



God Is Speaking — Are You Listening?

The #1 Key To Hearing From God!

by Rev. Michael J. Burns

Do you feel as though some Christian Ministers or Ministries are attempting to convince you that they have the **keys** *that will unlock the answers to the various needs that you have as a believer in Christ?* These ministers are gifted and they talk a real good talk but some of their followers are still left with their relationship with God faltering and their needs unmet. This may or may not be the fault of the church or minister that they were a part but unfortunately this is an ongoing issue for many in the church today.

Certainly there is a high percentage of ministers and believers who do not fit the profile that I am sharing here, but I still speak from over 42 years of active ministry experience and have seen this as an issue in people's lives. When I became a Christ follower I heard and saw many supernatural phenomena that happened in the church I attended as a teen-man. These things instilled within me a God-given desire to serve God which led me to **hearing God speak to me** about my calling to ministry.

God, through Christ Jesus, has reconciled the world to Himself (**2 Corinthians 5:19**). God's purpose in reconciling us was so that **we could have an ongoing genuine relationship with Him**. This life we are living is filled with relationships that start with our families, friends, schoolmates, co-workers, church family and people we connect with along the pathway of life. **Life is about relationships!**

Dr. Edwin Louis Cole said, *Being alone can be a blessing, but being lonely never is!* We were NOT created to live the life of a *hermit* where we live off the grid and just try to live life without other people involved. *There is no question that relationships can be difficult*, especially with other people and their silly quirks. Much of this has to do with the way they may have been raised.

Everyone has a past and that past has a great impact on how we view ourselves and others today. We all have a lens through which we see life and it is mostly based on the upbringing and environment in which we grew up. This is the reason *psychology* and *psychiatry* have become a multi-billion dollar industry **as people are trying to figure themselves out**. I am sure there are many people in this profession that struggle with the same things they are attempting to help others overcome!

In my 35 years of pastoral ministry, not counting the additional years I functioned in other ministerial capacities, I have met many thousands of *people who could not see themselves as God see's them*. I am talking about Christians of differing ages and every stage of life. Honestly, it took a good part of my life to come to a place where I experienced the healing I needed from growing up with an abusive alcoholic father and the divorce of my parents.

Previously it caused me to have a skewed view of myself and I grew up with a very low self-esteem. One that was recognized by the bullies I went with to school as an adolescent. It caused me to seek acceptance from friends. Sadly, the way to be with the **in crowd** was to act and do what they did. So I began to drink alcohol and do drugs as a teen-man. Looking back I can see that our spiritual foe, **the devil**, was trying to kill me off along with the destiny that God had for me.

The changes that I needed were discovered, of course, when I came to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. When we genuinely believe that we are both **loved** and **accepted** by the God who created us,

something takes place that words alone cannot properly express. It is also something that our minds have difficulty comprehending.

I say this often, but we must understand that we are made in God's image and likeness according to **Genesis 1:26-27** and **1**

Thessalonians 5:23. God is a triune being; *Father, Son and Holy Spirit*. Christ-followers are also triune; *Spirit, Soul and Body*. The *Spirit of Man* is the part that has been born again and where the *life of God* exists. As Christians we have been given the responsibility to *renew our minds* to God's Word according to **Romans 12:1-2** and **James 1:21**. There we are told to *receive with meekness the implanted or engrafted Word of God which has the power to save or deliver our SOULS!*

This is the process that every Christ follower must engage in order to develop the kind of relationship with God where we can be **divinely led** to live the abundant life that Christ came to give us! There may be some who might disagree and say that we are saved by grace through faith in **Ephesians 2:8-9** and not of works. I would agree in part but not totally. Why? Because **verse 10** goes on to speak of the ***good works*** that God created us in Christ ***to do***.

There are responsibilities that a husband has toward his wife and the wife has towards her husband. Parents have certain responsibilities toward their children and employee's have to their business owners. Christ followers have certain responsibilities to God and yet it is our dismissive attitudes towards those things that keep us from the abundant life Christ came to give us. It also keeps us from enjoying the vital relationship we should have with God and Him **leading** and **guiding** us in life!

Allow me to present to you the ways that **God is continuously speaking to His children**; They include; *The Bible, God's Word; the Still Small Voice; Dreams and Visions; He speaks in Audible Voices; through Angels; God even speaks to us through circumstances and other people. If God were to speak to you in an audible voice then*

you should understand that this would be the exception and NOT the rule or standard in life.

God speaking to us through the Bible, is the number one way that we should expect to hear God's voice. **This is the Rule and NOT the exception!** Can you see that this is a major reason why we need to know the bible so we can discern the difference between what is from God or just from our own selves (**Hebrews 4:12**).

Over the course of our lives we have been conditioned to believe the things that we have been exposed to from when we were born until today. Since the day we became a Christ follower the responsibility has rested upon us to enter this process of renewing our minds to assist our *human spirits* and our now *newly renewed minds to see ourselves as God created us to be.*

Back in the late 1970's I heard of a prophetic utterance that was given by **Dr. Jerry Savelle** where the Lord spoke these words through him...***My children are asking me to speak to them about this or that, they are begging ME in their prayers to speak to them! They have taken the position that I am silent and not willing to speak to them. BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I AM SPEAKING TO YOU ALL THE TIME BUT MANY OF MY CHILDREN ARE NOT LISTENING TO MY VOICE! THEY DO NOT RECOGNIZE MY VOICE AND THEREFORE THEY DO NOT RECEIVE WHAT I HAVE FOR THEM NOR DO THEY ACCOMPLISH WHAT I HAVE ASSIGNED FOR THEM TO DO!***

So, what is the **KEY** I mentioned in the title above? You might think that it is so simple that it cannot be true. I imagine that some might assume that *fasting, praying more, going to church more, reading the bible more or giving more money* would be the answer...**BUT IT IS NOT!**

Are you familiar with the biblical term, **RIGHTEOUSNESS**? If you are a Christian then you should be very familiar with this term. I have

another question though, **Do you know what RIGHTEOUSNESS IS?** Some have the idea that it has something to do with *Holiness* and they would be partially correct. Let's look at **Matthew 6:33**,

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

33. But seek (aim at and strive after) first of all His kingdom and His righteousness (*His way of doing and being right*), and then all these things taken together will be given you besides. **AMP**

33. Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. ***You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.*** **MSG**

Notice what the end result will be...*all these things shall be added to you...all these things taken together will be given you besides...You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.*

This is where many Christ followers are living today...***with great needs that are NOT being met.*** It is not because of God's failing to supply, it is because we are not DOING what **Matthew 6:33** is instructing us to do. Let me ask you this question: If a person is Not having their needs met, ***would it be fair to suggest that they are Not seeking First God's Kingdom and His Righteousness CORRECTLY?***

Facts are facts! There are many self deceived Christ followers that believe falsely that they must quit their jobs to ***seek God's Kingdom and Righteousness first!*** There are not just a few who have fallen into this deception. Obviously their idea of ***Seeking First God's Kingdom and Righteousness*** is INCORRECT, otherwise their needs would be met because what they are doing would prove to be correct! The proof of the pudding is in the eating and it doesn't taste very good in these situations!

As I close this month's article I want to focus on the subject of **Righteousness**. We can all agree that before we came to faith in Jesus we were **sinners** and in an **unrighteousness** condition spiritually speaking. The best definition for **Righteous** OR **Righteousness** means **to be able to stand before the Lord without the sense of Guilt, Fear, Condemnation and Inferiority**. This would also be true when it comes to standing before *people and the devil!*

These four things; **Guilt, Fear, Condemnation and Inferiority** that are born out of a **Sin-Consciousness** before we came to the Lord Jesus are the very things that **keep us from being led by the Lord and Hearing His Voice clearly and accurately. WHY? Until a believer moves far enough away from sin consciousness that believer cannot be led by the Holy Spirit...!**

In order for a Christian to be able to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, that believer MUST **Renew** and **Establish** within themselves, the truth of **righteousness** in their hearts and minds. Is it really possible for a Christ follower to live life **without** a sense of **Guilt, Fear, Condemnation and Inferiority?**

Let's define these four terms;

1. **Guilt** - to be under judgment; to be under sentence; feeling responsible or regretful for a perceived offense, whether real or imaginary.
2. **Fear** - is an unpleasant often strong emotion or feeling triggered by the perception or anticipation of danger...whether real or imaginary.
3. **Condemnation** - is the expression or emotion of a strong and serious disapproval.
4. **Inferiority** - the condition of seeing yourself as being lower in status than another or others; to be of poor quality; mediocre.

I know that there is someone reading this article and asking, *how do these four thing keep a person from hearing God speaking to*

them? These four things stem from a **Sin-Consciousness**. They are more aware of their past and what they did before coming to Christ then they are in who they are in Christ today! **Truthfully, people think more about sin than they do about righteousness UNLESS they have been taught the bible properly.**

Ask yourself, *Am I afraid something is sin OR am I afraid that it could be sin.* Then let me suggest that you may be struggling with a **sin consciousness. Sin absolutely separates us from God.** *The difference is that you are no longer in sin if you are in Christ!* **If you are not absolutely sure of where you stand in your relationship with God then you will be unsure of your ability to hear from God.** Hearing from God boils down to the truth of who you are IN Christ Jesus! Who do you really believe you are as a Christian?

There are a great company of believers that do not realize that ***what I think that God thinks about me greatly affects my ability to hear from Him.*** I am not a sinner saved by grace. God see's me saved right now and ***no longer a sinner but a Son.*** He see's me in right standing with Him!

In closing I want to share with you a list of 6 things that make it difficult to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit;

1. My background - What I believe about myself.
2. Not understanding what I am listening for. In other words, *What do I expect the Holy Spirit to say VS my own imagination.*
3. The development of my relationship with God has an impact to hear from Him the Holy Spirit.
4. Until I learn to hear God in the big things then I will have difficulty hearing Him in the small things because the big things are easier to hear and discern than the small things.

5. RELATIONSHIP is EVERYTHING when it comes to hearing from the Holy Spirit.

6. Other people's voices can be a hinderance to hearing from God because their voice does not necessarily come from God.

Understanding what it is for us to be **righteous in God's view** tells us that *we are the type of person that God will not only hear, but He will speak to us and lead us in every situation in our lives.* Christ follower's have an advantage in life because we have the creator of the universe living within us, who see's the end from the beginning, and knows what potentially lies ahead for you and me. He is willing to share what He knows with us if we will simply inquire of Him, lean on Him and spend the time of intimate fellowship with Him everyday!

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