

Sermon Study Guide

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THE MAIN THING:

God continues to speak to people today as He did in the Old and New Testaments. He speaks primarily through His Word and also in His whispers. Satan also prompts us to act in our fleshly desires. So we must TEST the source to confirm it is God's voice.

PURSUE RELATIONSHIP: *Opportunities to connect and pray as a group*

1. When you have been in the woods (or an unfamiliar place) where you had no reference point to find your way back or when have you used a reference point to find your way home?
2. When has someone calling your name helped you to find direction?

PURSUE GOD: *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

1. Knowing the evil environment where they stood, how are Peter's statement and Jesus' affirmation significant? (Matthew 16:13-17)

** For weblink information on the area.

Contrast the narrative in Matthew 16:21 – 23.

2. How do 1 John 4:1 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17 give guidance in knowing how to recognize God's voice?
3. Often times, Christians will use the phrase 'God told me to tell you' when in conversation with another person. How does James 3:13-17 show how to give and receive the word?
4. How do Proverbs 15:22, Romans 12:3, 6-8 and I Corinthians 14:33 indicate the role of Christian community to help a person accurately discern God's voice?

5. Extra question:

A new believer comes to you with a particular life issue and believes they know God's leading. How would you mentor the person to confirm this?

PURSUSSION: *Seek to be the community of God's people in your community*

1. What is significant for you about Peter's two interactions with Jesus?
2. Of the five ways presented for recognizing the 'whisper' of God, which is most important to you? Why?
3. Is there an area where you are 'quenching' the Spirit? (1 Thess 5:19). Pray about this as a group.
3. Where in your life do you need to reflect and discuss with others about a decision you need to make? Mediate on James 3:13-18

**http://www.padfield.com/acrobat/history/Caesarea_Philippi.pdf

THE WORD (NIV)

Proverbs 15:22

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.

Matthew 16:13-17

¹³When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

¹⁶Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

¹⁷Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.

Matthew 16:21-23

²¹From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. ²²Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" ²³Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

Romans 12:3, 6-8

³For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you . . . ⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your ^afaith; ⁷if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, ^bdo it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

1 Corinthians 14:33

³³For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord's people.

1 Thessalonians 5:19

¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

James 3:13-17

¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. ¹⁵Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. ¹⁷But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

1 John 4:1

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.

Sermon Study Summary

How the Holy Spirit Guides Us (Part 3)

Facing the future without God is like being hopelessly lost in a wilderness without map, compass, guide or point of reference. But the good news is that God wants to be our personal guide through His Holy Spirit. After Jesus' death, He sent His followers an Advocate, the promised Holy Spirit. (Jn 16:7, 13) When we commit our lives to Jesus we have close friendship with God and the Holy Spirit guides us in the way of Jesus Christ. He daily guides us into all truth primarily through Scripture. God also speaks through His whispers but Satan whispers to us as well. God continues to speak to us as He did in the OT and NT.

How Do I Discern a Whisper IS From God?

We need to test whether the prompting or leading is from God or from the devil. (1 Jn 4:1) Peter's two statements had two different sources: God's voice affirming who Jesus is and Peter's fleshly desires prompted by Satan's whisper to be a stumbling block to Jesus. (Mt. 16: 13-17, 21-22)

Test 1: Does it align with Scripture? Any leading that tells you to compromise your integrity or to violate or distort a Biblical teaching is not God's voice (e.g. Adam and Eve). God will not contradict His Word. The key to recognizing Satan's lies is to read, meditate and study Scripture daily and to do what it says. (2 Tim 3:16) Most of God's will and direction for us is right in the Bible. One example is to read the following Bible verses and ask, "What is God saying to me... what challenge or encouragement is He giving?" (Mt. 16:24; Eph 4:29; Phil 2:3; Col 3:12).

Test 2: Does it align with the Spirit of Christ? Would Jesus say or do this? Jesus spoke in a calm, quiet and confident way, not nagging or condemning. (Jn 4; Mt 19) In sharing a Word from God for someone else, we need to check our own motivation. In James we read how to distinguish whether it is from the spirit of God or the spirit of the enemy. (James 3:14-17)

Test 3: Does this leading align with the way God made you? (Rom 12:3, 6) John Ortberg says God generally leads in the direction of your gifts and talents and toward servanthood. If your leading is about being noticed, getting credit or being fulfilled and not about serving, it is best to question the leading.

Test 4: Do godly people whom you respect affirm this leading? (Pr 15:22) Go to godly people you trust to be honest and objective not who agree with you on everything. Share with them the prompting you have received; ask them to join you in prayer about it. If they have concerns and raise questions, those are red flags of warning for you.

Test 5: Does this leading require you to dishonor basic, vital commitments? Abraham took his family and livelihood (livestock) along when the Lord called him to an unknown destination so he could provide for them. A leading from God may cause unrest and confusion for a time, but will leave you with the peace of God. (1 Corth. 16:33) God may lead you to do things that require strong faith or go against our culture, but God will not call you to do reckless things.

Scripture warns us about turning a deaf ear to the Holy Spirit or shutting off His voice. (1 Thess. 5:19) He is our Friend, Counselor, Guide and source of strength and power. As we keep our eyes on Jesus, step out in faith. As we listen to His promptings, He will enrich our faith and transform us into likeness of Jesus Christ.