

SCG Open Session: Hearing God's Voice, Discerning God's Will (Part 2)

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REVISION

1. God is a communicating God (Genesis 1:3, Genesis 1:27, Genesis 3:8).
2. God desires to speak to His people (Deuteronomy 33:3).
 - a. Communication is initiated by His love for us.
 - b. It is heard by those who are living right before God.
 - c. It is heard by those who revere and worship Him.
 - d. It is heard by those who understand that what has been spoken by God must be obeyed.
3. God speaks to those who desire to hear (Hebrews 11:6).
4. God speaks to those who will obey (1 Samuel 15:22).
5. The closer you are in relationship with the Lord, the easier it is to recognize just as you are able to recognize the voice of a close friend (John 10:2-5).

Different Ways God Spoke in the Word:

1. God spoke audibly e.g. to Abraham, Moses, Samuel and to Peter and Paul the Apostle.
2. God spoke through dreams and visions – such as to the prophets Isaiah, Daniel and John the Revelator .
3. God spoke in a still small voice.
4. God spoke through wise people – prophets such as Nathan.
5. God spoke through nature – natural revelation.
6. God's Spirit "bore witness" to the spirits of believers (Romans 5).
7. God spoke through prophecy (1 Corinthians 14).
8. God spoke through the written Word (2 Timothy 3:15-16).

God still speaks today

God still speaks today through the ways described above especially through the Spirit's witness (John 14, John 16) – both directly to our spirits and through His Word.

ARE ALL VOICES FROM GOD?

We "hear" many voices and must learn to discern God's voice from other voices. Competing for God's voice are the whispers of Satan seeking to destroy God's work in us and God's plan for us, and the voice of the flesh – the "carnal world" which seeks after pleasure, instant gratification and promotion of self.

1. Satan still tries to speak doubt and unbelief into our minds just as he did to Eve (c.f. 2 Corinthians 11:3). Those who fall into his clutches "will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:13).
2. There is also the voice of "the flesh" which constantly competes with God's voice in my emotions and my mind. These often take the form of "vain imaginations" and pretensions which while sound religious are in opposition to the ways of God (Romans 7:21-23; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

DISCERNING GOD'S VOICE

The Bible describes ways by which we can judge the emotions we feel, the thoughts and intentions of our minds and the words of advice we receive.

1. Judge all we hear by Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
2. The Holy Spirit's conviction (Hebrews 8:10-11).
3. Godly counsel (Proverbs 11:14).
4. Confirmation from godly others who have a similar spiritual conviction (Matthew 18:16).
5. The peace of God (Colossians 3:15).
6. Circumstances/Timing (Acts 18:1-3).

DISCERNING GOD'S WILL

1. To discern is to exercise a choice and a judgment.
 - a. Discernment is the art of knowing when it is God acting upon or speaking to us, and when it is not.
 - b. It is a personal matter.
 - c. It is best for the time at hand.
2. Because God's moral will is clearly linked to His Holy, Righteous and Just character and any thought, action and deed which goes against Who and What He is clearly not His will and there is no need for discernment – only obedience.
3. Discernment comes into play when there is a need to choose between two things which do not violate His revealed moral will.
4. In order to correctly discern His will, we must be people who:
 - a. Know Him intimately – His thoughts, His ways and His desires.
 - b. Pray.
 - c. Desire to honour Him and glorify Him in our lives.
 - d. Desire His will and are open to receiving it.
 - e. Are part of a vibrant nurturing body of believers to which they are accountable morally and spiritually.
 - f. Desire to obey when we have discerned.
5. Discernment involves the total being :
 - a. Our feelings are the raw material we discern.
 - b. Our intellect judges the source of those feelings.
 - c. Our will makes a choice and decides to act on the basis of this judgment.

CONCLUSION

And this is my prayer: that your love for one another may grow more and more with the knowledge and complete understanding that will help you to come to true discernment, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, entirely filled with the fruits of uprightness through Jesus Christ, for the glory and praise of God (Philippians 1:9-11).

