

Identifying The Voice Of God **John 10:27**

Intro: People often ask me, "When I try to listen to God how do I know if it is God speaking or some other voice?" Or, "I've asked the Lord to give me direction, but it's as if I hear two voices. How do I know if God is the One I hear or if it is Satan's voice? Or, if it is just me talking to myself?" Or my personal favorite "Is it just my mind playing games with me? Or is God trying to tell me something?" These are all legitimate questions that need to be answered. Identifying who is doing the talking is essential if we are going to be able to listen to God and follow His instructions in righteousness.

The problem is there are way too many voices trying to get our attention. We need to be able to **Identify The Voice Of God** among all the others.

Watch this video as a young girl tries to **Identify The Voice Of God** ---play *lifehouse's Everything* video...

[Read John 10:27/pray/dismiss Jr. church MENTION THAT ONLY 2ND GRADE AND BELOW ARE TO GO]

What a sight to see that young girl being pulled in so many directions while along the Lord tries to get her attention. On the verge of suicide He finally begins to real her in and saves her from herself.

Somewhere around four months of age, a baby begins to identify his or her parent's voices. Having heard them speak for weeks, the child can now distinguish that they sound different from other people. Similarly, God has supplied us, *His* children, with the capacity to recognize *His* voice. Over time we can learn to distinguish Him speaking to us. He does this through many ways and today we are going to learn some of the ways to **Identify The Voice Of God**.

In Matthew 16 Jesus tells His disciples that He has to go to Jerusalem, suffer many things, be killed, and then be raised on the third day (v. 21). Peter, with obvious good intentions, gets upset and Jesus' statement and says, "...**Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.**" Jesus turns to Peter and says, "...**Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men**" (v. 23).

In this exchange you can see the difference between the Voice of God and the Voice of Satan. Peter's dilemma is also ours. We may seek the Lord's minds about a decision we have to make concerning our family, our finances, or our vocation. We may be committed to doing the right thing, so we begin to pray. Unfortunately, we feel we should move in one direction one day and the opposite direction the next. It seems as if the voice we hear tells us something different each day. The result is our frustration and it brings confusion. We wonder how we can know positively whose voice we hear.

In our text today, John 10:27, Jesus makes it very clear that believers' normal experience is to hear God accurately and clearly. Let me re-read our text, "**My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:**" If believers walk in the Spirit, understand the completer meaning of the Cross, and allow the Holy Spirit to fill us and live His life through us, then it should be easy for us to distinguish the voice of God from the flesh, or the world or the devil. The natural Spirit filled walk of committed believers is such that when God speaks, we can **Identify His Voice**.

Some of us have experienced this in a mighty way. Most pastors, youth pastors and missionaries would say they have experienced this in a very real way; they have been able to distinguish between God's voice and all the others and that was how they new just what God wanted them to do. For others, especially young Christians, it's a bit more of a problem. A sheep that has been with a shepherd for many years is better equipped to hear the

shepherd's voice then a newborn lamb. The Bible is very clear in its teaching that believers, both young and old, should be able to clearly discern the Voice of God, let's look at some scriptural ways we can **Identify the Voice of God...**

We Can Identify the Voice of God Because...

I. First, God's Voice Will Always be Consistent with His Word

- A. God's Voice will never tell us to engage in any activity or relationship that is inconsistent with His Word
1. **ILL:** A young lady went to her pastor and told him she was dating a man who was an alcoholic and an adulterer. Despite this, she told him that she believed God had told her to marry him. Was she hearing God's Voice? Of course not!

God wouldn't tell someone to do something that was contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture.

2. Unfortunately, not all situations are so easy to discern.
- B. The scenarios that are hard to figure out are the ones when the lady comes in and says *"I met this man, he is the CEO of ABC Company and he lives over in Sycamore Hills. He has asked me to marry him. What should I do?"*
1. She then tells you that she met him through a mutual friend.
 2. He doesn't go to church
 3. He has been married before but his wife left him.
 4. Then she tells you that she has been praying and she believes God is telling her to marry him.
 5. What do you do?
- C. God's Word is clear – **"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"** (2 Cor. 6:14).

- D. **God's Voice will never conflict with the clear teaching of His Word.**
- #### **II. Secondly, God's Voice Will Often Conflict With Human Wisdom**
- A. There are some exceptions, usually when God requires something of us, it will clash with what you consider to be the natural, reasonable course of action
1. Jesus said that if someone strikes you on one cheek, turn the other Matt 5:39; that's not reasonable
 2. Jesus said if someone wants you to go 1 mile, you should go 2; that's not reasonable
 3. The prophet Isaiah put it this way:
For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Is 55:8-9)
- B. Jesus usually did the opposite of what people expected
1. If we feel the tug of the world and what we hear from God seems reasonable and rational, then we should check it out
 2. That's not to say that God doesn't use human wisdom
 3. He does
 4. But on many occasions God's Voice will ask us to do something that seems quite illogical to our rational minds.
 5. Remember, Jesus said we had to give if we wanted to get, **"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again"** (Lk. 6:38)
- C. Think about it, God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son;

1. Abraham could have reasoned that this command as of the devil,
 2. God would never tell him to do such a thing
 3. But it was God; and because he obeyed, God continued to multiply Abraham's seed through Isaac
- III. **Thirdly, God's Voice Will Always Clash With Our Fleshly Desires**
- A. God will never tell us to do anything that gratifies the flesh
1. I am not saying that God doesn't like fun
 2. He does but He wants the fun in the right way – a way that is pleasing to Him and brings wholesome fulfillment, not instantaneous gratification of the flesh
- B. If what we hear urges us to gratify the flesh, to forget what anyone else says, just do as we please, then we should know that it isn't God
1. He doesn't speak in those terms
 2. God always speaks in such a way that the results please the Spirit of God within us, not the flesh
 3. The old nature is a part of our physical lives, but it is to be under control of the Holy Spirit
 4. We are to satisfy the yearning of the Spirit; His Voice will build up and edify our spirits, not our fleshly natures
- C. Today's society continually appeals to the fleshly nature
1. TV, magazine, the internet, movies, music
 2. Many businesses seek to affect the individual by arousing carnal instincts in us - **Abercrombie & Fitch** catalog has been classified as "R" rated
 3. It is in a world dominated by such carnal clattering that God calls us to listen to a Voice that always seeks the benefit of others as well as ourselves, a Voice that requires substantial faith to hear.

- D. James told us, **"...ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts"** (James 4:2b-3)
1. James tells us that our prayers are not answered because we ask the wrong thing for the wrong reason
 2. We want it so our own personal lusts/wants will be satisfied
 3. If this is true then it stands to reason that when God speaks He isn't going to have us do something that will only lead to igniting more lust
- E. **God's voice will almost always go against our fleshly desires**
- IV. **Fourthly, God's Voice Will Often Challenge Our Faith**
- A. One thing God is always doing to His Children is challenging their faith
1. He does this to strengthen our relationship with Him and helps us grow into intimacy with Him
 2. When we lift up our petitions to the Lord, we should always ask ourselves if they will challenge our faith
 3. Not every decision we make will call for great faith, but in making those decisions in which we aren't sure if we are hearing from God, asking this question will help us determine the origin of the voice
- B. When Jesus was on earth, He was always looking for people to respond in faith
1. He could just speak and that would be the end of it, but in many instances His Voice required an act of faith
 2. He asked the impotent man in John 5 if he wanted to be made whole, when the man responded that he did Jesus told him to **"Rise, take up thy bed, and walk"** (V.8)
 3. That man had to exercise faith to get up and walk

- C. Scripture is full of examples of Jesus expecting someone to exercise their faith to do what He told them
 - D. Consider the story in Matthew 16 I mentioned in the introduction
 - 1. When Peter was told by Jesus that He had to die Peter didn't want to hear it
 - 2. Peter had seen the great things Jesus had done but his faith was going to be pushed to the limit
 - 3. Watch his leader be beaten, crucified and buried and do nothing
 - 4. But his faith would be reward on the third day
- V. **Fifthly, God's Voce Will Often Require An Act Of Courage**
- A. When God speaks His Voice will call for an act of courage on our part
 - 1. The best example of this is seen in the book of Joshua
 - 2. Joshua is faced with the staggering mission of getting the masses of grumbling Israelites across the Jordan River when the Lord delivered him an encouraging message (Josh 1:1-9)
 - B. In the space of these 9 verses, God exhorted Joshua to spiritual courage no less than 3 times:
 - 1. **"Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them"** (1:6)
 - 2. **"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law..."** (1:7)
 - 3. **"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest"** (1:9).

- C. Think about what God was asking Joshua to do
 - 1. He was following in the footsteps of Moses
 - 2. Despite Moses' miraculous leadership, even he had failed to get the Israelites into the Promised Land
 - 3. Joshua needed some spiritual fortitude to complete the task
 - 4. No less today do we stand in need of inner valor if we are to accomplish the works God has assigned us
 - D. The disciples needed courage to respond to Jesus' command to, *"Follow Me"*
 - 1. Paul needed courage to preach to those who had once hated him
 - 2. Gideon needed courage to defeat his adversaries
 - 3. When God speaks, the fulfillment of His plans hinges to some degree on whether we respond with confident, courageous spirits
 - E. **His Voice leads us not into timid discipleship but into bold witness.**
- VI. **Sixthly, God's Voice Will Never Have A Negative Effect On Others**
- A. God is concerned about the influence and witness we as believers have on other people
 - 1. If there is a harshness or crudeness toward others in what we hear, then it's not from God
 - 2. God never talks about our lives
 - 3. He talks about our surrender
 - 4. He talks about our yieldedness
 - 5. He talks about our crucifixion – or death to self
 - 6. He talks about loving our brother, about bearing one another's burdens, about encouraging one another, about not causing others to stumble
 - B. Satan tells us that we can do what we want

1. That we shouldn't worry about the rippling effects of our lives on other people
 2. He tells us every man is an island unto himself
 3. He tells us we should please number one only
- C. When God speaks, He will have not only our best interests in mind but also the good of all concerned
- D. He always works for the good of all His people, not just a few

VII. ***Seventh, God's Voice Will Almost Always Require Patience***

- A. You can look and look all you want but no where in Scripture does God tell anyone to rush into a decision
1. He doesn't operate that way
 2. Anyone in the financial world knows that success is not based on snap decisions
 3. There may be times when we need to hear from God quickly, God will never tell us to rush in blindly
 4. There have been times in my life that I wish I had understood this when it came to making a major purchase – a car, etc
 5. We may have to move swiftly, but we can move swiftly in the will of God and still not hurry into a situation
- B. Satan always encourages us to act immediately, because he knows if we back off and think long enough we'll reconsider
1. How many people have made decisions they regretted for the rest of their lives?
 2. Ps 27:14 exhorts us to, ***"Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD"***
 3. Ps 62:5 explains, ***"My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him"***

4. If we feel an overwhelming urge to act spontaneously, we better pull in the reins
 5. God is interested in having all the details in their proper places
- C. King Saul lost his throne because he acted hastily
1. Chosen by the Lord to be king over Israel, he was instructed by the prophet Samuel to wait at Gilgal
 2. *"...seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and show thee what thou shalt do"* (1 Sam 10:8)
 3. On the 7th day, Samuel still hadn't arrived.
 4. With a hostile Philistine army pressing in on him, Saul decides to take matters into his own hands, and he prepares burnt offerings to invoke the Lord's favor.
 5. As soon as the offerings are completed, Samuel arrives
 6. Saul offered some lame excuses, but his rashness disqualified him for a long and peaceful reign
- D. Getting ahead of God is a terrible mistake, and the consequences are always distasteful
- E. ***ILL***: Men who left BBC after graduation only to return in a year beaten and broken. Someone who rushes into a marriage without taking the time to make sure the person is the one God has for them.

VIII. ***Finally, God's Voice Will Always Cause Us To Grow Spiritually***

- A. God informs us that He has ordained, that ***"[those] whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son..."*** (Rom 8:29).
1. That being so, then whatever God speaks to us will stimulate our spiritual growth
 2. That means that God will never tell us to do anything or think of anything that sets us back spiritually

- B. He would never tell us to pursue a course of action that would hinder our spiritual maturity
1. In the illustration earlier about the young land who went to her pastor and told him she was dating a man who was an alcoholic and an adulterer. Despite this, she told him that she believed God had told her to marry him. Was she hearing God's Voice? Of course not, because a marriage of that nature simply would not contribute to her spiritual growth. In fact, more often than not, such a situation is to the detriment of the believer.

Conclusion: We can distinguish the Voice of God from the voice of Satan, despite Satan's ability to cloak his voice expertly. He comes as an angel of light along with all the appropriate enticements. He will not always be so bold as to make his ideas stand in direct opposition to the Word of God; he will simply skirt the truth. He will make his ways seem so logical and try to convince us that the Lord's ways are irrational to be what the Lord really wants. He will dress up his ways in very enticing dress just as he did for Eve in the garden; remember the lust of the eyes and the pride of life? The Lord would have us trust Him by faith; act as courageous warriors allowing Him to fight the battles for us. Satan tells us that we are to look out for number one rather than looking to God. Satan would have us worry more about the things of this world than our relationship with the Lord, reasoning that certainly God cares about our earthly needs and providing for my family.

Is God telling you something but you just can't hear His voice?
Today can be a day to turn it all around.