
Text: [Isaiah 55:8](#); [Deut 8:3](#); [Rom. 12:2](#); [John 4:35](#); [John 5:19](#); *Rep, March 23, 2025*

Title: "Preconceived Thinking Can Keep Us from Hearing & Doing God's will"

I. Understanding, from a biblical perspective, how we are meant to live.

1. [Deuteronomy 8:3a](#) (NIV)

^{3a} **He humbled you, causing you to hunger and** then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, ...

Everyone wants to get to the point in their lives that they have mastered at least most of life. The problem with this line of thinking is it can create independence from God. "I don't need God as much. I can do it myself." Laurie, when she was little, used to tell her mom "I want to do it my own self."

In Deuteronomy 8, God, through Moses, was basically saying this:

"So, you thought you could provide for yourself. But, you came to the point that you could not do that. You were hungry, and the place where you were currently at, there was no food. So, I invented something new. No one had ever seen, nor eaten, manna before. I brought it to you straight from heaven, while you slept. You woke up to breakfast. I created this new food, called manna, so you could eat. **You were forced** to rely on me instead of on yourselves. That is why I said I 'humbled you.'"

We tend to get away from our constant need for God, the smarter we think we are getting. We get to thinking we know what is best, we will figure it out. Don't go there, or if you do go there, then don't be surprised when God humbles you, yet again.

Why did God humble you? What does the rest of verse 3 tell us?

[Deuteronomy 8:3b](#) (NIV)

^{3b} ... **to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.**

"Man does not live on what you think you need in life. You need to live your life depending on every word that God wants to say to you. You need Him always."

2. [Isaiah 55:8](#) (NKJV)

⁸ "For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, Nor *are* your ways My ways," says the LORD.

⁹ "For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

God's ways of looking at life are so much different than our ways. God's ways of looking at people can be totally different than our ways of looking at people. And, what God wants to do in any particular situation can be totally different than what we think needs to be done.

Once we truly get this, then it should cause us to question our own thinking on things. It should also cause us to slow down our thinking on things. In other words, instead of thinking we know what should be said or done and then quickly proceed that way,

we should slow down our decision making enough to check in with God to be sure of what He wants.

3. [Romans 12:2](#) (NKJV)

² And do not be conformed to this world (stop thinking like the world thinks), but **be transformed by the renewing (*changing*) of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

Two things here:

1. If you're truly living the Christian life, your thinking must change from the old ways of thinking, to the thinking of a mature christian who now gets better and better at thinking like God wants us to think. ("Be transformed by the changing of your mind to think like God thinks.")
 2. If we could get to the place that we see everything in life like God wants us to think, THEN we could pretty much predict what the will of God is on most things.
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4. [John 4:35](#) (NIV)

³⁵ Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, **open your eyes and look** at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.

The only way you could know God has people ready to be saved is if you open your spiritual eyes to see what He wants to show you, see the open doors of opportunities to reach the ones that are ready for God to be in their lives. Then say what He wants you to say.

In other words, we are walking around not even looking for spiritual opportunities. Our mind is too full of other stuff.

5. [John 5:19](#) (NKJV)

¹⁹ Then Jesus answered and said to them, "**Most assuredly, I say to you, 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.**

There is a twofold method to Jesus knowing what the Father wanted to do:

1. Even Jesus, the Son of God, part of the trinity, even He understood He could not do anything without the Father's help. *So, why do we think we are so smart?*
2. This then caused Jesus to be looking and listening for what the Father is already doing, then align himself with the Father.

Jesus worded it pretty much like this "**... for whatever He (the Father) does, I am so in tune to Him that I see it, and then do the same thing.**"

Jesus was the pattern on how we are to live, too. So, we have to understand that His twofold method must be ours as well:

1. I can do nothing on my own,
 2. I can only do what I see the Father doing, and then make sure I do that.
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It is always interesting how people overlook, or downplay their own issues, but make huge issues out of what they think someone else is doing wrong. Denial can be a huge hindrance in our own growth and change because we tend to overlook our own issues. I personally believe ALL of us have at least some denial in us. We tend to know what we do well, then fail to look at where we still do not do things well.

It is why David prayed that God would help him see himself. David prayed things like "**Search me, O Lord, and see if there is any wicked way in me.**" ([Psalm 139:23-24](#)) David knew enough about life, and himself, that he was convinced he probably was not seeing the areas in life that he needed to still change in. He was not seeing his own denials.

So, let's begin to put together the main point of today's sermon. So far, we have looked at scripture about the fact that God wants to speak to us, and use us. He wants us to see everything from His perspective. We also saw that we need to have a mindset that we always need Him.

Now let's look closer at some ways that:

II. Our own "Preconceived ways of thinking" can definitely interfere with our ability to hear God.

4 Examples of preconceived ways of thinking that can hinder our ability to hear God:

1. "God wants me to be a good person, to get along with other people, and basically God wants others to see me as a loving person. This is what my witness is all about."

Does God want us to be like that? I would say "He sure does." But, here is where the problem exists. Our main focus of our thinking is trying to be nicey nice. Our focus is on what we have decided that we need to be doing. It is on your image of how we think we need to project ourselves.

While we are thinking that way:

Are you seeing what the Father is doing? Are you seeing things that the Father wants you to see while you are with someone? Or are you mainly thinking about what you need to be doing for that image of nicey nice? Is the focus so much on what you need to do, rather than hearing God telling you things?

My answer would be that if your mindset, or preconceived way of thinking is mainly focussed on what you need to do, you will probably NOT see what the Father wants you to see. You will probably NOT be saying what the Father wants you to say. *Why?* Because your preconceived thinking is "I want and need to be seen as loving."

Let's look at one example of things that God may want you to do, or say:

1.) You are with someone who is "trashing" someone else.

In your effort to be loving and nice, you either say nothing about it, or you sympathize with them. In other words, You let the trash talk go. In the course of your preconceived ways of thinking of being nicey nice, you think things like "Well, I don't want to get in the middle of it." (between them and the person they are trashing)

I understand the basic thinking of that, *but what if God wants you to say something?* If your thinking is "I don't want to get in the middle of it, and yet God wanted you to say something, your way of thinking prevents you from hearing God.

I am not saying that every time you hear someone trashing someone else, that you have to say something the first time you hear it. God may NOT want you to say something the first time you heard the gossip. I say this because it could make the person who is gossiping think you are going to get onto them everytime they do anything or say anything that you perceive is wrong.

So, only God knows if now is the time to say something, or what you should say, etc. My point is that your preconceived way of thinking that God wants you to be this nicey nice person, can be the very thing that is keeping you from hearing God, & knowing if you should say something, or not. And, even what you should say.

I do believe that if this person continues to keep gossiping a lot, you have a responsibility to say something. But, it must be done in the way that Jesus did things as described in [John 12:49](#).

It must be done:

1. in God's timing, (when He wants you to do it)

"For I did not speak of my own accord," ...

2. and you must say it with God's words, "... but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say ..."

3. and then we say it how God wants us to say it (say it kind, or say it more firm) "... and how to say it."

The entire verse looks like this:

[John 12:49](#) (NIV)

⁴⁹ For **I did not speak of my own accord,** but the Father who sent me commanded me **what to say** and **how to say it.**

You might be thinking right now "Well, that's not me. I can't confront people like that."

All I am saying is your job is to always hear God, and be available to do, or say what He tells you. And, that's never going to happen, if you are so focussed on your preconceived idea of always being nicey nice.

If your kids are out of line with something, would you not say something? Or would you let it go because you want them to see that you as loving?

My mom was very loving, but if you were out of line, she would tell you about it.

Here is something I have learned from the ministry. Every time I let something go with

a person who had an attitude in the church, they never changed. In fact, they continued to have their attitude until they eventually left. Because of that, my view on speaking to people has now changed. Yes, I hate confrontation, too. But, I will do it because apparently people as a whole, regularly refuse to see themselves, especially when they get mad at someone.

Here is the main ministry God has given me. It is not that I don't focus on anything but these 4 things. But, these 4, have been the highest emphasis in my ministry:

1. Talking about our need to hear God through His Holy Spirit. We have to be led by the Holy Spirit. *What good is our christian life without it being constantly led by God?* It is vital to the christian life that we try hard to always hear God.
2. Living our lives so we are constantly trying to see what the Father is doing, so we can unite with Him and do the same.
3. Attitude issues, and how that godly people should, or should not, handle things.
4. Helping people see how much pride runs their lives, and how little humility is in their lives. Then helping them understand how this effects their attitudes, their actions, and even their decisions.

MANY people have left churches because of their pride and their failure to humbly learn what God was trying to teach them.

I can tell you this, most people who have left this church left it for one of the above 4 reasons, if not all 4 of those reasons. And, every one of them did not think they were the problem.

So, on this first preconceived way of thinking, thinking God only wants you to be nicey nice and to be seen as loving, can actually keep your mind so focussed on how you need to be, that it is keeping you from doing or saying what God wants from you. Chances are you won't even hear what God wants from you.

God may be wanting to give you things to say or do that will help others. The problem is you are too focussed on yourself and how you are supposed to act. Be nice, but let God speak to you and through you to help others.

A 2nd preconceived way of thinking is really the opposite of our first one. Instead of being nicey nice, we think our job for God is to go around figuring out what is wrong with everyone.

2. Judging others can definitely keep us from hearing God, and from seeing how God wants us to help others.

I am going to spend a lot of time on this one, more than the other points because we have to see how dangerous this preconceived way of thinking is. But, by the time we get to the end of this one, we will clearly see the difference in being a Judger, and being a person whom God speaks through to help people be all that God wants them to be.

First of all, we have to understand that judging is NOT what God wants us to do. Really, it is strictly forbidden in the bible. It is so strictly forbidden that God says "In the same measure, or how strict you judge others, is how strict (same measure you used on others)

I am going to judge you." ([Matt 7:1-5](#))

The way church used to be many years ago:

When I was growing up as a kid I can remember that a lot of people who went to many churches mainly heard sermons about what they should not do in life, how they should not live. So, the Christians who sat in those churches and who heard those sermons, began to think that their job was to go around correcting people on their morals. They thought that was an effective way to witness for God. They didn't understand that if people truly get saved, all the morals of what is right and wrong will usually get corrected between them and God. But, they were trying to clean people up before they ever got saved.

God did not call us to be the "Right and Wrong Police." He did not call us to go around and try to figure out what is wrong with other people. He did not call us to judge other people.

So, how could we expect to hear God talking to us when the bible has already strictly forbidden us judging other people, yet we are doing it anyway?

When you judge others, your mind is focussed on what is wrong with other people. That preconceived way of thinking will keep you from hearing God, getting His insight, and doing or saying what He wants you to do.

I believe what God wants us to do is when we see things in others that God wants us to see, we are here to help them, to give an insight. I will talk about more of that in a few minutes. But, first, let's look at why people judge other people.

There can be many reasons people choose to judge others. Here are 5 possibilities:

1. The Judger has a low self-esteem, and they judge others so they can bring them down to their level, so that it makes themselves look better. (What I would tell that person is to grow with God, and He will make you feel better about yourself. Stop tearing down people to feel better)
2. Some people judge others because they think the Christian life is all about helping God out, by straightening out others.
3. A person is very perfectionistic on themselves, and then they put that on other people.

My personal view on that is "I don't care if you want to be perfectionistic on yourself, but do not put that on me. I don't want to live like that. I treat myself better than that.

With perfectionism, sometimes it is because their mind thinks they know the right way people should think, or the right way people should do things. Or, even what people should, or should not do. These kind of people have no clue that this line of thinking is very prideful. *Who are they to think they know what is wrong with everyone else?*

4. A person is very opinionated. These kind of people can become very judgemental.
5. A person has anger issues, and when they get mad at others, they put them on their "list of condemned people." Now, nothing they ever do will be good enough. And, every borderline thing they do will be always turned into something bad.

So, for us, here we are in in a wonderful church setting where everyone is good to every

one. It is the best atmosphere I have ever seen. It is something I want to see us keep. But, we should remind ourselves that Satan is not going to like this, and eventually he is going to take the weakest links in the church, meaning people who have attitude issues, or who are very opinionated, or people who like to judge others, and he is going to try to use them to stop what God is doing here.

Here is the difference between judging others and doing the will of God with others:

Judging is looking for fault in others, then discounting that person. It will usually move into labeling them next, with things like "They are like _____." Or "They are this kind of a person _____." It becomes very similar to a grudge view.

Now, the Judger sees the "labeled person" as someone who cannot do anything right. Every thought or comment about that person will be negative. And, if they do anything that is questionable, or subject to interpretation, the judger immediately turns it into something totally bad.

This person's preconceived ways of viewing others will absolutely keep them from hearing God. Their entire way of thinking is ungodly. God did not call us to judge others.

The 2nd way of viewing people is God's way for us to do it:

When a person truly walks with God, by the ways of the bible, they are not naive. They can see the faults of others.

1. But they are not going around trying to look for the faults of others.
2. In addition, they do not go around thinking they (themselves) know the right way of doing everything. Prideful people think like that, not humble people.
3. When a true, godly christian sees the faults in others, they should think this way:
"Well, that is not the way I do things, or the way I might prefer it be done. But hey, I love them for all their other qualities. I choose to overlook our differences. Besides, I'm not perfect either."

They just want to love others, and help others, not focus on what they don't like, or agree with. They understand [1 Peter 4:8](#) ... love covers over a multitude of sins.

Another way a godly person would think, instead of judging, would be like this:

4. "If God wants me to help them in any way, I'm available. I just want everyone to be all of that God wants for them to be."
5. The godly person has taught themselves, with God's help, to not be easily offended. Being easily offended is sometimes a root of judging.

I would like to someday reach a point where it is harder and harder to offend me. I think that would be a great goal for every christian.

If it becomes very hard to offend you, you can now hear God better. You are no longer focussed at being irritated at people. Instead, you can help people.

6. We are here on earth to do God's will. A lot of the will of God is going to be helping other people. So, if the only ones you ever help is the ones you like, chances are you are not accomplishing a lot. *However, what if you could help someone who was a*

real pain? What if God would take away how easily you are offended, and replace it with the perfect words at the perfect time to help turn the difficult person around? Would that not be the greater person to help? Would that not have a greater accomplishment?

Christians spend WAY too much time judging and condemning others, holding grudges, being easily offended, etc. *If we could get past all that nonsense, how much impact could we have on people who need the extra insights that God would give you to say to them?*

In the book of Genesis, we see where Joseph was so focussed on pleasing God, he did his best to overlook the offense that his brothers did to him. Why? Because Joseph knew he was here on earth to do God's will. He did not focus on being offended, or what is wrong with other people. Really, if anyone had a reason to be mad at someone, Joseph would be that person. Instead, he became a person who touched people's lives everywhere he went - as a slave, in a prison, with interpretation of dreams, and as a leader.

Look at this famous saying of his to his brothers when he met them years later:
Genesis 50:19-20 (NIV)

¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? (*I am not God. Judging is up to Him. I'm not here to judge.*)

²⁰ **You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good** to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

When you choose to judge others, you miss the point of what God is trying to do.

Even Jesus Himself said:

John 12:47 (NKJV)

⁴⁷ "... **I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.**

So, ask yourself this morning: *Which one am I? Do I see myself as a person who came to judge what is wrong with everyone, or do I see myself as a person to try to overlook the offenses of others, try to help others, and save the world?*

The 2nd preconceived way of thinking was judging others. That has to get out of the way or we will never hear God in order to help others.

What if the preconceived way of thinking had to do with this next one?

- 3. "I want to just relax, be myself, and be seen as a open, or fun, person. I trust everyone I am with right now. I'm relaxed in my current setting, not expecting any problem, or anything God wants me to do.**

To be honest with you, I actually love being in the mindset of #3. I love not having to focus on looking for issues, or problems. It is so much more comfortable for me. I can get like this when I am around people I think I can trust. I'm comfortable to totally be myself.

Example:

So, let's say that you go out to eat somewhere with someone you really like and trust. Your focus is to be yourself and have fun with the people you are with. That's not a bad thing. But, let's say there is a waitress there that you are barely noticing. Maybe God wants you to notice her, to pray in your mind for her. *Are you going to have a hard time hearing God talking to you because of your preconceived relaxed thinking?*

I can tell you, for me, this has been one of the problems I have had. I am so relaxed that I get caught off guard when something something negative happens, especially when someone says, or does something, out of line. I am caught off guard so much that I don't say anything. Sometimes that is not all bad. But, others times, I should have addressed the issue. My problem is I entered into that situation not expecting anyone to be out of line. I was relaxed, having fun, and got totally surprised. If I would have not had such a strong preconceived view of resting my mind, I would have heard God better, and said what He wanted me to say.

John 4:35 (NIV)

³⁵ Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, **open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe** for harvest.

Jesus was pointing out to His disciples that their mind was on something else. They were not seeing what God wanted them to see, that people were ripe and ready for salvation.

This 4th, and final example relates a lot to people who are:

4. **Very task-oriented. Their preconceived thinking is focussed on what all they have to get done. They are so focussed on that, that God would have a hard time getting them to hear Him, and what He wanted them to do, or say.**

This one should be easy for you to see what is wrong. They are totally focussed on what they have to get done, to the point that if a chance to help someone came up, they would not see it. Or, if God wanted them to call someone to check on them, they would never hear that from God. Their mind is totally preoccupied with what they HAVE TO get done.

Ask yourselves this morning:

How busy am I? If God was trying to talk to me, could He get past my busy-ness? Would I even be able to hear Him?

Isn't that the story of the good samaritan? In that story many people passed by the person who needed help, a few of which, because they were too busy to stop?

Look at how God chose to speak to Elijah in

1 Kings 19:11-13 (NKJV)

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.**

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 speaks most of the time in a still small voice. That is precisely when Elijah started to hear God.

Summary

Today was a message I have never talked about. God started showing me this several weeks ago about ways our preconceived thinking keeps us from hearing Him. *If God speaks often with a still small voice, is your mind so full of your own ways of thinking that you would never hear Him?*

Retraining our preconceived ways of thinking is so important to our being able to hear God. Changing your thinking so you can do 2 things at once, but be primarily focussed on what God might be wanting to say to you.

Praying always, can keep us in the habit of trying to always hear from God wherever we are at. Even just learning to constantly say things like "Thank you God for that parking spot up close." It retrains your thinking to where you are in touch with God more. You're listening more.

We are going to have to work hard at changing any preconceived thinking. So, much of it is a part of who we have always been, how we have always thought, what is constantly on our mind.

Learning to identify preconceived ways of thinking that keep you from hearing God and keep you from saying or doing what He wants you to do, is the starting point. Today we talked about just a few ways we have preconceived thinking. There are probably many more.

David prayed for God to show him his secret sins. He also prayed for any areas he had denial about.

Jesus said in:

[John 4:34](#) (NIV)

³⁴ "My food," said Jesus, "**is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.**"

This is OUR job, too - to do the will of God that has been assigned to my life, & therefore finish His work.

[Acts 17:28](#) (NIV)

²⁸ "**For in him we live and move and have our being.'...**"

[Isaiah 55:8](#) (NKJV)

⁸ "For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, Nor *are* your ways My ways," says the LORD.

Closing prayer - Lee Conner