

The Voices We Hear

There are many voices we hear all day long, among others...
the Voice of our own desire
the Voice of our conscience
the Voice of Public Opinion
the Voice of Authority
the Voice of Temptation and many other voices.

Among all these voices there is also the Voice of God. We all realize that God's voice is His Word. The written Word is perfect and never changes. "For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Hebrews 4:12.

The Lord Jesus said in Luke 11:28, "Blessed rather are those who hear the Word of God and obey it." Actually today I like to share some thoughts about the many voices we hear all around us. Where do these voices come from?

First there is the voice of the five senses.

We call these FACTS.

We can see things with our eyes, hear them with our ears, feel them, smell them and taste them.

Second there is the voice of the mind. Also called the voice of reason.

These come from our own reasoning or the logic of others.

These also come from material science, philosophy and psychology.

This vast area of knowledge comes mostly through the mind.

Thirdly, there is the voice of emotions. This voice evaluates things from a personal angle whether good or bad.

Fourth, there is the mysterious voice of intuition.

Intuition tells what we know will happen. We just know it.

Our reason may often silence the voice of intuition, our observation may deny it, and our feelings may ignore it so that we do not obey that voice.

All these voices from the 5 senses, from reason, from feelings and from intuition are valid. Because this is how God made us. We have all learned to obey or to ignore these voices in the process of seeking our guidance. They have been with us from the beginning.

The Voice of Conscience speaks of that we received in our upbringing. Conscience tells us what is right or wrong, but it is not necessarily as accurate as the Truth of God in His Word. A wrongly trained conscience can easily become the voice of prejudice or even hatred, so that a man may hate a Jew or the Arab.

The Voice of Authority, such as the voice of a father or mother. Even after that authority has died his or her voice may still “speak” loudly! Every time I sit down to a meal I “hear” my mother’s voice to finish all the food on my plate!

The voice of authority can also become the voice of Stalin or Saddam Hussein and the authority is misused.

These and many more voices we hear within us day after day. Any of these may be positive voices which God can use as His voice to us. On the other hand any of these voices can also be misdirected and become the voice of the enemy for our destruction.

God may speak to us through our 5 senses. The men of Israel saw that land of Canaan was good and they knew that God wanted them to take it. I like to watch the World News to see what God is doing around the world. My father used to take me for walks in the meadows and point out the marvels of God’s nature. My house is full of his paintings of beautiful flowers

God may also speak to us through the power of reasoning. God warned Israel by reminding them what had happened when they disobeyed the laws of God. But the enemy may also use reason to deceive us. He said to Adam and Eve, “Has God really said that you shall not eat of every tree in the garden?”

God may speak through our emotions and feelings. Jesus had compassion on the multitudes. His compassion demanded that He must do something. He saw the hungry crowds and fed them bread and fish.

God may speak through intuition. The more we yield to God the more He is able to correct our natural intuition and give us true spiritual perception. As God said through Isaiah, “If you leave God’s path and go astray, you will hear a voice behind you say, ‘No, this is the way; walk here’” (Isaiah 30:21).

HOW CAN WE DISCERN THE VOICE OF GOD FROM ALL THESE VOICES?

How do we hear God? Is the voice audible? Do we hear it with our physical ears? Some say ‘yes’ and others say ‘no’. God is a Spirit and it is by His Spirit that He communicates with our spirits. Our spirits “hear” Him.

Romans 8:16, *“The Spirit Himself testifies without spirit that we are God's children.”*

The important question is not “Was it audible?” but “Was it the voice from God?”

The Bible teaches us that the natural man cannot understand the spiritual things because he has only a human spirit, but the believer has received the Spirit of God when he or she is born again. This is when real communication with God begins.

A cosmonaut who was in outer space said that he saw no God there. Had he stepped out of his capsule he would have met God very quickly! We know that such reasoning from this Russian cosmonaut is ridiculous for it is not with our physical senses that we become aware of God.

We need to realize that God the Father is immortal, invisible and beyond human comprehension. But the Father has revealed Himself to the world through His Son. The Son speaks to us by the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit guides us by the written Word of God. Any and all voices we may “hear” must be according to the written Word of God. When we believe in Jesus Christ, receive Him as personal Savior and repent from our sin the Spirit of God awakens our spirit and we are born again.

Then the Holy Spirit witnesses with our spirit and assures us that we are the children of God. He then illuminates and corrects our thinking. Then He directs our emotions to Him and our will must be yielded to His will and even our physical bodies can feel the effects of the Spirit of God as we experience Joy and Peace.

Again is may be asked how will we know whether we heard the voice of God?

The answer is; we will know that just as know our other spiritual realities. Those who have experienced forgiveness know when the guilt of their sins was taken away. Those who have new life in Christ know that they are born again. A great change has taken place, “The old is gone the New has come”.

What about the person who says there is no such reality because he has not experienced it? A blind man cannot know what the color red is but his noncomprehension does not make the color nonexistent.

God says, *“But you are not like that. You are controlled by your new nature if you have the Spirit of God living in you. And remember that if anyone doesn’t have the Spirit of Christ living in him, he is not a Christian at all.”* Romans 8:9.

So by the Spirit of God within us, we recognize the voice of the Spirit of God speaking to us. God speaks to us in many ways. God may choose to speak to you through a telephone call with your father in Nigeria. God may speak to you through a sermon. God may speak to you through a newspaper article or a book or a video cassette.

God can speak to us through the voice of a little child. Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them **to little children**. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.” Matthew 11:25-26

Are there dangers in this spiritual realm since we know so little about it? Yes, certainly so, but there are also precautions that can make it safe. The precautions are all written in the Word of God. **We must read God’s Word, Meditate upon it and put it to memory.**

All the dangers of flying have not kept people from flying. A couple of weeks ago Adam Air crashed in the ocean near Sulawesi Island but the flights of Adam Air planes are fully booked these days! People are hoping that all the safeguards are in place. The manuals are there for the pilots and maintenance crews. But greed makes people divert from the manuals. **So we also need safeguards for spiritual guidance. Our perfect manual is the Word of God. It is our foundation for life. Our compass for life’s journey. We must continually look at it, refer to it, and never ever disobey it.**

We need to realize that our own desires greatly influences what we seem to hear. The voice of God is something like the rain. The rain falls from heaven in all purity, but then it becomes defiled in the atmosphere and mingled with earth's soil. So is the Word of God. It is pure as it comes from His mouth but it is becomes defiled with our desires, prejudice and unbelief. Some adjust or interpret the Word to their own desires.

Prejudice also distorts our hearing. Jesus had told the disciples that they had to go to the Gentiles but they had not gone. When Peter had the vision of the sheet that was let down to him with all the animals that the Jews would not eat, he learned that it was his prejudice that had kept him from hearing what God was saying to him. In the German language, the word 'hören' (to hear) implies receiving the message and obeying it.

Then there is the intuitive person. He may be receiving visions that give direction to the church. I heard of a sincere and dedicated young man but he was mainly directed by his intuitions. He was eager to hear from the Lord and follow Him.

One day as he was driving his car, he heard a voice say to him, "if you really trust God you can close your eyes when you drive." He listened to that voice and obeyed. As a result he had an accident. When the police questioned him, he told them why he had the accident. The police then took away his license from him and the judge turned him over to a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist, however, said that any one who heard voices was a schizophrenic. Here we have the two extremes of one's view of this subject of hearing voices. If anyone who hears a voice is schizophrenic then all the men of the Bible who had communion with God were psychiatric cases for they heard God speak. But if what the young man heard was valid then we know that voices cannot be depended upon.

There would have been no problem for the sincere young man if he had simply checked the voice of intuition with his five senses and looked at the road and the traffic. Had he used his reason, it could have told him not to do that. But he did not let his whole self into the act of decision making, so the enemy took advantage.

Jesus said, "***The Lord our God is the one and only God. And you must love Him with All your heart, and soul and mind and strength.***" Mark 12:30. All our faculties are to be involved in listening to God, hearing Him and obeying Him.

We must continue to walk humbly before Him. We must seek to hear Him as He speaks to us, but we must be willing to receive correction when we make mistakes in reception, knowing that He treats us with love as His children...

"So be careful to do what the LORD your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left. Walk in all the ways that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess." Deuteronomy 5:32