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SERIES FOUR

Hearing God - Study Guide

Your Journey Continues

Series Four is part of an equipping series intended to unfold over time so you can truly absorb the message and experience profound life transformation. It allows the Holy Spirit to touch your heart, so the teachings become more than just head knowledge.

All teaching materials can be found at our website, AdvancedBiblicalFoundations.org. They include the video, study guide and a companion book:

- Series One – Cross is the Key
- Series Two – Love, Identity and Purpose
- Series Three – Free Indeed
- Series Four – Hearing God
- Series Five – Basic Training
- Series Six – Setting the Captives Free
- Series Seven – Financial Freedom

Introduction

There is no question the Lord is speaking to you today. Are you listening to what He is saying? There are many ways to improve and increase your ability to hear the life-giving words God speaks to you.

In this series, you will learn five principles to sharpen and enrich your practice of hearing from God. You will also uncover ways God communicates to His people. You will examine and explore how to know when God is speaking and what He is desiring to communicate.

Let's get started on this exciting adventure of growing in fellowship with Him and walking in His ways as you respond to His voice!

A Prayer For You

Heavenly Father, may all who complete this study come to know You intimately and be able to hear and obey You fully. I pray that each person would enjoy true, living, intimate fellowship with You, Lord, through the Holy Spirit. May He give each person spiritual ears to hear Him clearly and the grace to obey. In Jesus' name. Amen.

⁷ *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.*

⁸ *For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.*

Matthew 7:7-8

Blessings to you,
Terry

Session 1:

Does God Still Speak?

Let's Prepare

Additional study material for the Session 1 video can be found in the companion book:

- Introduction
- Chapter 1 – Does God Still Speak?

At the end of this session, you'll get an overview on how God speaks to His people and how you can enjoy true, living, intimate fellowship with the Lord through His Holy Spirit.

Video Reflections

Watch the video and jot down notes on the opposite blank page. Then, reflect on the following:

- The video speaks of fine tuning your senses to be able to hear God clearly. Consider adjusting the heat on a campfire or smoker, focusing binoculars, finding a station on an old radio, or adjusting a recipe to cook for a crowd. How do these day-to-day activities relate to today's session? Can you think of other examples?

Introduction

All good relationships require communication. The better the communication, the better the relationship is going to be. Our relationship with the Lord is no different. We'll refer to these passages often during this series.

¹ "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and **the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.** ⁵ Yet **they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."**

John 10:1-5 (emphasis added)

²⁷ **My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.**

John 10:27 (emphasis added)

Notes

The core of the Christian faith is developing an intimate, personal relationship with Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. God desires for you to know Him in a personal way – not just know facts and stories about Him, but to really know Him. **Continuing to grow in your relationship with God demands that you hear Him.**

This series was based on the following three beliefs:

- **God eagerly desires intimate fellowship with His children.**
- **God still speaks today, and He wants you to hear.**
- **Hearing presupposes (assumes, implies) obedience.**

Since the beginning of time, God has longed for fellowship with His children. In Genesis 3:8, after Adam and Eve sinned, God came to *them*! In Exodus 25, God reveals to Moses the plans for a tabernacle to be built so that He could dwell among His people in the wilderness. Later, in 2 Samuel 6, David builds a tabernacle for the Ark of the Lord. Then, in 1 Kings 5, you see the construction of Solomon's temple. God wants to dwell with His people. **God created mankind for fellowship.** In the New Testament, God literally put on flesh and dwelt among us (see Isaiah 7:14). When Jesus went to the Father after His death on the Cross, He gave us the Holy Spirit so He could *live in us*.

In the Old Testament, God wanted the children of Israel to hear Him, but they did not. **Why would God speak to you if you don't obey?** Note below that **God is still speaking today.**

⁷ *Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you **will hear** His voice, ⁸ do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness. Hebrews 3:7-8 (emphasis added)*

²⁵ *See that you do not refuse Him who **speaks**. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who **speaks** from heaven. Hebrews 12:25 (emphasis added)*

²⁰ *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone **hears** My voice and opens the door, I **will come** in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. Revelation 3:20 (emphasis added)*

How do you relate and communicate to a living God who is spirit? God is not talking about your natural ability to hear with your physical ears, but about your ability to hear in the spirit with your spiritual ears. There are many ways to hear God. You'll learn about them in more detail in future sessions:

- An impression in the inner man
- The Word comes alive when you're reading your Bible
- Through other people
- Nature
- Thoughts that are of God
- Dreams and visions

Any kind of major word from God needs to be in a community aspect. This means that you should be in relationship with others who can speak into the truth of that word (pastors, church leaders). You need to be plugged into the Body of Christ and not go it alone. God does speak to people individually, but we need to understand how to work together when necessary. We'll cover this in more detail in a later session.

Does God Still Speak?

Let's begin in Genesis to see God's original plan. In Genesis 3:9-10, we find God walking in the Garden of Eden, having a conversation with Adam – "Then the Lord God **called** to Adam and **said** to him, "Where are you?" So he said, "I **heard** Your voice in the garden ..." God's plan from the beginning was to have intimate fellowship with His people. In fact, the entire Bible is God's Word to His people. He reveals His Word, His purposes and His desires by communicating in various, and literally endless, ways.

◆ God Communicated in Old Testament

Let's look at Old Testament scriptures showing how God spoke to His people. Note the highlighted verbs denoting God communicating in various ways.

⁶ ... So the Lord **said** to Cain ...
Genesis 4:6

⁸ Then God **spoke** to Noah and to his sons with him, saying ...
Genesis 9:8

¹ After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a **vision, saying** ...
Genesis 15:1

¹² Then he [Jacob] **dreamed**, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth ...
¹³ And behold, the Lord stood above it and **said** ...
Genesis 28:12-13

² And the Angel of the Lord **appeared** to him [Moses] in a **flame of fire** from the midst of a bush.
Exodus 3:2

⁴ God **called** to him from the midst of the bush and **said**, "Moses, Moses!"
Exodus 3:4

¹³ Joshua said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" ¹⁴ So **He said**, "No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." And Joshua said to Him, "**What does my Lord say** to His servant?"
Joshua 5:13-14

⁷ On that night God appeared to Solomon, and **said** to him, "Ask! What shall I give you?"
2 Chronicles 1:7

Notes

⁸ When You **said**, “Seek My face,” my [David] heart said to You,
“Your face, Lord, I will seek.”
Psalm 27:8

⁸ Also I heard the **voice** of the Lord, **saying**: “Whom shall I send, and who will
go for Us?” Then I [Isaiah] said, “Here am I! Send me.”
Isaiah 6:8

²¹ While I [Daniel] was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen
in the **vision** at the beginning ... reached me about the time of the evening
offering.
Daniel 9:21

◆ God Communicated in the New Testament

Malachi 3:6 says, “For I am the Lord, I do not change.” From the beginning of
the Bible all the way to the very end of the Bible, God is communicating
with us. Let’s begin with the Parable of the Sower.

¹ On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. ² And great
multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat;
and the whole multitude stood on the shore. ³ Then He spoke many things
to them in parables, saying: “Behold, a sower went out to sow. ⁴ And **as he
sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them.**
⁵ Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they
immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. ⁶ But when the sun
was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.
⁷ And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. ⁸
But others **fell on good ground and yielded a crop:** some a hundredfold, some
sixty, some thirty. ⁹ **He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”**
Matthew 13:1-9 (emphasis added)

¹⁰ And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in
parables?” ¹¹ He answered and said to them, “Because **it has been given to you
to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,**
but to them it has not been given.
Matthew 13:10-11 (emphasis added)

¹² For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance;
but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.
¹³ Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and
hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴ And in them the prophecy
of Isaiah is fulfilled. ¹⁶ **But blessed are your eyes for they see,
and your ears for they hear.**
Matthew 13:12-14,16 (emphasis added), reference the prophecy in Isaiah 6:9-10

In this parable, Jesus speaks of going beyond natural hearing and listening
by the Spirit of God with spiritual ears. God wants to communicate and
reveal much to His children. If you really desire to hear Him, He wants to
speak to you!

- Based on what you've studied so far, have you ever "heard" God? Describe your experience. Are you ready to grow in your ability to hear God? Why or why not?

In Acts 10, you find a phenomenal story of how the Gentiles were brought into the Kingdom of God as the Holy Spirit is poured out on them. **God is communicating today in many ways just as He did in the Old Testament.**

*¹ There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, ² a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. ³ About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a **vision an angel of God** coming in and **saying** to him, "Cornelius!" ⁴ And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?" So, he [the angel] **said** to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.*

Acts 10:1-4 (emphasis added)

As you read the entire chapter, you see Peter falls into a trance and hears from God. As the story unfolds, you see the importance of obeying when God speaks to you. You'll study this entire encounter in more detail in session 7.

Hebrews 1:1-2 says, "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things." Hebrews 3:7 says He is speaking today: "Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice ..." Below are more New Testament scriptures that show how God spoke, and continues to speak, to His people.

*¹ [John] was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a **loud voice, as of a trumpet.***

Revelation 1:10 (emphasis added)

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Revelation 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:29, 3:6, 3:13, 3:22 (emphasis added)

*¹⁷ And the **Spirit** and the bride **say**, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.*

Revelation 22:17 (emphasis added)

◆ God is Communicating TODAY

As New Testament believers, we can expect Him to speak to us today. **Put on your spiritual ears and tune in.** Scripture is clear that, from the beginning, God has communicated to those who would open their hearts and ears to Him, who pursue Him and have a real desire to fellowship. Hebrews 13:8 says, *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”* God never changes and we can believe He still speaks to His children today.

First We Hear, Then We Obey

God does speak to us and wants us to hear Him, but hearing presupposes obedience. If you’re not going to obey, why would He want to speak to you? Obedience is the foundation of blessing for us. Note the connection between hearing and obeying in the following New Testament verses.

²⁴ *“Therefore whoever **hears these sayings of Mine, and does them**, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. ²⁶ “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”*

Matthew 7:24-27 (emphasis added)

“These sayings of mine” in the passage refers to God speaking through His Word. The Word itself is alive and speaking to you. The storms of life will come against both houses. There’s no way to avoid the storms. **You build the house on the rock by hearing and obeying.**

You don’t drive sheep. The Good Shepherd, Jesus, leads and the sheep follow. God created mankind to have this desire to have intimate fellowship with Him. You were made to follow Him.

- Read the following Old and New Testament scriptures and highlight any words or phrases that stand out as God speaks to you through His Word. What did you learn from this?

²⁵ *See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven.*

Hebrews 12:25

²⁵ *But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.*
James 1:25

¹⁴ *Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.*
Revelation 22:14

We find the same connection between hearing and obeying in the following Old Testament passages.

¹⁸ *In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.*
Genesis 22:18

⁵ *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.*
⁶ *And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.*
Exodus 19:5-6

¹ *Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth.*
Deuteronomy 28:1

²² *So Samuel said: “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.*
1 Samuel 15:22

¹ *Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, and give attention to know understanding.*
Proverbs 4:1

¹⁰ *Hear, my son, and receive my sayings, and the years of your life will be many.*
Proverbs 4:10

Closing Thoughts

*The real question is not, “Does the Lord speak?”,
but rather, “Do we listen to what He is saying?”
(James Ryle, “Hearing the Voice of God” seminar, April 1992)*

You are on a journey to a deeper relationship with God the Father. Hearing His voice is part of the maturing process and, as a child of God, you were created with a desire to know Him intimately. Perhaps you’ve not understood the process or pathway but be assured – **God wants you to enjoy His presence now.** God’s heart is to communicate with you and

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bring you into an intimate relationship with Him. **Jesus came to restore mankind to a relationship** that was lost by Adam in the Garden of Eden. Through His sacrificial death on the Cross, you are reconciled to the Father. Jesus sent His Holy Spirit to live in you and guide you in walking daily in His ways.

Revelation 3:20 says, *"He stands at the door and knocks."* As you open the door and draw near, you'll find Him there . . . waiting.

- Consider this intimate relationship to which God is calling you. Share your thoughts, fears and longing for that place of closeness and harmony.

A Prayer for You

Dear God, your Word says your eye is on the sparrow. You see my comings and goings every day. That is not enough for me. I want to know You; I long to hear Your voice. I need the Holy Spirit to speak to me. I open my heart to You and trust that I will hear clearly as I become still and focus my heart and soul on listening and obeying. In Jesus' name. Amen.

In the next session, you'll see the importance of full receiving and embracing the Holy Spirit.

Session 2:

The Necessity of Receiving the Holy Spirit

Let's Prepare

Additional study material for the Session 2 video can be found in the companion book:

- Chapter 2 – Receiving and Embracing the Holy Spirit

The importance of fully receiving the Holy Spirit is discussed in every series. One of the greatest benefits of salvation in Jesus Christ is being able to hear God speak through the Holy Spirit. You don't have to go through life blindly "*relying on our own understanding*" (Proverbs 3:5), which is very limited at times. You can draw upon the wisdom of God to guide and direct you every day of your life.

At the end of this session, you will understand the importance of fully receiving the Holy Spirit to enable you to hear God.

Video Reflections

Watch the video and jot down notes on the opposite blank page. Then, reflect on the following:

- At the beginning of the video, Terry shares his personal experience of receiving the Holy Spirit after he was saved. He says the Holy Spirit changed him and changed his life. Describe these changes.

⁷ For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. ⁸ And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.
1 John 5:7-8

Jesus wants you to know Him. He modeled how to live as a man empowered by the Spirit living in relationship with God the Father. John 5:19 says, "*the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.*" The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus to do the Father's will. How do you follow in Jesus' footsteps?

1. You must be born again from above by the Spirit of God.
2. You must be baptized with or in the Holy Spirit.
3. You must develop personal intimacy with God by the Holy Spirit. You must receive the Holy Spirit as God, the Spirit of Truth (John 14:29).

Jesus promised His disciples before His crucifixion that the Holy Spirit, who is just like Him, would come to them. The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), and is our Helper, Comforter, Counselor, Strengthener and Standby.

- Read the following scriptures spoken by Jesus Christ and highlight anything that speaks to your heart. Is this new information for you?

- When were you first introduced to the Holy Spirit? How has your knowledge of Him grown over time?

¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.
John 14:16-18

²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.
John 14:26

- As you read this final passage, put yourself in the disciple's shoes. What were they expecting the Messiah to do when He came? How did Jesus' actions on earth meet those expectations? How could it benefit them if He went away?

*⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth. **It is to your advantage that I go away;** for if I do not go away, **the Helper** will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. ⁸ And when He has come, He **will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:** ⁹ of sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰ of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; ¹¹ of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. ¹² "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ However, when He, the **Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak;** and He will tell you things to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.*
John 16:7-15 (emphasis added)

You have an advantage because the Spirit of God has chosen to live with you and in you. He will also convict the world, including you, of sin. The biggest sin is unbelief. The Holy Spirit will help you truly understand that you have been made righteous by the sacrificial death of Jesus on the Cross. The Holy Spirit will show you that the ruler of this world, Satan, is your enemy is constantly trying to hold you in bondage. The Holy Spirit will reveal that Satan has already been judged and you have victory over him!

The Holy Spirit will “*guide you into all truth.*” Jesus said in John 8:31-32, “*If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*” The truth is not just words; it’s a person. It’s Jesus!

The Holy Spirit reveals the Word to you and speaks what He hears from heaven. **The Holy Spirit will speak to you.**

How Does God Speak to Me?

John 10:27 which says, “*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*” Remember, **the Holy Spirit is the one communicating with you.**

⁵ *Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*
Romans 5:5

¹⁵ *For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”* ¹⁶ *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.*
Romans 8:15-16

The Holy Spirit makes your relationship with God real.

- The term “Abba” can mean “Daddy.” Do you see God a loving approachable Father or as an impersonal all-powerful being?

⁹ *But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”*

¹⁰ *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.* ¹¹ *For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.* ¹² *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.*
1 Corinthians 2:9-12

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In the natural, you are limited. Remember the first passage of this session, 1 John 5:7-8, which describes the Holy Trinity. It says the Holy Spirit is in heaven and on earth. **It's the Holy Spirit who searches the deep things of God. It's your spirit man that He's relating to.**

You don't just need to know intellectually the Father loves you. **The Holy Spirit will reveal the love of the Father to you, not just with information, but through revelation.**

The Still, Small Voice of God

⁹ And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁰ So he said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

¹¹ Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; ¹² and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

1 Kings 19:9-12

Any kind of intimate relationship is not based on yelling and shouting at one another. Intimate conversations are quiet. You pull away from distractions. God wants you to lean in. He doesn't want to simply download information to you. He wants you to listen in the Spirit.

How can I know God by the Spirit?

Let's follow the example of Jesus.

²¹ When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. ²² And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

Luke 3:21-22

Luke 4:1-2 says, *"Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit was led by the Spirit into the wilderness."* In verse 14, you see that *"Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee."* In verses 18 and 19, Jesus declares, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me."* He goes on to give his job description on earth. **Jesus modeled for us how to live as a man empowered by the Holy Spirit.**

Jesus commanded His disciples in Acts 1:4 and 8, *"not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father,"* referring to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, for *"you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you."* Only then could they exercise the authority Jesus gave them to

carry out the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18, to “make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.” It’s the Holy Spirit who is God with us.

You are encouraged to read the Book of Acts and see how the lives of believers changed after the Holy Spirit was poured out on them. **Life changes when the power of Holy Spirit is upon you.**

God used Acts 19:1-6 in my life to show me that a changed life is more than being born again and receiving salvation in Jesus Christ. He wants you to continue to be empowered and grow in your relationship with God the Father. This requires you to fully embrace the Holy Spirit.

¹ And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples ² he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” ³ And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.” ⁴ Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” ⁵ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.
Acts 19:1-6

When you receive the Holy Spirit, something changes. Some people speak in tongues, but that is not what you should be focusing on. God wants to fill you and empower you so you can be who He’s called you to be.

- Were you baptized after being born again and receiving salvation in Jesus Christ? Were you filled with the Spirit of God at the time or perhaps later? Describe your life before and after you received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Closing Thoughts

It’s the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit that speaks to you today. You do not hear God with your natural ears, nor understand Him with your natural mind, but with your spiritual ears and spiritual understanding. God reveals Himself to you, and you know Him with your heart (inner man), not just your mind. You can communicate with God spiritually, not intellectually.

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This is why you must fully embrace the Holy Spirit and develop a personal relationship with Him. The Holy Spirit is God and you must learn to hear His still, small voice speaking to you

A Prayer for You

Dear God, thank You that you desire to speak to me every day and that you long to guide me by Your Spirit into all truth and lead me in paths of righteousness in obedience to Your Word. I am Your sheep and I CAN hear Your voice. Your Word is clear that when I draw near to You, in humility and sincerity, You will draw near to me. Today, I come to seek Your face and hear Your voice that I might live in a way that pleases You. Help me to protect my heart from the influences and other voices in this world, that I might confidently know that I am hearing from You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

In the next session, you'll focus on five principles which will help you become more attuned to the voice of the Lord.

Session 3:

Foundational Principles of Hearing God

Let's Prepare

Additional study material for the Session 3 video can be found in the companion book:

- Chapter 3 – Foundational Principles for Hearing God

In the last session, we spoke of the need to receive and embrace the Holy Spirit. **The Holy Spirit is the One communicating with you.** Jesus is at the right hand of the God the Father and the Father communicates through the Holy Spirit. Jesus came to earth to model how to be anointed with the Holy Spirit, hearing and obeying God. God wants to speak to you too.

At the end of this session, you will know five foundational principles of hearing God. As you incorporate them into your life, you will become increasingly attuned to the voice of the Lord.

Video Reflections

Watch the video and jot down notes on the opposite blank page. Then, reflect on the following:

- When tasked with planning a vacation or a party, how do you approach it? Are you a list-maker? Do you plan far in advance? Do you prefer to keep your to-do's in your head and be flexible depending on what the day brings?

#1 – Know God's Word

You must spend time in God's Word. You find God's vocabulary in His Word. As you do, the Holy Spirit speaks to you, revealing the Truth (Jesus) that sets you free (John 8:32).

**The better you know His Word, the better you know Him.
The better you know Him, the better you can hear Him.**

Everything you hear from God is backed up by scripture. The promises in the scriptures below emphasize the importance of knowing God's Word.

¹ Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; ² but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. ³ He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.

Psalms 1:1-3

Notes

⁸ *This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.*

Joshua 1:8

¹⁰ *"For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹ so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*

Isaiah 55:10-11

To Truly Know God's Word:

- **Hear the Word** – Listen to Bible-based teaching and to others who tell you about the Word.
- **Read the Word** – This step is imperative to grow and begin to hear God for yourself.

To Continue to Grow:

- **Study the Word** – Write down what the Holy Spirit shows you. Look up the meaning of words and cross-reference other scriptures and translations. Join a Bible study group in person or online.

To Truly Use the Word:

- **Memorize the Word** – The more you hear, read and study the Word, the more you naturally memorize key scriptures which are meaningful to you. This helps you recall truths for yourself and others when you need them.
- **Meditate on the Word** – This is a very aggressive pondering of the Word (not mindless meditation), literally speaking the Word repeatedly to yourself.

You must know God's vocabulary, His love language. God speaks using the terminology He uses in Scripture. If you are unfamiliar with His vocabulary, you may miss something or misunderstand Him.

- Put a check-mark next to the activities above that are part of your current routine.

#2 – Believe God Wants to Speak to You

You must have faith. Unbelief (the absence of faith) hardens your heart toward the God. If you allow unbelief to consume you, it will. You must confess to the Lord that your unbelief is sin, then repent (turn away from sin, change your heart) and turn toward Jesus. What God wants is relationship, not religion. Your faith is in a person, Jesus Christ, and not in a doctrine. **You must believe God wants to speak to you.** If you don't, then you can be sure nothing will happen.

⁶ *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*
Hebrews 11:6

God wants you to seek Him, not just seek His hand for what He can do for you.

- Do you truly believe God wants to speak to you personally?

²... *looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, ...*
Hebrews 12:2

¹⁷ *So then faith come by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*
Romans 10:17

#3 – Learn to Perceive God Correctly

James Ryle says, “What one believes God to be like will determine the kind of message that is received as a ‘Word from Lord’” (Hearing the Voice of God seminar, April 1992).

How do you get the proper perspective of God? In John 14:9, Jesus says, “*He who has seen Me has seen the Father.*” In verse 10, He also says He only does what the Father does and only says what the Father says. As you see Jesus, you see the Father. **Jesus reveals the very nature of the Father.** Colossians 1:15 says, “*He is the image of the invisible God.*” Hebrews 1:3 also says Jesus is the exact replica of the Father.

Remember, God is not like your earthly father. God chose you, created you, loves you and desires intimacy with you. He would not have sent His Son to die on the cross for you if He wanted to punish you or wanted you to perform for Him. If you struggle to have a proper perspective of God, you can first **read the Gospels** (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). Then, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into the truth of who the Father is.

⁷ *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*
1 John 4:7-8 (emphasis added)

Since God is love, you can re-read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 and substitute “*God*” for “*love*.” Below is a list of the characteristics of God taken from this passage. God is Love and He:

Suffers long	Is not selfish or rude	Rejoices in truth
Is kind	Never seeks His own	Bears all things
Is not envious	Is not provoked or irritable	Believes all things
Does not parade around	Does not think bad or evil	Hopes all things
Is not arrogant	Does not rejoice in injustice	Endures all things

Notes

Above all, God never fails. **How you see God affects so much.** This is why the enemy does everything possible to destroy the family unit, especially fathers. If you do not see God as a loving Heavenly Father, you will not hear Him accurately

- Think of your earthly father or anyone who may have been a father figure (i.e., stepfather, relative, close friend). Is there anything in that relationship that might be affecting how you see God as your Heavenly Father??

#4 – Be a Good Listener

To hear God, you must become a good listener. You must slow down so you can hear God's still, small voice. **You must learn to quiet yourself** amid the busyness, turmoil, and problems. Jesus' lifestyle modeled how to pull away from the world and draw closer to God the Father.

*³⁵ Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.
Mark 1:35*

*¹⁶ So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.
Luke 5:16*

*¹² Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.
Luke 6:12*

It's important to develop a personal time with God. You must make that choice and plan for it. Find a quiet place. Set aside a dedicated time. **Relationships are dynamic.** Some days, you can dedicate more time than others. Switch locations as your schedule requires. Change what you do when you spend time with the Lord (pray, read, worship). Some days will be easier than others. Some days, you'll take the time because you absolutely can't through the day without it. **Find your time.** You will benefit from whatever time you give to seeking God.

- How would you describe the pace of your life? How often do you slow down to hear God?

- What is the noise level in your life? How can you quiet yourself to hear God?

You must learn to practice the presence of the Holy Spirit and be aware of His abiding presence in your daily life. The Holy Spirit can speak to you in so many ways, and you can literally train yourself to become sensitive to Him. As with any relationship, it takes time and intentionality.

One way is to continually “check in” with the Holy Spirit. Ask Him about things, anything big or small, throughout the day. Then, be present, if only for a few moments, to listen. He is always with you. You may hear Him through His still, small voice or through other people, circumstances, nature and through things you see and hear. Do not limit the Holy Spirit’s ability to speak to you. Just create an opportunity and He will be there.

Learn how to develop a sensitivity to the prompting of the Lord. Learning how to “get in the Spirit” through praise and worship or sitting quietly and reading the Bible can become a natural part of your walk and life in the Lord. As you step into the spiritual realm, you’ll find that your friendship and intimacy with God will become deeper and sweeter, as the Holy Spirit communicates with your spirit.

- Do you truly believe the Creator of the universe is interested in the small details of your life?

- What does it look like to “get in the Spirit?” Are you familiar with this?

Closing Thoughts

There are many ways to improve and increase your ability to hear the life-giving words God wants to speak to you.

- The video speaks of setting aside time to incorporate these foundational principles into your daily routine. Who or what determines what you do each day? Is there currently space to add activities which draw you closer to God? Make a list of things that can immediately be dropped from your calendar, completely or temporarily, to help you make time for God.

Notes

A Prayer for You

Dear God, I pray that my spiritual eyes would be opened to see what You desire to show me and that my spiritual ears would hear your voice. May I have the grace and discernment to identify Your voice, apart from others and then be obedient. Please forgive me for elevating men's opinions or words above Yours. I give thanks for Your presence, Your love and the power to walk where You will lead me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

In the next session, you will explore more specifically how God speaks to His children so you can be more sensitive to His voice.

Session 4:

How Does God Communicate with Us?

Let's Prepare

Additional study material for the Session 4 video can be found in the companion book:

- Chapter 4 –How Does God Communicate with Us?

In the last session, you studied the importance of a **foundation of understanding the Word of God**. You saw that God communicates in so many ways. He speaks through His Word and through prayer. He speaks to your spirit (in the Bible this is also called the “inner man”) by a still, small voice. He speaks when you praise and worship, through dreams and visions, through other people, circumstances, and nature. **My heart's desire to help you be more sensitive to the Holy Spirit working in your life.**

We would all like God to speak audibly or write His instructions to us on a wall or in the sky, but He desires the kind of intimate relationship and communication that can only come from time spend with Him. He has called us sons, not slaves (Galatians 4:4-7), and sons abide with Him forever, in intimate fellowship. **Good relationships have good communication.** Whether you believe it or not, God is always speaking through various means. The trouble is we are not always listening!

In this session, let's explore more specifically how God speaks to His children.

Video Reflections

Watch the video and jot down notes on the opposite blank page. Then, reflect on the following:

- With whom do you communicate most day-to-day? What are the various ways you speak to them? Has the way you communicate changed over time? How do you prefer to communicate?

God Speaks Through His Word

It's very important for you to understand His vocabulary. God's Word speaks as clearly today as when it was written, and it is the best and safest way to hear God.

- What other ways do people seek to hear from God or the spirit world that are not directly taken from God's Word? Why are these ways not considered “safe?”

Notes

¹⁵ *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*
2 Timothy 2:15

To be a disciple (follower) of Christ, **you must understand the importance of the Word of God.** Through Scripture, God reveals Himself to you and literally speaks to you from His written Word. Do you want to hear it? He's already said it! Just get into the Word.

¹⁶ *All **Scripture is given by inspiration of God**, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,* ¹⁷ *that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*
2 Timothy 3:16-17 (emphasis added)

¹³ *However, when He, the **Spirit of truth**, has come, He **will guide you into all truth**; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*
John 16:13 (emphasis added)

You can see how the Word of God and the Spirit of God work together.

⁹ *But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*
¹⁰ *But **God has revealed them to us through His Spirit**. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. ¹¹ For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. ¹³ These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴ But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*
1 Corinthians 2:9-14 (emphasis added)

You must know the Word of God and also embrace the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who reveals to your spirit the things that have been freely given to you by God. This is more than just information for your mind. According to Vine's Dictionary, it is the uncovering, unveiling, or literally illuminating of something to you. God's Word is truth and the Holy Spirit makes it alive and real to you. Vine's Dictionary defines this as, "the communication of the knowledge of God to the soul."

¹⁷... *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.*
Ephesians 1:17

¹² *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*
Hebrews 4:12

The Word of God is living. It is alive and it speaks to you. The Word is alive because **Jesus is the Word** (John 1:1, Revelation 19:13). Jesus says in John 6:63, *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."*

Objective Truth and Subjective Truth

Jesus said in John 4:24, *"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."* **Objective truth is the Word of God. Subjective truth is the spiritual truth that comes from the Holy Spirit.**

Objective truth is absolute truth. It is living and active. Jeremiah 1:12 says, *"Then the Lord said to me, I am alert and active, watching over my Word to perform it."* Jesus says in Matthew 24:35, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."*

Objective truth of God's Word can be studied and learned by the mind. You also need God to speak to you subjectively, or spiritually, so you can know the truth in your mind and experience it in your heart.

For instance, I can learn that God loves me. But, since love is basically an inner-heart experience, I cannot fully experience God's love until He touches my heart with His love, heals my hurts, and breaks my hardness. When He fills me to overflowing and brings to tears of joy to my eyes, then through an intuitive, spiritual experience, I have fully experienced the love I read about.
(From "Communion With God" by Mark and Patti Virkler)

You need to have objective and subjective truth and understand both. You shouldn't focus primarily on one. In western culture, we have practically ignored the subjective aspects of God, focusing on head knowledge. This creates religion, not the depth of real relationship and fellowship God wants us to have. In 2 Timothy 3:5, Paul calls this *"having a form of godliness, but denying its power, and from such people turn away!"* Don't ignore your intellectual capabilities but use your mind in harmony with your spirit. You must discern spiritual things spiritually.

¹⁰ *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit.*
For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.
1 Corinthians 2:10

¹³ *However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*
John 16:13 (emphasis added)

Let's examine the Greek translations to better understand this.

- **LOGOS** – Refers to the whole of God's Word, the written Word, the Scripture. Logos is the Greek word used in John 1, where Jesus called "the Word." **Logos is objective.** It is information that can be studied with our minds.
- **RHEMA** – Refers to the spoken Word, or the revealed Word of God, when the Word is revealed by the Spirit for a specific time, even, circumstance or season. **Rhema is subjective.** It is illuminated or revealed by the Holy Spirit to our spirits.

Personal Experience

Terry shared a personal story of getting assurances from God during a stressful time in his life. The Holy Spirit brought the Word (logos) to mind – the perfect scripture at the perfect time. It brought him great assurance, and he meditated on it for the next few days.

- Have you experienced this?

- How do I know where to look in the Bible for answers to specific situations?

Spend time in His Word. Learn his vocabulary. Hold scripture in your mind and heart for when the need arises. Your goal is to know God both objectively and subjectively, to know both logos and rhema and to have real fellowship and intimacy with Him. **God will speak through His Word to cause it to come alive in your life.**

The Tabernacle of Moses

In Exodus chapters 25-39, God tells Moses to build Him a tabernacle which symbolizes logos (objective) and rhema (subjective) very well. God wanted a place to dwell with His people. Since the Garden of Eden, that has always been God's heart. God is always trying to communicate with us, to pursue us.

Outer Court	Inner Court	Holy of Holies
Altar, Laver of Washing	Bread, Oil Lamps	Ark of the Covenant
Natural Light	Illumination by the Spirit	Light from God's Glory
Logo / Objective	Rhema / Subjective	Intimate Fellowship with God

Hebrews 8:5 speaks of this earthly tabernacle as a “*copy and shadow of the heavenly things*.” It is a picture of heaven. Jesus is our High Priest in heaven.

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:14-16

The one way into the Outer Court is Jesus – through his sacrificial death on the Cross and through baptism. Natural light shines as you intellectually study the Word. The Holy Spirit illuminates the Word in your heart, bringing you into the Inner Court. Matthew 27:51 says the veil separating the Inner Court from the Holy of Holies was literally “*torn in two from top to bottom*” at the moment of Jesus’ death. This ended the separation between God and mankind and made a way for the Holy of Holies to be opened to all people, both Jew and Gentile. **The way into the presence of God is through Jesus, through His Word.**

God has already made a way for you to enter into the presence of God. The work is now on your end.

Logos Word – Objective Truth – Word of God

Rhema Word – Subjective Truth – Spirit of God

Vine’s Expository Dictionary of the New Testament explains logos and rhema this way: “The significance of rhema (as distinct from logos) is exemplified in the command to take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word (rhema) of God (Ephesians 6:17). Here, the reference is not to the whole Bible as such, but to the individual Scripture which the Spirit brings to our remembrance for use in time of need, a prerequisite being the **regular storing of the mind with Scripture**.

Rhema word is a spontaneous thought, idea, word, or even a feeling or vision. As you read the Word (logos), the Holy Spirit reveals the truth of the logos Word to your spirit with a deeper understanding. When this happens, the rhema word is revealed by the Holy Spirit to your spirit first, then your mind. When you have rhema understanding of a logos Word, you remember that passage and its revealed truth long after you can remember the Scripture (logos) that you have simply studied intellectually.

Personal Experience

Terry experienced a profound understanding of scripture (specifically 1 Peter 5:8 and Revelation 5:5-6). The first verse says Satan “*walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour [you]*.” In the second verse, Jesus is described as both the “*Lion of Judah*” and a “*Lamb as though it had been slain*.” He felt like the Lord said to him, “*I’m a lamb to you, but a lion to your enemy*.”

Notes

Another instance was when Terry was reading Matthew 16:13-19. Jesus asked His disciples, *"Who do men say I am?"* They said some thought he was John the Baptist or one of the prophets. He asked again, *"But who do you say I am?"* Simon Peter answered, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* Jesus blessed him and told him, *"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven ..."* Terry then had a vision of being six years old and playing with a very old skeleton key at his grandmother's home. He asked God what he meant and continued to pray about the key. A year later, he saw a podium on Christian television with an ornate cross that reminded him of the old skeleton key. He felt like the Lord said to him, "The cross is the key." That was the beginning of a lifetime of study and the development of this teaching series.

- Has this ever happened to you?

Closing Thoughts

The Word is the foundation. The Holy Spirit brings the Word to life. God speaks to you in so many ways. Are you tuned in to hear him?

A Prayer for You

Heavenly Father, thank you for still speaking today through Your Word and giving me all I need to live in sweet communion with You. Lord, help me make choices to spend time in Your Word, seeking Your face all throughout my day, looking for You in every interaction and every moment. Help me to draw aside and be still. Help me to live a life of worship and thankfulness for Your goodness and mercy. Help me to see You in the little things. The Holy Spirit, cause the Word of God to come alive in my life! I long to have fellowship with You. Thank You for Your great love! In Jesus name. Amen.

In the next session, you will dig deeper into each of the various ways God speaks to you through the Holy Spirit.

Session 5:

Practical Keys to Hearing God

Let's Prepare

Additional study material for the Session 5 video can be found in the companion book:

- Chapter 5 – Practical Keys to Hearing God

You've explored the Word for the various ways God speaks to His people. As you continue the journey of becoming a student of the Word, you'll see it's the best and safest way to hear God.

In this session, you'll begin to focus on the keys to hearing God. Throughout this session, Terry shares his personal experiences of how God has spoken to him throughout his faith journey.

Video Reflections

Watch the video and jot down notes on the opposite blank page. Then, reflect on the following:

- The video speaks of "pressing in" to hear God. What happens when something is pressed? What happens to the thing that is pressed? What, if anything, is released? Consider the examples of a wine-press, putting pressure on a bleeding wound, pressing on a button on a device.

#1 – God's Voice is Usually a Still, Small Voice That Comes from Within You

In session 2, you read 1 Kings 19:11-12 that God's voice is usually a still, small voice versus a great and strong wind or an earthquake. God often begins to speak in the form of a thought. God loves you and is calling you into relationship with Him. He wants you to press in.

His voice does not condemn or put you under pressure, and it is not unsettling. It is a soft and loving voice from within. It may seem that God speaks from the outside, but it is usually a still, small inner voice. The thoughts He brings are not analytical or intellectual thoughts that come from your own mind. Your thoughts determine your attitudes and actions, so you must be careful to guard your mind. In 2 Corinthians 10:5, you are told to actively *"bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."* *You are responsible for your "thought life."*

God may be speaking when a thought "just comes" to you. These thoughts are spontaneous. You just know. Suddenly, you are aware of something you should do or say. **There are many times when God is trying to talk to you, but you are too busy to hear.**

- As you go about your day, do you find it hard to stop the thought traffic if only for a few minutes. How often do you think you are missing hearing a word from the Holy Spirit?

Notes

- Remember, every thought that passes through your mind is not necessarily from God. The devil gives you thoughts also. Do you believe this? How would you describe a thought from the enemy?

Have you ever been driving down the road and just “known” you should not go a certain way? That has happened to me several times, and every time I did not follow that impression or thought, I soon found out I had made a mistake!

- Do you believe God speaks to you about the little things in life?

- Have you heard of people who have avoided disaster when they acted on what seemed to be a random thought?

As a parent, I’ve had the Holy Spirit speak to me about my children. I got the impression they were doing something wrong, or they needed me to intercede for them. At the time, I had no way of knowing if I was really hearing from God or my own mind, but I know now that many times it was God.

If you live with a lot of fear or anxiety, the enemy can twist things and plant all kinds of thoughts in your mind. In 2 Timothy 1:7, we know that *“God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”* This is why you must test every thought you receive and take your thoughts captive. **God is wanting you to learn how to be sensitive to His Spirit.**

#2 – God Speaks in the First Person

God is personal. He knows you. He created you, and He will call you by name. He wants intimacy with you and will speak to you to build that relationship. God knows my name too. He’ll say “Terry,” and then give me a flow of thoughts and impressions. In my experience, He doesn’t speak to me in long paragraphs, but in short, precise words, impressions, or pictures.

A real relationship has communication that goes beyond just information. God wants to engage you in communion, kinship, and fellowship. Usually, when I hear my name, what follows is a very personal word just for me. I have heard him say, “Terry, I love you and am pleased with you.” I believe He wants to speak that same thing to all who are willing to receive it.

- How effective is praise and worship in getting you to focus on God versus your circumstance?

- How can you engage in praise and worship throughout the day when you are not in a corporate setting?

God wants the subjective truth, the rhema spoken word to be revealed and come alive in you! Hearing God speak to you personally will give you a greater revelation of His love, His power, and His majesty. It will change your perspective and refocus your gaze on Him versus your circumstances.

#3 – Many Times, God Speaks Through Scripture

God can quicken actual words of a particular scripture to you. The better you know God's Word, which is His vocabulary, the more easily you can hear His voice. The Holy Spirit reveals the Word to you personally. He might prompt you to do something you need to do or to confirm something you believe He has spoken before.

Sometimes when I read a passage, I suddenly hear the voice of the Lord saying I need to do exactly as the scripture instructs. Perhaps I need to forgive someone or apologize to someone for saying something that was not in the right spirit. These promptings are not to condemn you. They are spoken by the loving, firm voice of the Lord to bring correction.

As you grow as a student of the Word, the Lord may prompt you to look at specific book, chapter or verse. Scripture references can be triggered at any time. When God gives you such a reference, you can usually remember it much longer than you can remember other verses you've studied.

Terry shares an example of continuously being woken in the middle of the night at the exact same time. He used the numbers on his digital clock to search scripture for a word from God. He eventually found the scripture to be very personal, inspirational and something offering specific direction he needed.

- Has God revealed scripture to you in a similar way?

God is not limited. He is trying to help us grow in learning to hear him.

Usually, the question from God is very simple and is accompanied by understanding that is far beyond your natural knowledge. Such seemingly easy questions can often reveal much about our hearts and much about God's heart. After I received the Holy Spirit and knew my life had changed, I wanted to know more. As I searched for the scripture, I read:

¹ And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples ² he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." ³ And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." ⁴ Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." ⁵ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. ⁷ Now the men were about twelve in all.
Acts 19:1-7 (emphasis added)

When I read this, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and asked me the same question. I immediately knew the answer in my inner man, but my mind was not answering the same way. With my mind, I answered, "Yes, I received the Holy Spirit when I believed." I knew you cannot get saved and born again without receiving the Holy Spirit. I knew intellectually the Holy Spirit lived within me. I also knew there was more to the question. God was asking me, "Have you received *Me* as the Holy Spirit?" I knew in my heart I had not. I knew in my mind the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. I believed in the Holy Spirit, but I had never received God as the Holy Spirit. I was raised in a good church that taught about Jesus and even the fatherhood of God, but there was not teaching on the Holy Spirit beyond that He exists. That day, my life changed forever as I received God as the Holy Spirit. I asked Him to live in me, guide me, direct me and fill me.

In another instance, I boldly told God I wanted to heal people like Jesus did during His earthly ministry. Immediately, God said, "Do you?" He then gave me a profound revelation of my faith journey thus far. Jesus Himself only did what He saw the Father do and only shared what He heard the Father say (John 5:19). I realized I was not nearly mature enough to handle kind of power and authority.

#5 – God Speaks Through Visions and Dreams

Notes

¹⁷ 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your young men shall see visions; your old men shall dream dreams.

Acts 2:17

God uses vision and dreams to speak to us. We'll explore this further in session 7.

#6 – God's Voice Carries Faith and Assurance of His Strength

This is supernatural. God spoke to Jesus in John 12:28-30 and some people mistook His voice for thunder. God voice is powerful and mighty, but it is not necessarily loud. In fact, it is usually a still, small voice, but it carries the faith and assurance of His ability and strength to act.

When I hear from the Lord, I have confidence in His ability to enable me to carry out what I have heard because of the assurance that comes with His voice and the faith it brings.

#7 – Peace Accompanies God's Voice

³³ These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

John 16:33

²⁷ Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

John 14:27

Sometimes what you hear may be unsettling, but it is followed by peace. Just as faith and assurance come with hearing God's voice, hearing a word from God also brings peace. If He speaks to me to do something and I find that instruction a little unsettling at first, when I act in obedience, if it really is the Lord, His peace floods my inner man. Jesus paid on the Cross for you to have peace and He freely gives it to you when you hear and obey God's voice. Remember, the devil cannot duplicate peace. Only Jesus brings peace.

Terry shares the feelings his wife Susan experienced when they first stepped out to begin the church. She had no experience and a young family but was willing to step out in faith. As she drove to the grocery store thinking about it, she felt God say, "I'll do it through you." She hadn't asked God a question, but God provided the answer. Comfort and peace followed and has sustained her since then.

- Have you experienced God's peace when you felt like He was asking you to step out of your comfort zone and obey Him?

#8 – Sometimes All You Get is a “Yes” or “No.” Nothing more.

Once you test the word you received, and believe it is God, you must obey. We tend to want God to agree with our plan or explain His response better. Sometimes, **we just want to know how things will turn out, and God just wants us to obey.**

I have found that God is interested in everything I do and everything I am involved in. Once, I asked Him for a specific word about a business deal I was involved in, and I received a “No” from Him. I kept praying to get additional information, but I got nothing more. I really believed God's answer was “No,” but I wanted it to be “Yes.” I knew I could obey God or choose to go ahead with my own plans and pursue the deal anyway. I chose, by the grace of God, to obey and later found out that, of course, God was right. Obeying His “No” saved me a lot of trouble and a lot of money!

Similar instances have occurred since then – ventures I meticulously planned and prepared for knowing that, in the natural, everything seemed perfect. Then God said “No.” I tried to get more information from God but heard nothing. Even when God says “Yes” I still try to get more information, but it seems God just wants me to obey His simple response.

- How hard is it for you to scrap what seems like a perfect plan and look for other options? Have you experienced this in your work life or in your personal life?

I remember a time when I was asking God for wisdom and prayed, “Lord, will you give me wisdom regarding this particular situation?” He spoke to me and said I was not asking for wisdom, but just really wanted to know how things were going to work out. God then reminded me of Proverbs 9:10 which says, *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”* I received revelation about the fear of the Lord and it was so simple. To have the fear of the Lord was to simply go to Him with awe and reverence, and ask about everything, specifically asking for His will and His desire, not my own. He said to me clearly and distinctly, “That is wisdom.”

*²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.
John 10:27*

God loves you. He wants you to know Him. God leads gently, though at times he can be very firm. He always gives you the power and choice to obey. When you do so, you experience joy and liberty from what He asks of you.

You cannot drive sheep. When the predator comes, it tries to divide and plunder and create chaos. Your enemy, the devil, is always looking for ways to keep your eyes off the Good Shepherd, to keep you from following close behind Him, to take you away from His protective covering.

Closing Thoughts

The multi-faceted ways of God are undoubtedly endless and far beyond our human comprehension. John 36:26 says, “*How great is God – beyond our understanding!*” He is not known clearly, fully and perfectly by anyone. Yet this is the God who chose to intimately spend time in pursuit of mankind, His beloved. He longs to have communion with you, to speak to you, encourage and strengthen you and seal your heart with His love. Through the fullness of the Trinity operating in your life daily, you can know and experience God’s presence.

A Prayer for You

If you desire to hear the Lord speak to you, take a few moments to quiet your mind and soul and wait in prayer for Him to speak. Practice being in the Lord’s presence as often as you can.

Dear God, thank you for your amazing love for Your children. I come asking to hear Your voice. Lord, give me spiritual ears that I might hear Your voice in whatever way you want to communicate to me. I want you to call out my name. I want to sense Your presence. I will quiet my mind and soul and wait . . .

In the next session, you’ll explore six things you can do starting immediately to improve your ability to hear God.

Session 6:

Application for Daily Life

Let's Prepare

Additional study material for the Session 6 video can be found in the companion book:

- Chapter 6 – Application for Everyday Life

In the last session, you saw several examples of how God has spoken to Terry throughout His faith journey. Be open to the many ways God speaks and know that your experience will be unique and personal.

So, where do you begin? Are you ready to develop this intimate relationship with the Lord, and a sensitivity to His voice and leading. God desires that as well. In this session, you'll learn six practical steps you can take starting today to experience a greater sense of God's presence, joy and peace.

Video Reflections

Watch the video and jot down notes on the opposite blank page. Then, reflect on the following:

- What would you say is the most powerful book you have ever read (besides the Bible)? Perhaps it was a self-help book, a work of fiction, poetry or a biography that really spoke to you. How did this change your life for the better??

Remember the words of John 8:31-32: *"Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'"* If the truth makes you free, a lie will keep you in bondage!

#1 – Set Aside Time to Spend with the Lord Each Day

³⁵ *Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.*
Mark 1:35

¹⁶ *So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.*
Luke 5:16

¹² *Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.*
Luke 6:12

Notes

These passages from session 3 emphasize making daily time with the Lord a priority in your life. If you do not intentionally schedule a regular time, you will not do it. Find a place that is quiet where you can spend uninterrupted time with Him.

*³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,
and all these things shall be added to you.
Matthew 6:33*

*¹⁹ The best of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring
into the house of the Lord your God.
Exodus 23:19*

Firstfruits refers to dedicating the first and best of what you have to God. It's a way of showing gratitude and trust in His provision. I personally like spending time with the Lord first thing in the morning. As you go through seasons of life, you'll need to adjust that to continue making it part of your daily routine. If you want a relationship with someone, you need to spend some time with them.

- What changes to your daily routine can you make starting tomorrow to spend quiet time with the Lord? What is working for you now?

#2 – Get “In The Spirit”

Do whatever you need to do to get into the Spirit. You might start with some worship or by reading the Word. I suggest you don't do the same thing the same way every day. Ask the Lord what He would prefer you to do. He may have you sit quietly. He may have you pray. Praying in tongues helps align you with the Holy Spirit. It is not so much what you do, but that you do it. Find what works best for you.

- What changes to your daily quiet time can you make starting tomorrow to get into the Spirit? What is working for you now?

#3 – Learn to Quiet Your Soul

Have a notepad and pen available during your quiet time. As you think of items for your to-do list, write them down. Then, go back to trying to hear God. If you are going through a very trying time, or had some kind of conflict with someone, you must deal with it as best you can. It's very hard to hear from God when you're under pressure.

- What changes to your daily quiet time can you make starting tomorrow to eliminate distractions? What is working for you now?

Also, when you are trying to hear God, don't start asking for things. He knows all things and already knows what you need. God want you to seek Him, not just to seek what He can give you.

#4 - Keep Your Heart Clean

You must examine your heart and be sure you have fully forgiven everyone in your life. If you struggle to forgive, then strive to extend mercy to them as Jesus did for you when He nailed your sins to the Cross. Do it for your own peace of mind. Unresolved conflicts will hinder you from hearing God.

- Read the passages below and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal anyone whom you need to forgive. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you release them. Include this in your daily prayer until you find your peace.

¹⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.

Matthew 5:14

⁸ He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

1 John 4:8

¹³ And you, being dead in your trespasses, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴ having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the Cross.

Colossians 2:13-14

²⁰ If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

1 John 4:20

#5 - Keep a Journal and Write Down What You Hear

Write down what you believe the Lord is saying to you. Check what you are hearing against scripture and against the principles in this manual. Also, check with your spiritual authority for confirmation that what you are hearing is from God. Matthew 18:16 says, "by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." Remember, the enemy wants you to be deceived. These are good ways to ensure you are hearing the truth of God's Word.

Notes

Also, by keeping a record of what you believe you are hearing, you can check to see how you are growing in hearing God. Review it from time to time to see if what you are hearing actually comes to pass. You will probably be surprised at how well you really are hearing from God.

- What changes to your daily quiet time can you make starting tomorrow to capture and remember what you believe you are hearing from God? What is working for you now?

A time of quality time of mostly listening and not talking. Yes, you are to pray and intercede for loved ones and situations going on in your life. I'm talking about taking time to hear God speak to you through the Holy Spirit.

#6 – Test What You Receive

Paul instructs you in 2 Corinthians 10:5 to *“cast down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”* Take the time to stop the thought traffic and ask, “Where’d that come from? Scripture? Did that feel like the Spirit of God?” Let’s dig deeper and explore three ways to test what you are hearing from God.

1 – TEST ITS ORIGIN

¹ Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; Because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

1 John 4:1

You are responsible for your thought life and for discerning what is right and wrong. To test its origin in the Word, you must be a student of the Word.

You must also depend on the working of the Holy Spirit in your inner man. John 16:13 says, *“... when the **Spirit of truth**, has come, **He will guide you into all truth**; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”* Here’s a quick test to see if a thought is from God.

Self	Satan	God
Born in the mind	Not focused or focused on the bad, comes with uneasiness	Spontaneous, accompanied by peace

Remember the words of 2 Timothy 1:7, *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”*

2 – TEST ITS CONTENT

Notes

⁵ *They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world,
and the world hears them.*

1 John 4:5

The thoughts you have coming from the natural world may be from something you've seen or learned through your own intellect. They may also be of the enemy. What you hear from God can be tested in His Word or by others. Ask your spiritual brothers and sisters. You are on a spiritual journey as the Body of Christ so you can accomplish God's will together. Ask for counsel.

Self	Satan	God
Learned or acquired by natural knowledge	Negative destructive, fearful; contrary to God's nature, His character or His Word; Afraid to be tested by others	Positive, edifying (enlightening, teaching). comforting, not afraid to be tested by others

3 – TEST ITS FRUIT

¹⁷ *Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.*

¹⁸ *A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.*

¹⁹ *Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*

²⁰ *Therefore by their fruits you will know them.*

Matthew 7:17-20

Self	Satan	God
No way to test fruit	Brings fear, hurry, bondage, worry, anxiety, confusion, pride: appeals to the ego	Brings faith, power, love, hope, enlightenment, revelation

God's wants to reproduce His character in you. The fruit of the Lord's voice is the fruit of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. As you can visually see a piece of fruit, others should look at you and see the fruit of the Spirit lived out.

⁹ *So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

Revelation 12:9

When you hear something, take a moment to ask "Where did it come from?"

Notes

The chart below shows the difference between the fruit of the enemy and that of God.

Satan	God
Accuses any testing of fruit	Shows mercy
Condemns	Convicts of sin
Causes division	Builds relationships
Sees problems and has no solutions	Sees good and has solutions
Degrading thoughts	Encourages
Revenge and hate	Forgiveness and love
Judgmental	Redemptive
CONDEMNATION AND CONFUSION	PEACE AND ORDER

The Lord never runs you down or tells you how bad you are. God hates sin, but He loves you.

On the other hand, Satan hates you and is always trying to make you feel faulty or have no value. The devil is loud and condemns you. He orders, threatens, intimidates, and challenges and perverts Scripture. In Genesis 3, when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, they became ashamed and self-absorbed, fearful and blamed one another. That is the fruit of the Fall and it's also the nature of the enemy. We must remember the words of 1 John 4:18: *"Perfect love casts out fear."* That perfect love comes from God.

Romans 14:17 highlights the fruit of God: *"For the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."* It's more than ritual and rules. It's about aligning your thoughts and actions with God's will and being in right relationship with Him and others. Experiencing peace through faith in Christ is something you extend to all people. You also experience joy in all situations that comes from the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Remember that Jesus was crucified between two thieves. One is the thief of yesterday, reminding you of everything you ever did wrong. The other is the thief of tomorrow, filling your mind with worry. John 10:10 says the enemy also wants to *"steal, kill, and destroy"* any chance you may have to enjoy God's presence today. So, what should you do? Hebrews 4:7 says, *"Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts."*

God wants you to understand that the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. You now have a better understanding of how the enemy works versus how God works.

- Do you believe there is a spiritual battle for your mind? How prepared are you to fight the lies of the enemy?

The Difference Between Conviction and Condemnation

Notes

DEVIL'S CONDEMNATION	HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTION
Is indefinite and vague; focused on many things	Definite and specific, focused on one thing
Make you feel terrible, that you are a horrible person	Hates the sin, but doesn't crush your spirit
Is not clear, leaves you confused	Easily recognized, you really "know"
Offers no solution	Offers a definite solution (repentance)
Comes with the devil's nature – hopelessness	Promises God's power to correct, gives hope
Always challenges and accuses you	Never, never challenges you as a person or challenges who He says you are in His Word
Does not inspire faith; brings fear, worry, anxiety and hopelessness	Bolsters faith, releases power and love, brings peace and joy
¹ <i>There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.</i> Romans 8:1 ¹⁰ <i>Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down."</i> Revelation 12:10	⁸ <i>And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ of sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰ of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; ¹¹ of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. ¹² "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."</i> John 16:8-13

Notes

Closing Thoughts

You must learn how to draw near to Him and be quiet with Him. The moment you do, the enemy will do everything possible to disrupt that. Allow the Spirit of God to guide and direct you as you develop your relationship with God.

A Prayer for You

Review the practical suggestions in this section and establish or change your quiet time routine. From the heart and in your own words, ask the Holy Spirit to stop the noise and keep the darts from the enemy at bay, so you can practice His presence and hear His voice ... then quiet your mind and soul and listen for that still, small voice ...

In the next session, you'll further explore how God speaks through dreams and visions. Terry will share his personal experiences hearing God in this way.

Session 7:

Visions and Dreams

Let's Prepare

Additional study material for the Session 7 video can be found in the companion book:

- Chapter 7 – Visions and Dreams

In the last session, you were introduced to various ways to test what you are hearing, to discern whether it is from your own mind, the enemy, or God. In this session, you'll focus on hearing God through visions and dreams.

Video Reflections

Watch the video and jot down notes on the opposite blank page. Then, reflect on the following:

- Do you dream often? Are they vivid? Do you remember your dreams long after you've woken up?

The Bible defines a dream in Job 33:15: *"In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, while slumbering on their beds ..."* A dream is something that occurs when a person is asleep, while a vision is something that occurs when a person is awake. The Bible records countless times when God spoke through visions and dreams. From Genesis to Revelation, visions and dreams played an important part in the lives of God's people.

¹⁷ 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. ¹⁸ And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.'
Acts 2:17-18

This passage speaks of things that will happen *"in the last days."* Peter is quoting the Old Testament prophet Joel 2:28-31 on the day of Pentecost, indicating that the believers of the time were living in the last days. If they were in the last days, then certainly we are in the last days now! Jesus has not yet returned to gather His bride (believers), as stated in Joel 2:16. If we are in the last days now, we can certainly expect these things to happen to us all well.

Notes

In this season, **God is pouring out His Spirit on all flesh. All who receive and embrace the Holy Spirit will be able to prophesy. All will have visions and dreams.** Romans 2:10-11 says, *"But glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God."* God's Spirit is *for everyone – Jews and Gentiles alike.*

When you are born again and the Holy Spirit is poured out upon you, you will be much more sensitive to the Spirit of God. **This spiritual activity should be normal for all believers today.**

Visions

There are many different types of vision. A vision in general is defined in Strong's Concordance (#3706) as: "the act of gazing (external) an aspect of something (internal), an inspired appearance. Let's explore a New Testament example of when God spoke through visions.

¹ *There was a certain man in Caesarea called **Cornelius**, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment,* ² *a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people and prayed to God always.* ³ *About the ninth hour of the day **he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God** coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!"* ⁴ *And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?" So he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.*

Acts 10:1-4 (emphasis added)

⁵ *Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter.* ⁶ *He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do."* ⁷ *And when the **angel who spoke to him** had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually.* ⁸ *So when he had explained all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa.*

Acts 10:5-8 (emphasis added)

A key to hearing is obedience. Cornelius was a Gentile. He knew of God but may not have been sure of who He was. How did he know it was an angel of God? Cornelius experienced God's grace upon his life, allowing him to recognize the angel. Cornelius immediately responded to God's word with obedience.

⁹ *The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, **Peter** went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour.* ¹⁰ *Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, **he fell into a trance*** ¹¹ *and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth.* ¹² *In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air.* ¹³ *And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."* ¹⁴ *But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."*

¹⁵ *And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common."*

¹⁶ *This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.*

¹⁷ *Now while Peter **wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant**, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate.*

Acts 10:9-17 (emphasis added)

A vision is not like what you see with your physical eyes, but something that flashes before you. Most visions are like pictures that the Holy Spirit uses to reveal things to you. Some visions are long and detailed, but most are simply pictures that appear in your spirit. Visions are not generated by the flesh or by human effort, but by the Spirit of God. You cannot create or imagine a true vision from the Lord, and you should not try. Visions can come at any time, day or night, no matter what you are doing.

Visions and dreams are very symbolic. It is interesting that these men received visions but did not receive the fullness of what they had seen until God gathered them together. Even though God could have told them clearly what they were seeing, He did not.

¹⁸ *And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there.* ¹⁹ ***While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him,*** "Behold, three men are seeking you." ²⁰ *Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."* ²¹ *Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, "Yes, I am he whom you seek. **For what reason have you come?**"* ²² *And they said, "Cornelius the centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you."*

Acts 10:18-22 (emphasis added)

In this account, it appears God shows us things and tells us just enough to cause us to keep seeking Him. In this case, the people needed others to understand and perceive clearly the visions they had seen. **God is not interested in just giving you information.** He wants you to press into Him.

When you have a vision, ask the Holy Spirit what He is trying to show you. If it could have a profound effect on your life or the direction of your life, then submit it to someone in spiritual authority for testing. **Always get counsel when receiving a word.** Scripture is very clear that you are to test all things.

Just as the Holy Spirit directed Cornelius and Peter, the Holy Spirit intervened as Paul was planning a mission trip. The Holy Spirit used a vision from a man from Macedonia.

Notes

⁶ Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. ⁷ After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. ⁸ So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. ⁹ And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰ Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Acts 16:6-10 (emphasis added)

A vision is something you see in your mind's eye. They can be very involved or detailed. Some people have visions that are like watching a movie, while others simply see a picture of something.

Personal Experience

One day, before we started the church I pastored, I was praying with the leadership team, and the Lord gave me a vision. While praying I saw, in my mind's eye, an old frontier fort. It looked like something from an old western movie. This vision had three different pictures. They gave me an understanding about the church and the different stages we would go through in the coming years.

When I receive a vision from the Lord, it seems to be imprinted in my mind and, as I continue to seek the Lord, He unfolds what He is saying to me. Sometimes, it's a long time before I understand it. I shared this in session 4 and it is relevant here. While studying Matthew 16:13-19 about Jesus giving us the keys of the Kingdom, I had a vision of a skeleton key. It looked like an old key I played with as a child at my grandmother's house. I had not thought of that key for many years until I saw it in my mind's eye while reading this passage.

I knew God was trying to show me something about His Kingdom. I continued to pray about it but got no insight. More than a year later, I was watching Christian television and saw someone preaching behind a clear podium with a cross etched into the front of it. The cross looked like the key I had seen. Immediately, I heard the Lord say, "The cross is the key." This set me on a course of study and revelation that continues to this day. **Visions are pictures that require you to press into God to find out what He is saying.**

Dreams

Acts 2:17-18 says God communicates to us through dreams as well as visions. Strong's Concordance define a dream (#1789) as: "something seen in sleep, a vision in a dream."

Notes

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Some people dream often; others rarely dream. I know people who have dreams that feel like they're watching a movie. They remember every detail including colors and what was said and done. It's also good to have someone who has some experience in interpreting dreams help you interpret it. **The key is to be faithful with whatever God gives you.**

Notes

Personal Experience

One night I had a dream where I saw the number “4” and then the letter “P.” Immediately, I knew each “P” represented something spiritual: passion, purity, power and prayer. The Lord said these were characteristics or qualities He wanted in His disciples. I immediately wrote this down. The next day, morning, I asked God about what He had shown me and shared it with those closest to me. They felt I received a true word from the Lord. The 4 “P’s” later became the primary values of the disciples we wanted to shepherd at Sojourn Church.

In another dream, I saw a foundation stone with writing on it. It looked like a random inkblot. I couldn’t make out what it said. I felt the Holy Spirit tell me that was all He was going to show me. I looked at it again and wrote down “Advanced Foundation.” I asked the Lord, “What are you saying?” He said that what I was teaching was foundational and would advance to go worldwide. I brought that word back to those in spiritual authority, the leadership of the church and with those I felt comfortable sharing. This was the beginning of the discipleship series you are studying and, yes, we are spreading God’s Word worldwide.

Closing Thoughts

Beware – the enemy will try to give you visions and dreams that represent what he wants to see happen. In fact, he can present facts that seem to be true and try to deceive you. Remember to test everything you get and share it with those around you, especially those in spiritual authority.

Never make a change in your life based on a vision or dream until you have had those around you, especially those in spiritual authority, pray with you about what you think the dream is saying. This is true with anything you think you are getting from the Lord.

A Prayer for You

As you prayerfully spend time with Him, learning to hear His voice and walk in obedience to His will, ask Him to give you visions and dreams and allow you to participate in the wonder and awe of the heavenly realm. Come hungry, expecting and longing to know Him more deeply. You will not be disappointed.

*⁵¹ And He said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”
John 1:51*

In the next session, Terry will use several Biblical accounts to explain the various gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Spend time this week reading these stories to capture the richness of what will be shared.

Session 8:

Hearing God for Others

Let's Prepare

Additional study material for the Session 8 video can be found in the companion book:

- Chapter 8 – Hearing God for Others

In the last session, you saw in Acts 2:17 that *“it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh.”* We are living in the last days, the time between when Jesus died on the Cross for our sins, was buried, raised and ascended to heaven until He returns. We're all able to prophesy today, to deliver a word from God to others.

God wants to speak to you personally and individually, primarily because He desires intimacy with you. As you carry His presence, bring hope and healing, speak life and purpose, and demonstrate His love to the world, you become the heart, hands and voice of the Lord.

At the end of this session, you will see that your ability to hear from God directly impacts others' understanding of who God is. He intends to share His truth with His people through YOU!

Video Reflections

Watch the video and jot down notes on the opposite blank page. Then, reflect on the following:

- When the storms of life hit, who do you turn to for advice? What is it about that person that makes you trust them? How do they make you feel?

God wants you to speak to others, and others to speak to you, in prophetic ways. He wants to use you as a vessel through which He can reveal Himself and His heart for people. Hearing God for others can be extremely beneficial and extremely dangerous. God designed His people to need each other; therefore, you should learn how to hear the Lord for others and understand the issues involved in doing so. **You need to be in relationship – connected properly to the Body of Christ.**

Prophecy

God wants you to speak to other people. Prophecy occurs when God speaks to someone through another person or a group of people.

*³¹ But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.
1 Corinthians 12:31*

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*³⁹ Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.
1 Corinthians 14:39*

God wants you to truly desire and pursue the spiritual gifts and be motivated by love. God is love and wants you to show His love to others. **If you don't have love, you have nothing.** First Corinthians 13:13 says, *"And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."*

*¹ Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.
1 Corinthians 14:1*

*³ But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.
1 Corinthians 14:3*

*³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.
1 Corinthians 14:31*

Unlike the Old Testament prophets who prophesied to rebuke and bring correction to Israel, today, prophecy can be a very effective and beneficial tool if used correctly. **New Testament prophecy is to encourage, exhort and comfort.** The Spirit of God wants to use you to be a blessing to others.

*²⁰ Do not despise prophecies. ²¹ Test all things; hold fast what is good.
1 Thessalonians 5:20-21*

Just like visions and dreams, all prophecies need to be tested. **You must be very careful when prophesying to someone.** I suggest not saying, "The Lord told me" or "Thus saith the Lord" before you give someone a word. I would simply say, "I believe the Lord has given me something for you" or simply give them the word without using the name of the Lord. It is better to offer the word in a way that allows the person to receive it as a gift rather than as a command.

Gifts/Manifestations of the Spirit of God

*¹ Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:
² You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. ³ Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, And no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. ⁴ There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.
⁵ There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶ And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. ⁷ But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all ..."
1 Corinthians 12:1-7 (emphasis added)*

The gifts of the Spirit work in you by the power and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They are not natural abilities, though your natural abilities may be used as you exercise the gifts. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are part of normal

Christian life, and they often work together. For instance, you may see the word of knowledge and the gift of healing operate simultaneously in a situation. You may also see the gift of faith and the working of miracles working together. The gifts of the Spirit are often divided into three categories.

Revelatory Gifts - Enable You to KNOW

- **Word of Wisdom** - divine insight that reveals the will of God for a specific situation.

- ◇ Scripture reference – John 8:2-11 – Woman Caught in Adultery – The passage tells of a woman in adultery who, by Jewish law, should be stoned. The Pharisees try to test Jesus by asking His opinion. Jesus spoke a word of wisdom saying, *“He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.”* All were convicted of their own sin and left. God told the woman, *“Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”*
- ◇ Have you ever spoken into a situation and thought, “Wow, how did I come up with that? That was really wise!”

- **Word of Knowledge** - revelation of facts or knowledge that is humanly impossible for you to know.

- ◇ Scripture reference - John 4:1-29 – Samaritan Woman at the Well – Jesus tells a Samaritan woman details of her life a stranger could not possibly have known. It is not done to embarrass her, but to reveal the long-awaited Messiah to her. She then goes into the city, saying, *“Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?”*
- ◇ Have you ever dropped an impactful truth bomb you could not possibly have known on your own into a conversation that really helped someone? Has anyone done this to you?

- **Discerning of Spirits** - the divine ability to recognize or identify the spirit or spirits working in a person, situation, or place (includes the activity of angels and demons).

- ◇ Scripture reference – Acts 16:16-18 – Paul recognizes and commands a demon to come out of a slave girl whose spirit of divination was bringing her master much profit by fortune-telling.
- ◇ All people discern right from wrong. This speaks of recognizing what is happening in the spirit world. Are you personally familiar with this phenomenon, as opposed to just seeing it in the movies?

- **Faith** - God-given ability to believe God in a supernatural way; faith that surpasses a person's "normal" measure of faith.
 - ◇ Scripture reference – Mark 2:3-5 – Jesus Heals a Paralytic – Four friends go to great lengths to bring their paralyzed friend to Jesus, believing He can heal him.
 - ◇ Scripture reference – Mark 5:25-33 – Woman with the Issue of Blood – A woman ill for twelve years was impoverished and ostracized due to her illness. She enters a crowd following Jesus in the hope that by simply touching His garment, she would be healed. In this encounter, Jesus says, *"Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be healed of your affliction."*
 - ◇ Have you allowed someone to pray for you and been healed or received some relief from the illness? At the time, did you truly believe you could be healed?

- **Healing** - God-given ability to impart physical or inner healing
 - ◇ Scripture reference – The New Testament is filled with accounts of Jesus and His disciples imparting healing. The authority He gave His disciples is for you today. Make yourself available, believe God and trust the Holy Spirit to release what He wills at a time when He wants to release them.
 - ◇ Have you prayed for someone to be healed? Do you truly believe God can answer your prayers and heal?

- **Working of Miracles** - Manifestation of God's power beyond the course of natural laws
 - ◇ Scripture reference – John 6:1-14 – Feeding the Five Thousand – Jesus prays over a boy's lunch of five loaves and two small fish and his disciples feed a crowd of followers with leftovers to spare!
 - ◇ The New Testament is filled with accounts of Jesus doing miracles. Is there a particular miracle of Jesus that stands out to you? How did that miracle encourage you?

- ◇ Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." Miracles have not passed away. He's still doing miracles today! Miracles don't have to be a spectacular event. God is in the everyday.

◇ Have you experienced a miracle in your life?

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◇ Have you been waiting for a sign or miracle so you can truly believe in Him? Do you believe God is wanting you to simply trust Him in the waiting?

Utterance Gifts - Enable You to **SPEAK**

- **Prophecy** - Speaking the mind of Christ to a person or group of people for the purpose of encouragement, exhortation, or comfort.

- ◇ Scripture reference – Prophecy was discussed earlier in this session in 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14.

◇ God wants you to love all people by giving words of encouragement and comfort. How can you incorporate this into your day-to-day life?

◇ God wants you to love all people by giving words of encouragement and comfort. How can you incorporate this into your day-to-day life?

- **Different Kinds of Tongues** - God-given ability to speak in an unknown tongue in a specific situation. There is a difference between tongues as a personal prayer language (a gift to you from the Holy Spirit) versus tongues that are to be interpreted by those in spiritual authority for edification by the Body of Christ.

- ◇ Scripture reference – Acts 2:1-13 – The Holy Spirit descends on believers and all are filled with the Spirit. They begin to speak foreign languages. Observers from many nations understand what they are saying about the wonderful works of God. *“So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘Whatever could this mean?’ Others mocking said, ‘They are full of new wine.’”*

◇ Put yourself in the story. What do you think your first response would be?

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- ◇ How familiar are you with speaking in tongues? When were you first introduced to this manifestation of the Holy Spirit?

- ◇ Think of the first time you heard someone speaking in tongues. Was this your reaction?

- **Interpretation of Tongues** - Ability to know and interpret a message given in tongues so others can benefit and be edified. Anytime a tongue is given aloud, it should be interpreted.

- ◇ You not only know what is being said, but you can interpret and understand what God is saying to His people. It carries the same weight as prophecy in that it benefits all.

The gifts of the Spirit are given to each for the benefit of all. You should expect the Holy Spirit to release these gifts through you for the benefit of those who need help. Any effective ministry must be done by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In ministering to others, be especially sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit can reveal the heart of a person – the deep inner problems and issues. We often cannot know these hidden areas. Only the Holy Spirit can unlock them, expose the darkness and then heal and restore. When He chooses to work through you, He uses these gifts to reveal things you could not see or that the person receiving ministry could not reveal or may not know. It's exciting and fulfilling to be used in this way and see the Lord bring freedom and wholeness to people.

Personal Experience

One morning during my regular quiet time, the Lord showed me a vision. It was at our favorite restaurant where we planned to dine that evening. It seemed someone had choked or experienced some sort of physical problem. I continued to pray and asked the Lord what was happening. It then seemed like the person was having a heart attack. I felt the Lord showed this to me so I would be ready to pray for that person. I prayed in the Spirit over the situation and felt prepared for what was to come.

We arrived at the restaurant, and I didn't see anything from my vision. We enjoyed our meal and, just before we left, a couple who were friends with my wife's sister were seated next to us. My wife told me discreetly that the man (her sister's friend) was very sick and had been given less than a few months to live. He had been to some of the best physicians and specialists in the nation and no one could diagnose what was wrong with him. All had concluded he would not live much longer.

He was the man from my vision! He wasn't dying of a heart attack, but he was dying. I shared my vision with my wife and told her, "I know I am supposed to pray for this man." She responded, "Right now, here in the restaurant?" I said, "Well, maybe not here, but I know the Lord wants me to pray for him."

We went home and my wife's sister call the man and asked him if we could pray for him. He and his wife were very gracious and extremely desperate. They were part of a church, but not one that prayed for physical healing. They set a time for us to stop by. We explained what led us there and that we believed God was going to heal him. He allowed us to lay hands on him and pray for healing.

We took authority over the sickness and asked God to release a gift of healing. As we prayed, I felt the Lord show me that he would not be healed instantly but over time. I shared that with him and thanked him for allowing us to pray. He lived for at least 8 more years. He has since passed away but did not die from whatever ailed him here. God is so good! This is an example of how **various gifts work together**.

Word of Caution

As much as God wants you to minister to others, and as much as the Body of Christ needs this ministry, be careful. In 1 Samuel chapter 8, the nation of Israel demanded a king – a man to hear God for them and then tell them what God said. There is only one mediator between God and man, and that is Jesus. No one stands between you and Jesus. He is your great High Priest. Do not go to other people ask them to hear God for you without going directly to God yourself. We do need each other, but every believer must develop their own personal intimacy with God. **God is wanting you to go to Him personally**; that is the priority.

If you hear God speak something that involves other people, then submit what you think you are hearing to those who love and care for you. For example, if a husband receives a word telling him to sell everything and go to a foreign nation to become a missionary, you should discuss this with your wife and those in spiritual authority over you.

You are not an island unto yourself and, because your actions usually involve other people or even organizations, you must learn to ask those in authority to pray with you regarding what you are hearing. If God is speaking a word to you, He doesn't mind you seeking Godly counsel.

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Closing Thoughts

Using the gifts of the Holy Spirit are meant to be a normal part of the Christian life. You need the power, the revelation of God and all His gifts to live this life and bring hope and healing to those around you. You have been given the authority by Jesus to do so.

For an in-depth study of the authority you have in Christ, please complete the series titled Understanding Authority which can be found on our website at AdvancedBiblicalFoundations.org.

A Prayer for You

Dear God, please fill me with your Holy Spirit now as I pray. Fill me with the gift of prophecy. Strengthen me in my walk of faith and let the words of my mouth be directed by the Holy Spirit for the encouragement and edification of my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, and even to those who do not yet know You, as a testimony of Your love for them. In Jesus' name. Amen.

In the next session, we will bring our study to a close with a word about obedience.

Session 9:

The Importance of Obedience

Let's Prepare

Additional study material for the Session 9 video can be found in the companion book:

- Chapter 9 – The Importance of Obedience

God speaks to His children. Your response is to obey. Why would God talk to you if you don't want to obey? You must yield completely to the Holy Spirit.

- Jesus is the Lord of all. Have you truly personally yielded to Him being the Lord of your life?

At the end of this session, you will understand the importance of obedience as it relates to hearing God.

Video Reflections

Watch the video and jot down notes on the opposite blank page. Then, reflect on the following:

- As you go about your day, what rules or people in authority do you and others automatically obey? What is the consequence of not obeying? How does it benefit you to obey?

Jesus As Your Model of Obedience Today

*⁷ ... who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, ⁸ **though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.** ⁹ And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him ...*

Hebrews 5:7-9 (emphasis added)

At any time, God the Father could have rescued His Son from the agonizing pain of the Cross. Obedience is important. Not obedience to the Law, but to what God is saying. Jesus' obedience to the Cross cleansed us of all our sins and restored our relationship with God the Father.

*⁷ Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "**Today**, if you will hear His voice, ⁸ Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, ⁹ Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. ¹⁰ Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.' ¹¹ So I swore in My*

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wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'"

¹² Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; ¹³ but exhort one another daily, while it is called **"Today,"** lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, ¹⁵ while it is said: **"Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."**
Hebrews 3:7-19 (emphasis added)

Psalm 46:1 says, **"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."**

- Do you believe is God speaks to His people TODAY? If so, how likely are you to act on it? What would prevent you from obeying?

The True Root of All Sin is Unbelief

¹ Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. ² For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; **but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.** ³ For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,'" although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. ⁴ For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works"; ⁵ and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest." ⁶ Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, **and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience,** ⁷ again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts." ⁸ For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. ⁹ There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. ¹⁰ For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.
Hebrews 4:1-10

Verses 2-6 recalls the punishment on the unbelieving Hebrews, who died in the wilderness after wandering for 40 years (see the Old Testament Book of Exodus). They did not enter the physical rest they may have had in Promised Land because they heard the word but did not have faith to believe it.

¹¹ Let us therefore **be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.** ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.
Hebrews 4:11-13 (emphasis added)

The apostle then cautions the New Testament Hebrews who professed faith in Jesus the Christ, not to make the same mistake. You must believe by faith what Jesus has done. Verse 9 introduces the spiritual rest that comes from believing what Jesus did for you on the Cross.

- Describe in your own words the difference between physical rest and spiritual rest. Describe an emotion associated with each one.

God is Not Pleased With Disobedience

You have two choices: hear and obey and enter God's rest OR allow your heart to be hardened and not please God.

James 1:22 says, *"But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only."* **This does not mean doing or performing to be accepted by God. It's about obeying what God says because you are in a loving relationship.** You were a sinner and are now saved by God's grace. **Your new nature is in tune with God.** Only those who do the will of the Father will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, as Jesus said below.

²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' ²⁴ "Therefore, whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, And the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. ²⁶ "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

Matthew 7:21-27

God does not want blind obedience. He wants a relationship with you. You decide how you want to build that relationship. Will you be like the wise man or the foolish man? Will you hear and obey OR hear and ignore? Are you in denial that the storms of life will come? Jesus learned obedience to the things He suffered during His time on earth. No, your storms will come.

Obedience Brings Blessings

⁴⁶ *While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. ⁴⁷ Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You."* ⁴⁸

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*But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?"⁴⁹ And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers!"⁵⁰ For **whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.***

Matthew 12:46-50 (emphasis added)

Jesus expands the definition of family beyond biological relatives to include those who share a commitment to hear and obey God's will. This spiritual connection and shared purpose binds believers together.

- Do you know someone whose family is fractured or dysfunctional? Do you know someone who feels isolated or alone? Describe how this passage can bless them.

¹⁴ *Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.*

Revelation 22:14

In the final chapter of the Bible, the apostle John says there are blessings for those who obey. In Genesis chapter 3, God punished Adam and Eve after they disobeyed Him, removing them from the Garden of Eden which contained the Tree of Life. This prevented them from living forever. Christ's Second Coming will restore eternal life in God's presence for believers.

You Have a Choice To Make

¹³ *Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?'* ¹⁴ *But the word is very near you in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.*

¹⁵ *"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil,"* ¹⁶ *in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.* ¹⁷ *But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them,* ¹⁸ *I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess.* ¹⁹ *I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that **I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life,*** that both you and your descendants may live; ²⁰ *that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."*
Deuteronomy 30:11-20 (emphasis added)

This Old Testament passage truly sums up this series. This passage describes it as a choice – choose life or death, good or evil, blessing or curse. **If you don't choose life, the default is death.** He wants you to choose life and “cling to him for He is your life.”

This is not a one-time choice. **Life is not a ticket to heaven. Life is an ongoing loving relationship with the living God.** It means choosing Him every minute of every day – communicating and hearing Him and responding with obedience.

Closing Thoughts

I believe with all my heart that having a relationship with Jesus Christ is the most important thing in anyone's life. Healthy relationships require communication and expect obedience in return. If you are going to be a child of God who truly has a relationship and not just religion, you must cry out to Him to speak to you and be willing to obey.

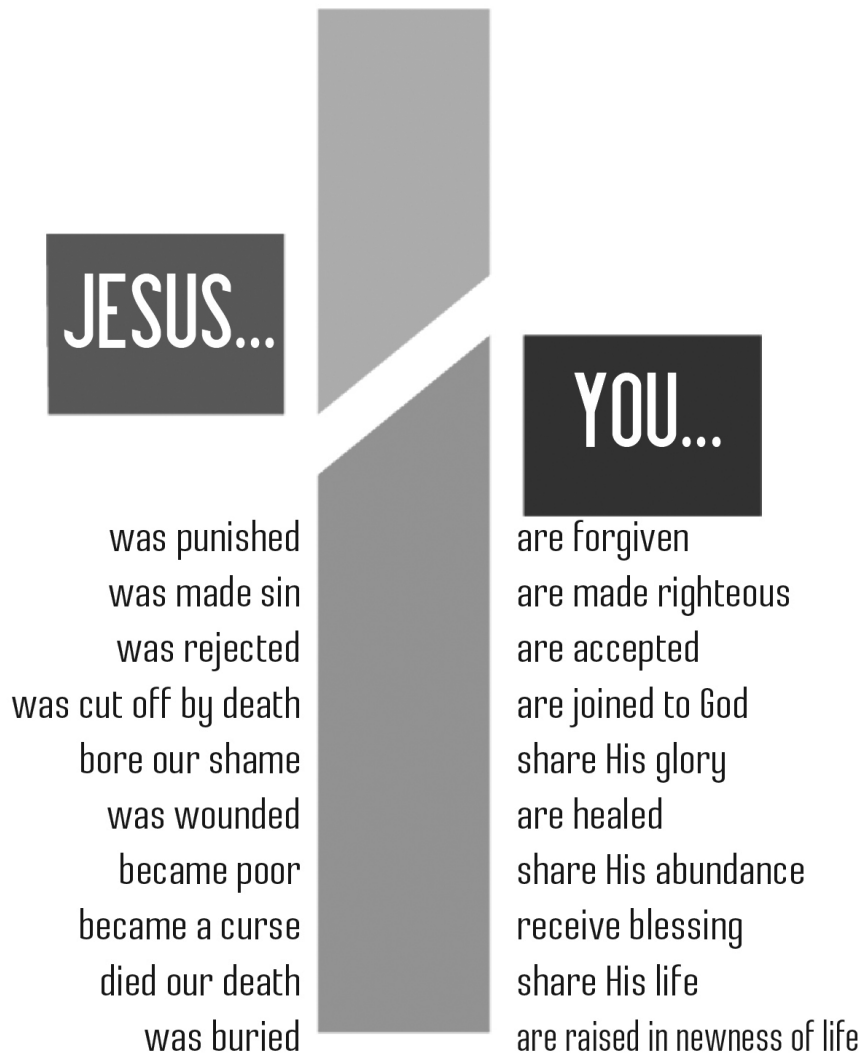
God does speak today in many ways. He wants you to hear His voice, understand what He is saying and doing in your life so you can walk in obedience to Him. God bless you as you hear and obey all He speaks to you!

A Prayer for You

Dear God, thank You for Your amazing love. Lord, fine tune my hearing through the Holy Spirit in whatever manifestation You see fit. I want all the gifts! I want to build my house on solid rock. I choose life every moment of every day. I want to cling to You, hear Your voice and use what I hear to be a blessing to those around me. Thank You in advance for the way You will use me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Appendix A

THE EXCHANGE OF THE CROSS



LIFE FROM DEATH

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THE CROSS

THE POWER OF GOD

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. 1Corinthians 1:18

The cross represents the greatest victory in all of world history. There, Jesus gave up His life for you and for me in an exchange that impacts every area of our lives. It is time for us to know the truth of the power of the cross so that we can experience everything Jesus died to provide for us.

THE CROSS PROMISES...

FORGIVENESS: Jesus was punished [by the Father] so that we could be forgiven. *See Isaiah 53:3-5; Colossians 1:14*

RIGHT STANDING WITH GOD: Jesus was made sin with our sinfulness so that we could be made the righteousness of God.
See Isaiah 53:10; 2Corinthians 5:21

COMPLETE ACCEPTANCE: Jesus was rejected so we could be accepted in the beloved, and we are no longer rejected.
See Isaiah 53:3-4; Ephesians 1:3-6

BEING JOINED TO GOD: Jesus was cut off by death so that we could be joined to God. *See Hebrews 2:9; Romans 5:8; Ephesians 2:4-6*

SHARING HIS GLORY: Jesus bore our shame so that we could be free from guilt and share in His glory.
See Isaiah 53:3; Matthew 27:26-31; Hebrews 2:10

HEALING: Jesus was wounded, taking our pain and sickness so that we could be healed. *See Isaiah 53:3-5; Matthew 8:16-17; 1Peter 2:24*

FINANCIAL ABUNDANCE: Jesus became poor so that we could share in His abundance. *See 2Corinthians 8:9; 2Corinthians 9:8*

BLESSING: Jesus was made a curse so that we could receive the blessing of Abraham, the promise of the Holy Spirit.
See Galatians 3:13-14

LIFE: Jesus died our death so that we could share in His life.
See John 10:11; John 17:21; John 11:25-26

A NEW CREATION: Jesus was buried, but raised from the grave so that we could be raised in newness of life.
See 2Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15

Appendix B

Hearing God – Leader Guide

Insights from Terry

If you are interested in using the study guide to lead a study group, additional materials are included in this appendix. Prompts are included throughout the study guide to fuel group discussion.

Planning Your Time Together

This guide can be used to minister to small groups in churches and homes as well as large groups. A 90-minute session could include:

- 20 minutes – Welcome and intro to the day's session
- 20 minutes – Video – using the study guide blank pages to jot down notes and insights
- 30 minutes – Group reflection and discussion; a series of book readings and prompts are offered in the study guide (choose as many as you see fit)
- 10-minutes – Prayer for the group (reflecting on the day's topic, personal requests)

Group Guidelines

If you are beginning your journey as a study leader, we recommend sharing guidelines to create an environment where all feel safe to share and ask questions as they absorb the teaching. There are many resources online for this type of information. Feel free to use this as a starting point.

- We will gather to grow in our relationship with Jesus.
- We will seek biblical truths.
- We will pray for one another at each meeting.

Whether you are an experienced teacher or just stepping out in faith in this area of gifting, consider teaming up with another believer to conduct this teaching. Each person lends a different insight into the scripture and each person's life experience may stimulate growth and discussion and offer encouragement to the group. These truths have been a blessing in my life.

You may also find it useful to share personal stories, if you feel comfortable doing so. This creates an atmosphere of authenticity, a feeling that the topics discussed pertain to real life. It also makes you more approachable to the members of the group who may be led to share their own stories or request more information and discussion outside the group setting.

Reading scripture aloud with "I" and "me" or inserting your own name brings the scripture to life in a more personal way. Inserting the names of friends and family members is a great way to pray scripture over others.

Thank you for sharing your gifts with the Body of Christ, His precious church, and to those who have yet to hear and understand the true message of the Cross.

A Prayer for You

⁴ For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another

⁶ Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; ⁷ or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching ⁸ he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Romans 12:4-8

Blessings to you,
Terry

Session 1 for Group Leaders:

Does God Still Speak?

Things to Consider

You may need additional time to welcome the group and help them get to know one another.

The first session should end with a feeling of being in a safe environment where all can share confidentially and with a sense of expectation at the upcoming journey to wholeness and healing.

Welcoming the Group

- ☐ Thanks for coming and introduce yourself.
- ☐ Location logistics – location of bathrooms, refreshments (if any), time commitment.
- ☐ Have each person introduce themselves and answer an Ice Breaker question. There are many resources online for these questions. Feel free to choose from the following:
 - ◇ What led you to join this study today? Who invited you to come?
 - ◇ When I <fill in the blank>, I feel completely at peace.
- ☐ Share the Group Guidelines in the previous section.
- ☐ Overview of this course and the series.
 - ◇ This study is the fourth in a series offered by Terry Moore intended to transform your life as you journey to discover your true identity. You'll be struck by God's amazing love as you begin to walk in a new freedom and the fullness of the destiny He has for you.

Video Group Reflections

Getting the conversation started:

These can be used each session to begin the video discussion:

- ☐ What part of the video impacted you the most?
- ☐ Is there something new you'd never heard about which stood out?

Session 2 for Group Leaders:

The Necessity of Receiving the Holy Spirit

Things to Consider

You may need additional time to welcome anyone who has just joined the group.

You may need additional time sharing and discussing the concepts of the Holy Spirit. Many people who have been in church all their lives find they know very little about the Holy Spirit's role in their lives.

You may need additional time sharing and discussing the concepts of being "born again", and the benefits of being "water baptized" as an adult (versus infant baptism which many people have already experienced).

Welcoming the Group

- ☐ Name tags may be helpful to help grow relationships and avoid the awkward, "What is your name again?"
- ☐ Welcome new group members. Have each person state their name and answer an Ice Breaker question. Feel free to choose from the following:
 - ◇ Where did you grow up as a child, as a young adult? In what city do you live now?
 - ◇ At what age were you first introduced to Jesus? By whom?
 - ◇ Share the Group Guidelines in the first section.
- ☐ Now, bring it back to the main group and ask:
 - ◇ Reflecting on last session's teaching, is there anything you'd like to share?

Session 3 for Group Leaders:

Foundational Principles of Hearing God

Things to Consider

A roadblock to hearing God may involve needing to forgive an earthly father or father figure. For some people, this may be a very emotional topic.

For anyone needing additional time to work out the information provided today, we highly recommend the Restoring Foundations Ministry for individualized healing and restoration. Please refer your students to their website for more information: RestoringTheFoundations.org.

Welcoming the Group

Begin the discussion with a personal reflection on what was discussed in the last session. Feel free to choose from the following:

- ❑ Reflecting on last session's teaching, is there anything you'd like to share?
- ❑ This week, we'll discuss "Foundational Principles of Hearing God." You'll get instructions on 5 things you need in your life to hear God more clearly.
 - ◇ Have you observed a young child who can't read yet playing with a stack of building blocks? To build the tallest tower, what do they need to do first?
 - ◇ When tackling a do-it-yourself project, trying out a new recipe, or assembling something you bought in pieces, do you tend to follow the instruction manual precisely? Do you prefer to improvise and go at it without reading the instructions word for word?

Session 4 for Group Leaders:

How Does God Communicate with Us

Things to Consider

Throughout the series, Terry encourages students to revisit what they have learned in previous sessions. Some concepts take a while to sink in, to go from the head to the heart. Please remind students to reread sections containing concepts they have yet to embrace. Encourage them to ask additional questions about anything they do not fully understand either in the group setting or one-on-one

Welcoming the Group

Begin the discussion with a personal reflection on the nature of the Father's love discussed in the last session. Feel free to choose from the following:

- ☐ Reflecting on last session's teaching, is there anything you'd like to share?
- ☐ This week, we'll discuss "How God Communicates with Us."
 - ◇ Looking back in your life or in history, who would you consider to be a great communicator? Why?
 - ◇ Have you ever spoken in front of a group, large or small? Did it come naturally or did you have to learn a few skills first? How did you prepare?

Session 5 for Group Leaders:

Practical Keys to Hearing God

Things to Consider

This week, Terry shares many personal stories about how he grew in his ability to hear God. Consider sharing any personal anecdotes from your life to enhance today's teaching.

Welcoming the Group

Begin the discussion with a personal reflection on receiving the love of the Father discussed in the last session. Feel free to choose from the following:

- ☐ Reflecting on last session's teaching, is there anything you'd like to share?
- ☐ This week, we'll discuss "Practical Keys to Hearing God."
 - ◇ Have you ever worked on a project or deadline at work or school and gotten inspiration from seemingly out of nowhere which was very helpful?
 - ◇ Do people describe you as creative or artsy? Where do you get your ideas and inspiration?
 - ◇ So far, in this study, is there a scripture that has jumped out at you or inspired you?

Session 6 for Group Leaders:

Application for Daily Life

Things to Consider

You may need additional time sharing and discussing the concepts of:

- ☐ The concept of getting “in the Spirit”.
- ☐ Spiritual warfare – Many people who have been in church all their lives may find they know very little about it or how to fight it using God’s Word.
- ☐ The authority Jesus has given believers to fight spiritual warfare.
- ☐ The devil’s tactics that take your mind off Christ so you cannot live in the fullness of what God has for you.

Welcoming the Group

Begin the discussion with a personal reflection on our true identity in Christ discussed in the last session. Feel free to choose from the following:

- ☐ Reflecting on last session’s teaching, is there anything you’d like to share?
- ☐ This week, we’ll discuss things you can do to hear God starting tomorrow.
 - ◇ Stop for a moment and be still right where you are. What do you hear? Where can you go to hear absolute silence?
 - ◇ When is loud noise a good thing?
 - ◇ Think back on any big changes you have had to make in your life (i.e., learning to drive, moving to a new home, going to college, getting married, starting a new job)? How did you prepare for them? What were the biggest challenges you faced?

Session 7 for Group Leaders:

Visions and Dreams

Things to Consider

You may need additional time discussing the concepts of visions and dreams. While many people dream, they may not be familiar with the reality of visions in the life of a believer.

Once again, encourage students to revisit what they have learned in previous sessions if they have not fully embraced them.

Welcoming the Group

Begin the discussion with a personal reflection on how your true identity in Christ defines your purpose in life. Feel free to choose from the following:

- ☐ Reflecting on last session's teaching, is there anything you'd like to share?
- ☐ Was it helpful to get practical tips on how to improve your ability to hear God? Have you tried them out?
- ☐ This week, we'll discuss how God speaks through visions and dreams?
 - ◇ Would you rather have x-ray vision (see through something) or see something no one else can?
 - ◇ Do you prefer short film reels or big-screen movies?
 - ◇ Do you remember black-and-white television? Do you remember what it felt like to see color TV for the first time?

Session 8 for Group Leaders:

Hearing God for Others

Things to Consider

This session is particularly enjoyable because it shows the group how to extend what they have learned in service to others.

Caution students that not everything you receive from God should be shared immediately. At times, the content should be tested by those in spiritual authority. If they are not part of a church family, invite them to join yours or help them get connected to one in their area.

Welcoming the Group

Begin the discussion with a personal reflection on how your true identity in Christ defines your purpose in life. Feel free to choose from the following:

- ☐ Reflecting on last session's teaching, is there anything you'd like to share?
- ☐ This week we'll discuss how we can help others through what we hear from God.
 - ◇ What is the best gift you have ever received in your life? What was the occasion? Why was it so special? Would you ever think of putting that special gift on a shelf and never using it or enjoying it?
 - ◇ Have you ever given a gift that was just perfect for the recipient? What was their reaction?
 - ◇ Do you do volunteer work? Describe it. What is it you enjoy most about it?

Session 9 for Group Leaders:

The Importance of Obedience

Things to Consider

You may choose to share Communion with the group on your final day of this course. It's a reminder of what Jesus did at the Cross on our behalf. You can refer to chapter 14 of the first book in this series titled "The Cross is the Key" or read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 before taking the elements.

Welcoming the Group

Begin the discussion with a personal reflection on how your true identity in Christ defines your purpose in life. Feel free to choose from the following:

- ☐ Reflecting on last session's teaching, is there anything you'd like to share?
- ☐ Name one thing in this study that:
 - ◇ Surprised you?
 - ◇ Touched your heart deeply?
 - ◇ Gave you hope for the future?
 - ◇ You immediately implemented in your life?
 - ◇ Challenged a long-held belief?
 - ◇ You wished you'd known a long time ago?