
Title: "All About the Holy Spirit," Pt 4 Republic, Aug. 18, 2024

How to Hear the Holy Spirit Better, & How Filters Can block us

Text: many

Pt. 3 Review:

#8 - In order to hear the Holy Spirit, we have to care about hearing from Him. We have to have a strong feeling that we NEED to hear from Him.

We need 2 strong feelings:

- 1. We have to start with a strong feeling that "I need to always hear from God because without hearing from Him, I am very capable of making lots of messes."**

We have to have a 2nd strong feeling:

- 2. The strong feeling that I might be missing things God wants to say to me, about witnessing opportunities, or decisions I need to make, or whatever.**

John 10:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ **My sheep (will or do) hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.**

3 parts to this verse:

- 1. My sheep, (the ones who belong to me, not just believe in me) they will hear my voice.** It is highly important to them. So, if you are not hearing His voice, or trying to do things without getting His voice, there's a serious problem on your end.
 - 2. I know them.** We have a relationship. We talk back and forth, often. The relationship is what allows us to hear His voice. If there is not a relationship, they are rarely, if ever, going to hear His voice.
 - 3. They have made the strong decision that the most important thing to them in life is that they follow Me, not themselves.**
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Tell yourself to listen well, just like the dove. Old time christians used to always say God speaks in a _____ (still) _____ (small) _____ (voice)

#9 - We have to care about hearing the Holy Spirit, and we also have to get better at seeing what the Father is doing.

- A. Hearing specific things from God, which can include impressions we feel.**
- B. Seeing what the Father is doing and joining Him with that.**

#10- _____ (retraining) ourselves to develop new _____ (habits).

Like BPQ (Bible time, Prayer time, Quiet time), then talking to God all day long so we get used to interacting with Him and learning how to be available to Him during the day. (C = Church, which helps us too to see things we aren't picking up at home)

We are creatures of habit. We tend to follow a routine we do most every day. If you do not work at retraining yourself by developing better habits you are not going to hear.

A. Retrain yourself and Start a new habit with _____ (B.P.Q. and C.)

B. Retrain yourself with a new habit of starting every day with a prayer, and end-

ing every day with a prayer of thanks, and whatever else comes to your mind.

C. Retrain yourself with a new habit of trying to hear God during the daytime.

This is a tough one when you are not used to doing it. So, let's make 2 suggestions:

Suggestion 1:

You can start doing this by saying "Thanks" to God for different things all day long. Decide last week that you are going to start finding things to thank God for all day long. *How many of you started doing that?*

Suggestion 2:

You can then move from "thank you's" to more listening for things that come to you during the daytime.

So, we talked about retraining ourselves and developing new habits that get us started with hearing God better.

----- END OF REVIEW OF PT 3 -----

#11- Better hearing

A. "A Still, small voice"

Old time christians used to say God speaks in "a still small voice." Those exact words are actually in the bible. I did a search and found it in [1 Kings 19](#). It's the story where Elijah was on the run for his life from Jezebel who had plans to kill him. We will look at some of this story. We will mainly just focus on how God chose to appear to Elijah.

[1 Kings 19:11-12 a](#) (NKJV)

¹¹ Then He (God) said, "Go out, & stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains & 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 **a** and after the earthquake a fire, *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire;

WIND

We saw in Part 2 of this series that one of the symbols of the Holy Spirit is wind. In Moses day God used the wind ([Exodus 10](#)) to move the locusts into Egypt, and later God used the wind to move the locusts out of Egypt.

In [Exodus 14:21](#) God used the wind to make the land dry across the Red Sea.

In [Numbers 11:31](#) God created a wind to blow quail in from the sea for His people to eat.

But, in this case, God did not choose to talk to Elijah in the wind.

EARTHQUAKE

In this case, God did not pick the earthquake to speak to Elijah.

FIRE

We know God can work through fire. In Exodus 24:17 it says:

¹⁷ To the Israelites **the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain.**

On the day of Pentecost, [Acts 2:3](#), God created images of tongues of fire on top of each person's head. It was a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

But, in this story of Elijah in [1 Kings 11](#), God did not choose to talk to Him in the fire.

STILL SMALL VOICE

How God chose to speak to Elijah in this case was a different way:

[1 Kings 11:12b-13](#)

^{12b} and after the fire (*this particular time God spoke in ----->*) **a still small voice.**

¹³ **So it was, when Elijah heard it**, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice *came* to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

God, through His Holy Spirit, chose to speak to Elijah in this particular situation **in a still small voice.** Verse 13 says that **Elijah heard it.**

A still small voice is more of a very quiet voice. Think about this, God just demonstrated Himself through a strong wind, then an earthquake, then a fire. All of those are loud, or strong things. So, in contrast, now He chooses to talk very softly to the point someone could actually miss it, miss His voice. But, the bible tells us that Elijah did not miss it. He was in tune enough with God, to be able to hear it.

Ask yourselves:

If something similar happened to you, whereby God used a still small voice, would you hear Him like Elijah? Or would your mind be so full of your own thoughts, that

To hear a small type of voice we would have to try harder to hear God, making sure it was quiet around us, but also making sure we quiet our minds from being so full of our own thoughts, or even our own preconceived ideas.

1st Question:

Does God, at times, still speak this way in christian's lives?

The answer is Yes, He does speak more quietly. He may even do this the most. Other times, it may be strong impressions you get. With that one, you have to be even more careful it is God. Because that one is easier to be wrong about.

2nd question:

Why would He speak more quietly, almost like a whisper? Why do it that way?

My guess would be He wants us to truly care about getting His thoughts on things. He wants us to care so much that we would try hard by quieting our surroundings, as well as quieting our minds.

What does it mean to quiet our minds? Do not go to God telling Him what to do.

Rather, go to God quieting all of our own thoughts, so He can tell us what He wants.

So, again, developing a new habit of trying to hear God better will require us to change some things, like quieting our surroundings, and quieting the thoughts in our mind.

B. Testing the spirits, or being sure it is God, not you.

"Do I know this is 'of God'? or, Is there is a chance this is really 'of Me'?"

If it is of you, it will be all of your own thinking of what you believe is best. Sometimes when it is "of you" you will feel you have to do it right now.

Another question could actually be: Is this "of Satan?"

That one might be harder to answer because I don't believe most Christians, who care at all about God, want to ever make decisions that are purposely "of Satan." What can happen is at times, not always, a fleshly decision can easily turn into "of Satan."

For Example: Someone is not retired, and they are working a full time job. Then they make some bad decisions, and spend too much money. Then, some unexpected things happen and they are tighter on money than they thought they were going to be. Now they have to add to their full time job, a part-time job, to pay for everything. This adds to their stress in life, and they also start missing church which drags down their spiritual life, and their ability to hear God as well. Then, their spouse and kids are not going either.

So, one bad fleshly decision turned into a glorious opportunity for Satan to work heavily in the life of the entire family. Satan definitely won on this one, at least for awhile.

1 John 4:1 (NKJV)

¹ Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, **whether they are of God** ...

If you look at the context of this verse, it is probably more referring to being careful of false prophets, and what you sense about them, that it is not of God. But, I believe the same verse is applicable to finding God's will as well.

When we are feeling certain impressions that we think are of God, that is probably the time we most need to test the spirits. Checking again and again to be sure what you feel is truly of God. Go back to the quiet surroundings, and include quieting your thoughts, or any preconceived ideas. In other words, clear your mind.

We need to look at finding God's will as a very, very serious thing. Our fleshly decisions bring us away from the protection of God. When God is in the decision, God will take care of us. But, if we make the decision on our own, because we have made ourselves think this is best, then we give Satan room to work.

So, testing what is "of God" or what is "of ourselves" is crucial.

C. Understanding that on some occasions, "timing" is involved with finding the will of God.

Sometimes things are not God's will at all. But on other occasions, it might be God's will, but we missed His timing. It is not supposed to be done right now. So, if doing what God wants is not done in God's timing, we will be missing His will. Both are important - finding God's will, and finding His timing.

Another way of developing better hearing involves times when we are around people:

D. When we are around people, we must get better at _____ (listening) a lot and _____ (speaking) little. ([James 1:19](#))

How could you be used by God to help others, when you are full of talk, talk, talk?

If we do not follow [James 1:19](#), our mouth is too busy for us to hear God. And, our mind is too busy to hear what people need. Without listening much, and speaking little you miss opportunities for the Holy Spirit to give you the perfect words or actions to help others.

[James 1:19](#) tells us to be quick to listen, and slow to speak.

For quiet-natured people, this could be easier to do. The exception might be if they are real shy, to the point that they are nervous about what to say when the other person finally quits talking so much, then their mind would not be listening to God. If they can stop thinking of what they are going to say, and instead, use this time to let God give them inspirational thoughts, then they have the potential to be real effective for God. One more difficulty the quiet-natured person might struggle with is them not speaking up to say what God gives them to say.

Then there is another type of quiet person. The person who is always thinking about things they need, or want, to do. They are not a chit-chat type of person. For them, to be used of God when someone is talking to them, they would have to cut off their thinking so that they can be used of God to hear what He wants them to hear and say. For this person, they are quiet enough to be able to hear God, *but will they hear Him? Will they try to hear Him? Or will they cloud their mind thinking about other things they want to do, or feel they need to do?*

So, the quiet time is there, in that they are not talk, talk, talk, *but Is their mind so full of other things they are thinking about, that they are not any more available to hearing something from God than a person who is doing the talk, talk, talk?*

But, for talkative people, who are always talking, talking, talking, trying to talk less is probably going to be very hard. Chances are they have been like this their entire life. They have developed a habit of talking too much that has always been a part of their life. We are creatures of habit, and unless they try hard to change this part of ourselves, they are going to be less effective for God.

The reason we need to listen much and speak little is to hear God better, but also to be used by Him better. There might be another reason, as well. Someone who talks too much can be boring to be around. *Who wants to just sit and listen to someone who does not give you equal time to talk?*

A good way to get better at speaking little and listening much is by learning to ask people more questions. Try it. Make up your mind just before you are going to be around others that you will listen more, ask questions, and see what God inspires you with. If you start having success with it, it will help you want to do even better next

time. If you keep doing this, seeing success, then you can eventually break the habit of your own talk, talk, talk.

I learned how effective this can be when I worked one year at a church as an associate pastor in charge of counseling. I had about 13-14 people coming to me each week. I got good at asking questions so I could listen better. I was amazed at how much more I learned so that I could help them better. I think of it as "playing interviewer", much like a journalist might do when they interview someone.

Here is how interviewing people can help you listen much and speak little:

1. When you ask questions you actually show how you care about them.
2. Your questions allow them the opportunity to share what their concerns are. That alone helps them feel better, even if you do not have any answers that God gives you to tell them.
3. And, asking questions can also involve a time where you are just having fun with someone. During that time you learn some fun things about people.

I love doing that with the twin girls, Erin and Katy. It is a blast to ask them questions. I learn all kinds of fun stuff about them. Like last Sunday I learned their dad, Lee Williams, is funnier than their Mom, Becky. That doesn't mean Becky does not have a silly side. But, it was fun for me to hear how the twins loved telling me how their dad plays with stuffed animals. He will pose them to be silly. The twins giggled as they told me.

All of what I learned, happened because I asked questions.

- Asking questions is fun, and it is an effective way to learn how to do a better job of listening much and speaking little.

The most important job we have is to hear God accurately. But, it is also our job to help others. Learning to be quiet will help you hear the person that is talking, but also hear God as He gives you some pretty good insights that you can share to help them.

#12- Filters that make it hard to hear God.

I already talked about learning the difference between "*Is this of God?, Is this of Me?, or Is this of Satan?*" Rest assured, it will probably be one of the 3. And, if you do not know how easy it is to be wrong, chances are, a lot of your decisions are going to be "this is of me" which can easily turn into "this is of Satan."

I believe we all have filters that block our ability to hear God, or hear Him accurately.

A filter is normally a good thing. Filters are normally used to remove dirt from something. For example, keeping the furnace filter changed in your house is important for keeping the dirt out of the vents. As air conditioning or heat blows through the vents, if they are full of dust you are breathing that stuff, which can create more allergy problems, more breathing difficulties, or at least having to dust your house more.

So, what a filter does is block things that could cause problems for you.

In the case with our relationship with God, I believe we have filters that block our ability to hear God **accurately**. So, those kind of filters are not good. Those kind of filters do not prevent problems, they cause problems.

I am not talking about unconfessed sin. That can definitely block us. But, we already covered that in an earlier sermon in this series. The filters I am talking about are ways of thinking that God has to try to talk through our own thinking in order to tell you His will

on something. Our mind is so full of us, and what we think, that it becomes junk that is in the way of God being able to talk to us. God would literally have to yell, scream, or maybe even send an angel in order for you to accurately hear Him.

Most of these filters involve preconceived ways of thinking that makes us convinced of something, causing us to make the assumption that our thinking must be from God.

There are LOTS of examples of filters that can block our ability to hear God. I am going to give you just 3. You can ask God if you have other ones, and ask him how this might be hindering you from finding His will.

1. Perfectionism. We are always working our minds to think about perfecting things. With many things in life, that is good. But, then we begin to think we know most everything about life, even things like how things should be done, or what needs to happen. We become so full of our own thinking, we can start thinking we do not need much guidance from God. In fact, we can feel bothered about things more. We can find ourselves telling God to straighten out other people, or situations.

Perfectionistic people really do some things very well in life. But, they can also be people who are hard to be around because it leaves you wondering what they are finding wrong with you now. And, their perfectionism can definitely block their hearing God. Their mind is already full of what they think.

2. Being judgmental can be very similar to perfectionism. It does not have to be the same.

A person can be judgemental out of hatred, or to make everyone else look bad, and they look better. But, how the mind of a perfectionist works it can easily move to judging everyone and everything. Again, our mind is so full of what is wrong with people or things, we can end up telling God who He needs to straighten out or what He needs to change. Really, it is a very arrogant way of thinking. It assumes that everything you see about people and things is correct. Your mind is so full of this stuff, there is no way you can hear God correctly. He may be wanting to tell you that you are the one that needs to change.

3. Being too compassionate can cause you to want to do too much for others, when God is not wanting that. Compassion can be a good thing, but if it is not guided by God it can be a bad thing.

Example: I have seen parents be too compassionate with their kids to the point they are always bailing them out of everything. Many times, those parents end up raising kids who take advantage of them. The parents have great compassion, but there is no balance to it. They are always so worried about making decisions that show compassion that they miss whether God may not want them to do that. Their compassion can cause them to become convinced it is the right thing to do, so they don't even check with God on what He wants.

When you truly walk with God & are truly growing, God will be teaching you things that helps to balance you, things that also help you make less mistakes in hearing God, things that can help you remove the bad filters that block your ability to hear God accurately.

DATA PROJECTOR ILLUSTRATION: Of Jesus & we cant see Him very well (Filters)

The most accurate way to hear God on most anything, is to come to Him with a

clean slate. Have no preconceived ways of thinking. Don't tell Him what you want to see done. Don't tell Him anything except to tell Him what you are wondering about. Come to Him to find out what He wants to do, or how He wants to do it. Come to Him with no agenda. That is how you have a better chance of hearing Him.

Daniel, chapter 10, is a very fascinating set of verses. I believe it gives us insight on how to better find out what God wants. I don't want to get into the whole story. I just want to show you that Daniel truly got God's answers because He came to God with a clean slate, just wanting to know what God wanted, just wanting God's thoughts.

So, an angelic creature appears to Daniel:

Daniel 10:10-15 (NIV)

- ¹⁰ A hand touched me (*an angelic being*) and set me trembling on my hands and knees.
- ¹¹ He said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.
- ¹² Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. **Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God,** (*realizing you do not know everything, and you truly need God's help, at that very moment ---->*) **your words were heard, and I have come in response to them.**
- ¹³ But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. (*This was a situation that Satan was wanting to work in very heavily*)
- ¹⁴ **Now I have come to explain to you** (*I have come to give you answers*) what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."
- ¹⁵ While he was saying this to me, I bowed with my face toward the ground and was speechless.

Summary -

The most important parts of today's message were:

#11- Better hearing

A. Explanation of "A Still, small voice" and the need to be quiet in order to hear God if He chooses to speak to us in a more quiet voice. Quiet also means quieting our thoughts.

B. Testing the spirits. [1 John 4:1](#)

Is this "of God"? Is this "of Me" (my fleshly thinking of what I think is best)? Or Is this "of Satan," trying to get me to do something he is totally behind?

We can give Satan more room to work in our lives:

- If we are making decisions "in our flesh" of what we think needs to be done, and we haven't checked with God. We just assume this is the right thing.

C. Understanding that "timing" can be involved with doing the will of God.

Sometimes it IS God's will for a certain thing, but it is not His timing to do it. We have to both find out God's will, then also find out His timing.

Another way of developing better hearing is when we are around other people:

D. When we are around people, we must get better at _____ (listening) a lot and _____ (speaking) little. ([James 1:19](#))

Finding out God's will in helping others happens best when we listen like [James 1:19](#).

Learning to ask questions more can help you to listen more and speak less.

#12- Filters that make it hard to hear God.

- You must come to God with a clean slate, like Daniel, getting our own thoughts out of the way, in order to get understanding and hear God accurately on what He wants.

- We need to learn about ourselves in a better way that we can recognize our own filters, and then work with God to start removing them so it stops interfering with our hearing Him better.