

KNOWING GOD'S VOICE

John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

- The question is not whether God's people want to obey Him; the question is how does a child of God know whether it is God speaking to them or another voice they are hearing?
- **HEAR (AKOUO)** – to hear, to consider what is said, to understand, to perceive the sense of what is said, to comprehend
- **KNOW (GINOSKO)** – a knowledge grounded on personal experience; a Jewish idiom for sexual intercourse between a man and a woman
- Through the maze of voices from so many areas that are not of God, His Word declares that His voice can still be recognized! Assurance is essential, for when you know that you have heard from God, every force of hell coming against you can be resisted.
- **Vital Principles Concerning God's Voice:**
 1. Living close to God is essential to hearing and knowing His voice. Lukewarmness, carnality and worldliness develop a distance between us and God until we cannot recognize Him when He speaks.
 2. Since there is a human and a divine will, conquering our will is a must before we can be submissive to God's will.
 3. God does not need to speak to us directly concerning anything already written in His Word! Although His Spirit may occasionally remind, convict or call us to obedience in these areas, God is not obligated to do so! His written word IS the voice of God!
 4. One-time calls can impact an individual for a lifetime. You may receive confirmations, renewals and encouragement, but just knowing God has spoken to you ONCE should motivate you to carry out His commands!
 5. We are to TRY the spirits, since a spirit of error and a spirit of truth exist simultaneously in the world (1 John 4:1-6). Paul even said that there are many voices in this world (1 Corinthians 14:10). These can come from Satan, others, or even our own mind.
 6. God leaves many things to common sense – after all, He gave you a brain to think with! Minor and insignificant decisions are best left to our God-given, built-in conscience and judgment. Of course, we always leave room for God to intervene, even in the mundane matters of daily life.

- **How Does God Speak?**

1. **THROUGH GOD'S WORD.** The Bible is the final authority on any matters that it addresses. Never accept anything as being from God if it even slightly contradicts the Bible!
 2. **THROUGH MEN OF GOD.** Men and women of God that you have confidence in because of their godly lives can help you know God's voice. God may also use them to speak directly to you.
 3. **DIRECTLY TO US.** God uses this method to call people into His service, or to give them specific direction. Haste should be guarded against in this instance! Calls from God don't die, but zeal will fade with time. New converts should become grounded in the truth before attempting to receive "direct orders" from God!
 4. **THROUGH GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT.** Prophecy or tongues and interpretation are to be judged by the hearers. This doesn't mean that we criticize or ignore what is said, but rather that we judge its accuracy according to the Bible. New converts, watch how your Pastor reacts to such an utterance!
 5. **IN DREAMS AND VISIONS.** Both of these occur in the lives of most people without having any spiritual meaning! So, when relying on a dream as being a directive from God, it is essential for you to be absolutely sure that God is speaking. Again, check it out with the leadership that God has placed over you. If they are not "thrilled," put your dream on the shelf – if it is of God, it will happen without you forcing it!
 6. **THROUGH ANGELS.** God can send angels, but so can the devil! So, it is important again to be absolutely sure. If you have a deep desire to see an angel, but no corresponding deep desire to obey the plain commands of God's Word, you're already in trouble!
 7. **BY INNER IMPRESSION.** Certainly not all of our impressions are from God; most are from external cues or from our own mind. So, we must become sensitive in order to distinguish God's prompting. Trial and error will certainly come into play here; that is why EXPERIENCE and CONSISTENCY are of utmost importance. Compare your impressions to the word of God, and watch spiritual leadership to see how they handle such things.
- **John 10:5** And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.
 - If a "voice" is different than the one you are accustomed to following, FLEE FROM IT! Sound Scriptural principles, deep spiritual perception and great caution must be exercised. Stay close to the Shepherd!

- **How To Know God's Voice – COMPARE!**

1. Compare what you are hearing with WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN TAUGHT. Never abandon principles instilled in you by the church! Contemporaries in every generation pressure God's people to forsake Biblical guidelines, scorning them as foolish and out of date – turn a deaf ear to such enticements!

2 Timothy 3:14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

Hebrews 2:1-3 ¹Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. ²For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; ³How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

2. Compare what you are hearing with PAST EXPERIENCES. Recall from the past what was of God and what was of the flesh, then act accordingly. Time and experience are great teachers! Quit making the same mistakes over and over – become wise to the devil!

2 Corinthians 2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

1 Corinthians 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

3. Compare what you are hearing with SOMEONE ELSE'S EXPERIENCES. Be sure to use godly, proven men and women as sounding boards to determine if you are on course or not. Independence and self-centeredness are sure routes to following the wrong voice!

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 ¹²And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; ¹³And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

4. Compare what you are hearing with GOD'S WORD. Any direction from God will harmonize with the Bible and the SPIRIT of the Bible – reject anything else immediately!

1 Timothy 3:16-17 ¹⁶All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

- **What If I Mistake God's Voice?**

1. Ask God's forgiveness.
2. Allow it to become a learning experience.
3. Forgive anyone who might have confused you – don't get bitter!
4. Make the best of your current situation.
5. Quit kicking yourself and looking back!

Micah 7:7 Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me.