

How is Your Hearing?

Are we as eager to hear the Word of the Lord as Samuel was when he said, "...Speak, for Your servant hears" (1 Sam. 3:10 NKJV). Many of us show disrespect for God when we don't even try to listen to what He wants to tell us.

Because we have heard God in the past, does not automatically mean that we will listen to everything He will say in the future. This is where and how we get into trouble. Most Christians have a hearing problem; the condition is "selective hearing." We only heed the parts of God's Word that suit us. We are willing to listen to the familiar, the old story, the tried-and-true. If it is something we have heard before, then we will listen. But if Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, wants to teach us something from His Word we haven't discovered before, we often resist the truth He has for us.

Jesus said, "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 NKJV).

Some resist the Holy Spirit when God attempts to lead them into a better understanding of His plan for mankind. It may sound strange to them; therefore, they reject the Truth.

Many times our personal image of the Truth is so rigid it does not allow Jesus to teach us anymore. When we dismiss the Truth, we are rejecting Christ, the written Word of God (John 14:6).

There is an example of this in Christ's parable of Lazarus and the rich man. After the death of Lazarus and the rich man, the rich man wanted Lazarus to warn his brothers. Jesus said, "...**If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one [Jesus Christ] rose from the dead**" (Luke 16:31). Jesus gave the book of Revelation to the Church after returning to heaven. Many Christians have rejected His Words because they haven't accepted Moses and the prophets, therefore, they won't receive the Words of Jesus after His resurrection either!

Some are prone to run from prophecy as if it were some sort of plague. Yet Jesus said the Holy Spirit would tell us things to come. Many Christians flee from the book of Revelation, yet it is a book that comes to us from the Father and is opened to our understanding through Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:1; 5:8-9). Why fear a book which was prepared to help us understand the entire Word of God?

Seven times in the second and third chapters of Revelation Jesus said, "He who has an ear [to hear Spiritual things], let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." The problem for many is that they don't have an ear that is inclined to listen to God by allowing the Holy Spirit to speak through His Word. The Spirit and the Word will always agree! But many are far too lazy to bother proving whether what they hear from God's Word is true.

We should be as the Bereans who, "...were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good" (I Thess. 5:19-21 NKJV). Test the scriptures; scripture will prove scripture. The answers are hidden, but Jesus will lead us, through the Holy Spirit, into all Truth if we ask Him with a humble attitude.

For many, it isn't that we don't want to hear God, but that we are often devoted to things of our own convictions. It is our own philosophies, our own thinking, and our own mind-set that keeps us from hearing the entire Word of God. **The Bible is not open to private interpretation!** We will never hear God if we continually say, "Well this is the way I see it," or "This is my take on what the scripture says." Scripture will always interpret scripture! The Bible will speak for itself! Jesus, the living Word of God, will lead us into all truth through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Peter wanted to make it very clear that we are not to play "God" with the Bible, "Knowing this first, that **no prophecy [or instruction] of the scripture is of any private interpretation**" (II Pet. 1:20).

Strong beliefs can often stand in the way and block our ability to hear and to understand additional Truth. This limits our hearing to only the areas of God's Word that are familiar to us. Even our desire to serve God, in the way of our choosing, can prevent us from listening to Him. Wanting to serve God in our own way constricts our capacity to hear!

It is this attitude of wanting to serve God in our own way that must change! We must all humble ourselves as little children and have proper fear and respect for the Word of God. God says, "...to this *man* will I look, *even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word*" (Isa. 66:2). "...Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, 'Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in My name receiveth Me'" (Matt. 18:2-5).

We must have the attitude of a child, just as did Samuel, and always be willing to say, "Speak, for Your servant hears." Through deep repentance toward God, our hearing will improve. God gives understanding to all who seek Him with respect and humility.

When people reject the Bible, they are refusing to listen to God.

If we do not take the time to read the Word of God, Jesus can't teach us. Many have our own ideas about God, but don't know anything about His plan for mankind. By refusing the Word, we are not allowing Jesus to teach us. Jesus can't instruct us if we decline His invitation to spend time together.

Nearly everybody has a Bible. But Jesus says, "...I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (Rev. 3:20). Jesus is sitting on your bookshelf as the written Word of God, yet you pay no attention. He is knocking at the door of your mind, wanting to commune with you. He wants to teach you Spiritual things, if only you would make time for Him. You can pass by Jesus, in writing, several times a day and be totally unaware of Him. You disregard Jesus because you refuse to pick up your Bible and spend time with Him.

God says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to Me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hos. 4:6).

If you desire to improve your hearing, you must, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). Take time every day to humbly study the Word of God and you will discover you can hear God.

We can hear and understand every word that comes from the mouth of God, if we approach the Word of God with meekness. "...It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4). The better we listen, the stronger our faith will be. When we repent to God for being so hard of hearing, our faith increases. "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).