

Decision Making and Hearing the Voice of God  
Session 2

Guidance Fundamentals

*"I know, o Lord, that the way of human beings is not in their control; that mortals as they walk cannot direct their steps" (Jer 10:23)*

It doesn't take long in the Christian walk to realise being able to hear God's voice is essential. If we are going to live differently to the world, if we are to fulfil God's purpose for our lives, we need to be sensitive to God's voice. The good news that we all have managed it in the past. We had to hear God's call to become a Christian. The Bible emphatically declares:

*"My sheep know my voice" (Jn 10:27).*

So we can do it! Although it is a sign of basic maturity (ie sheep not lambs), it is a PART of a developing personal relationship with God.

When Elijah was about to leave earth he started a walk to Jordan. A number of times he told his servant Elisha to stay behind - he tested Elisha's ability to hear (2 Kings 2). Elisha listened to his spirit and not Elijah - he was now acting in response to God's prompting. He was ready to replace Elijah.

1. Foundation

In Psalm 32 David investigates guidance:

1. Right relationship with God (v1-5)

a) Our three problems: (v1-2)

- Transgression (overstepping the mark)
- Sins (missing the mark)
- Sin (iniquity, stain)

b) Confession and cleansing (v3-5)

2. Right attitude to God (v6-7)

- Place of prayer (v6) .....calling on God
- Pressing in to God (v7) .....being surrounded by God

3. Right place to hear God (v8-11)

- A promise "I will instruct you"
- A proviso "don't be like the . . ."
  - horse (impetuous)
  - mule (stubborn)
- A principle
  - failure to obey brings sorrow

- rejoice / be glad; such freedom makes a person guidable.

Incomplete yieldedness in our relationship with God can cheat us out of clear, continual guidance.

See also Prov 3:5-6, Rom 12:1-2

## 2. Fundamentals

Guidance is learning to live hearing God's voice. Sometimes we are not conscious of hearing God yet we find ourselves in 'the right place at the right time'. Living out of principles, keeping our word, doing our duty is necessary if God is to lead us more consciously. On special occasions, times of redirection, conscious guidance is needed. We should hear from God directionally at certain times - at other times we will hear devotionally. We are in the will of God until He reveals we are out of it.

Guidance functions on two levels. See Psalm 119:105.

- a) A lamp to my feet - each step and issue we face.
- b) A light for my path - ultimately where we walk towards.

### DEVOTIONAL GUIDANCE

Birth.....X.....X.....X.....Death

### DIRECTIONAL GUIDANCE

Ps 37:23-24

Isa 30:21

Acts 16:6-10

It is easy to guide something that is *moving* but not going at top speed. It is important to make use of initiative and set goals, to have vision. This may be refined over time.

Prov 16:9 (LB)

Prov 29:18

Our lives have been ruled by our minds and emotions. We do things to please people, out of fear, because it will benefit us. These impulsive and compulsive motivations need to be broken through to learn to hear God's voice. We are *responders* to God, not *reactors* to peripheral fears (developing a peripheral fear/anxiety that adjusts our whole life is one of the primary concerns of the enemy).

## 3. Spirit to spirit

- You are a spiritual being. (Prov 20:27; 1 Thess 5:23)

- It is the role of the Holy Spirit to reveal God and God's heart to us. (1 Cor 2:9-11; Rom 8:16)
- We need to learn to interpret what God is speaking to our spirits.
- Guidance is learned by experience - we get better at hearing as we mature. (Jn 10:27)

The key is being *sensitive*. God speaks to us. (Ps. 50:3) Our role is having ears to hear, a spirit that perceives what God is saying.

#### Building Sensitivity

- a) Worship and prayer builds our sensitivity to God. (1 Cor 14:4,14-15)
- b) Silence and stillness is essential. Constant noise (TV, radio, talk) and constant activity makes God difficult to notice. (Is 30:15)
- c) Keeping relationships right. We don't have issues with others or God. Failure to deal quickly with issues hardens our hearts to the Spirit. (Eph 4:29-32)
- d) Yieldedness/surrender. Pursuing other goals and priorities can shut God out. We can be lost in our worlds. (Rom 12:1-2)
- e) Discipline in our devotional life, in our listening for God to speak. Note: we are all different in our wiring (Prov 18:13)
- f) Suffering is sometimes needed for God to get our complete attention! (Is 30:20-21)

The Holy Spirit will speak if we listen. It is so simple but our cluttered spirits sometimes don't connect.

#### 4. The process of God speaking

I am indebted to the teaching of Bob Mumford on 'Temptation'.

He argues that there is a specific process that temptation occurs within.

- Promise
- Principle
- Problem
- Provision

#### Casestudies:

- Adam and Eve
- Abraham
- Joseph
- Israel
- David

- Jesus
- Romans

When God begins speaking it is only the beginning. He may 'promise' something, but we need to believe that promise and, at some point, process through the problems, before it becomes provision.

Our responses can be:

- Unbelief – we can trade
- Hebrews 6:12

The results can be:

- Another lap
- Our bones bleach in the wilderness
- We stand and enter the promised land

We can become all too familiar with the wilderness (the place of testing). Even believe that it is normal to live there.

## 5. Ruled by peace

### a) Peace

We are promised that believing in Jesus puts a 'witness' or 'testimony' in our hearts. (1 Jn 5:10) This is true in matters of guidance. Our spirits should register that it is God speaking. Peace should result from a decision or inclination.

"Let the peace of Christ rule (umpire) your heart." (Col 3:15)

Peace should decide a matter for us. Our lives should be lived in peace and a lack of it is like blowing the whistle to stop.

### b) Unrest

If there is a golden rule of guidance it is:

"If there is unrest in your spirit - don't move."

There may be uncertainty - because we walk by faith and faith will be required at times (Prov 3:5-6). Unrest shows a lack of peace. It is God's clearest warning sign that things are not right. We can press on and God won't stop us but this can have serious consequences. (Gen 6:3; Ps 106:12-15) The response God is after is a responsive spirit.

In guidance there are three answers:

- Yes
- No
- Wait - delay is not denial.

### c) Waiting

Much is written in Scripture on waiting. Waiting is God's great clarifier. If uncertain do not press on regardless! That is not faith (it is presumption). The decision may be right but the time may be wrong (if you are prophetic

be very aware that you will want to act because of a sense of urgency, learn to weigh this). Explore Ps 37:14; Ps 27:13-14; Is 64:4; Lam 3:25-26.

"God has a moving (when God speaks, gets our attention) *and* a moment." (Jim Hurn)

God can often move powerfully or speak clearly about something new but this does not mean it is for now. Learn to receive revelation but not to lose the big picture (ie where you are at, circumstances that God must change, the effects on other people).

#### d) Haste

A common response is to react and feel we must make God's word happen instantly. We run the risk of trying to fulfill God's word in our own strength. Rushing is not respected in Scripture - it is clearly warned against.

*"It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, not to be hasty and miss the way."* (Pro 19:2)

*"But you will not leave in haste or go in flight; for God will go before you ..."* (Is 52:12)

In 1 Sam 13:8-14 Saul's impulsiveness cost him the kingdom. Peace rather than panic should mark our decision making. If you are prophetic you will need to deal with the *urgency* that you feel when you hear God speaking (the danger of hearing clearly is responding prematurely).

#### e) Wisdom

Ultimately our lives should reflect the ongoing and clear direction of God. Haphazard changes in people's lives show that their ability to hear and respond to God is questionable. Wisdom should mark our lives, not a tendency to leap into the unknown (Prov 2:1-10, 3:13-18).

*"I guide you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths. When you walk, your steps will not be hampered; when you run, you will not stumble ... The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day."* (Prov 4:11-12,18)