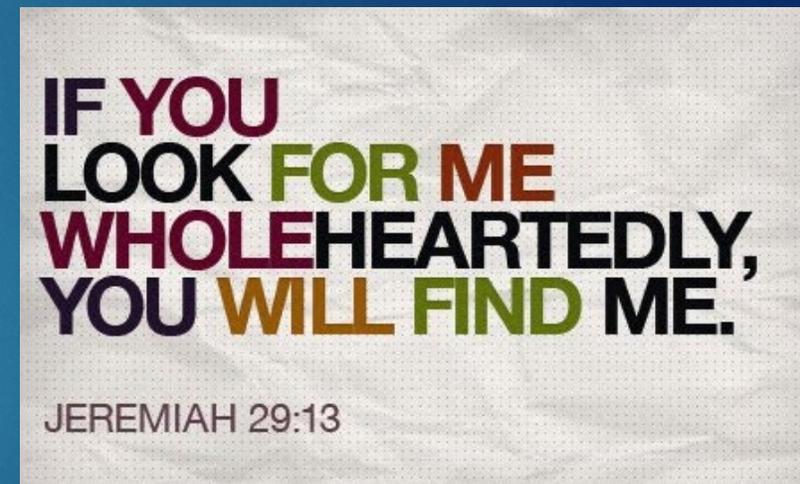
# 1. Hearing From God Requires: Faith

- ▶ David Wilkerson once said, "One of the greatest blessings a true believer has is to hear and know the voice of God. It is possible to hear God's voice today as certainly and clearly as did Abraham and Moses,...,Paul, Peter, the apostles, and John on the isle of Patmos!"
- ▶ This confidence in being able to hear in God requires faith.
  - ❖ Hebrews 11:6 – *"And **without faith it is impossible to please God**, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."*
  - ❖ Psalm 145:18 – *"**The LORD is close to all who call on Him**, yes, to all who call on Him sincerely."*
- ▶ When we put our full trust in the Lord, we have a confident trust that He will speak to us and guide us on our walk with Him.

# 2. Hearing From God Requires: Desire

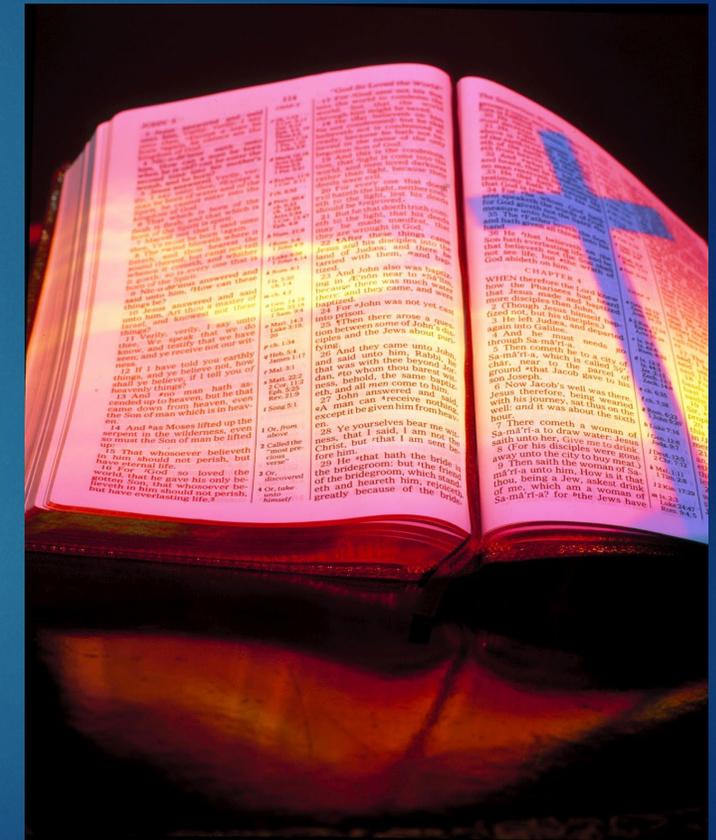
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- ▶ Not only do we need **faith** to hear God, but we must also have the **desire** to hear from God.
- ▶ What is desire?
  - ❖ Dictionary defines as "the natural longing to possess any seeming good; eager wish to obtain or enjoy; sometimes also referred to as appetite or aspiration."
- ▶ The fact is that desire is the natural and universal impulse toward action, be it either for good or bad. Without **desire** our **will** cannot leap into action, and nothing is accomplished.
  - ❖ Remember: The highest human achievements are only possible when the energy of **will** is stimulated by the flame of **desire**.
  - ❖ We must eagerly desire to hear from God. We must make it a priority in our life, day-by-day, hour-by-hour, even minute-by-minute.
  - ❖ Jeremiah 29: 13 emphasizes this point with God's own words: "*You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*"



# Interplay of Desire & Will

- ▶ Interestingly, though it seems desire is needed for the will to act upon, on the flip side, one can create **desire** by an action of his **will**.
- ▶ This concept is well understood by psychologists.
- ▶ Instead of man being a slave of desire – and indeed he is in many cases – he can in reality become the **Master of Desire and even a creator of it**.
- ▶ So, how does one become a creator of desire?



# How To Create Desire

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1. If we have need of something, then we will activate our will to act on or pursue our desire.
2. The first step in the creation of desire is that of the forming of a **clear mental image** by giving it considerable attention.
3. This mental image then becomes a **want**.
4. The next step is to create a **need**. Example:
  - ❖ Mouthwash is advertised to give clean breath. This stimulates a **want**. However sales did not increase significantly until advertisers created a **need**. Mouthwash advertisers figured out a way to create a need for a product by stating that it kills bad breath and reduces your chance of gum diseases. Now the product has become a need rather than simply a want. The strongest way to market a product is to position it as both a need and a want and package it a colorful package (*clear mental image*) so it will stimulate a desire to purchase the product.
5. If we have need of something, then we will activate our will to act on or pursue our desire.



# Desire and the Pursuit of God

- ▶ The trouble is with most of us that we do not truly desire things hard enough (have a *clear mental picture* that creates a *want*, then a *need*)
- ▶ We frequently mistake vague passion and wishes for **earnest, longing, and clear desire**.
  - ❖ "As the deer pants [breathes with excitement] for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God." (Psalm 42:1)
  - ❖ "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also **desirable** for gaining **wisdom**, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves." (Genesis 3:6-7)
    - ▶ - **Notice: Wisdom in this life is both a need and a want**
  - ❖ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst [**desire**] for righteousness, for they will be filled." (Matthew 5:6)
  - ❖ "**Delight** yourself in the LORD and He will give you the **desires** of your heart." (Psalm 37:4)

# 3. Hearing From God Requires: God's Word

- ▶ *"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*
- ▶ *"Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow..." (1 Peter 2:2)*
- ▶ *"Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore...and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word [*rhema*] of God." (Ephesians 6:13-17)*
- ▶ *"But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised." (1 Corinthians 2:14)*
- ▶ In order to **hear** and **know** the voice of God, we certainly need to know **His Word**. The Holy Spirit illuminates Scripture to us, teaching us His character, His will, His purposes for humanity. This is the logos! To understand individually, our own purpose requires rhema.
  - ❖ Remember *Rhema* is built on *Logos*, which is built on *Grafe* (the written word).
  - ❖ Know Rhema for an effective spiritual sword; no rhema and no sword!

# Be a Hearer and a Doer of the Word

- ▶ The Bible speaks of two main divisions of hearers:
  - ❖ A foolish hearer hears the voice of God, but does not act upon it.
  - ❖ A wise hearer hears and acts upon the message of God.
- ▶ One listener is a "hearer of the Word" only. The other is both a "hearer and a doer."
  - ❖ *"<sup>22</sup> Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. <sup>23</sup> Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror <sup>24</sup> and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. <sup>25</sup> But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do."* (James 1:22-25)

# 4. Hearing From God Requires: Discernment

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- ▶ Christ Himself informed His followers that the Holy Spirit would act as His representative in continuing to communicate the divine message through His messengers. Jesus said that the Comforter, the **Holy Spirit**, "will **teach you everything**, and remind you of all that I have said to you." "**He will guide you into all the truth**" (John 14:26; 16:13).
- ▶ With the Holy Spirit as our guide, we must **discern** and **test the spirits**, for they are not all from God:
  - ❖ *"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. 2This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. .... We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood."* (1 John 4:1-7)
- ▶ We must evaluate any "voice" in our mind and discern it: Does it line up with God's Word? Does it resonate in my spirit? Does it give me an unexplainable peace? (Of God – meditate upon) Or does it cause condemnation, confusion, fear, guilt? (Not of God – must be cast down)

# Testing the Spirits

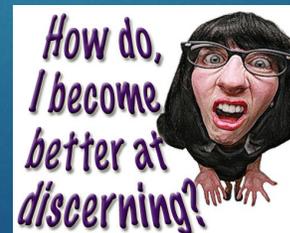
- ▶ How Do They View the Son of God? (1 John 4:2-3)
- ▶ What is Their Relation to the Spirit of God? (1 John 4:4)
- ▶ Are They in Harmony with the Word of God? (1 John 4:5-6).
  - ❖ *"Jesus answered, 'I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one.'" – (John 10:25-30)*

# Discerning Others' Motives

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1. **THE BIBLE TEST:** Does their teaching agree with the scriptures. *"These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily [to find out] whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).*
2. **THE RELATIONSHIP TEST:** Do they have a relationship with God the Father? *"By this you know the spirit of God" (v. 2). "Jesus said to him . . . 'No one comes to the Father except through Me'" (John 14:6).*
3. **THE JESUS TEST:** Do they believe Jesus was a man who could die for their sins, and was He God who could raise from the dead? *"For [there is] one God and one Mediator between God and men, [the] Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).*
4. **THE PROOF TEST:** Do the false teachers appeal to the world and its ways to prove their point? Or, do they appeal to biblical authority? *"They are of the world. Therefore they speak [as] of the world, and the world hears them" (1 John 4:5).*
5. **THE MONEY TEST:** False teachers. *"Through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you" (2 Peter 2:3, LB).*
6. **THE MORALITY TEST:** Does their lifestyle reflect godly living? They should love God. *"He who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:8). "Those who turn truth into error because of their fleshly living" (Jude 4, ELT).*
7. **THE FRUIT TEST:** Jesus taught, *"Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing . . . you shall know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:15-16).*

❖ (Source Elmer Towns: how-to-test-the-spirits)



# How to Hear God: Physical vs. Spiritual

Hearing	How it Works	Benefits
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By collecting the sound</li><li>• By vibrating the ear drum</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Speaks to our mind</li><li>• Ear drum balances our physical bodies</li></ul>
Spiritual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By <b>waiting</b> on the Lord</li><li>• By resonating (harmonic vibration) that is agreeable with our spirit and the Spirit of God.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Speaks to our spirit</li><li>• Provides direction, encouragement, and healing that gives balance to our spiritual lives.</li></ul>

# Conclusion

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## ▶ Hearing God Requires:

- ❖ Faith
- ❖ Desire
- ❖ His Word
- ❖ Discernment

