

What To Do When It's Hard To Hear

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Thesis: It is sometimes hard to hear God; what you do in those times is crucial. Hearing problems

Text: *"4 ..His sheep follow him **because they know his voice.** 5 But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they **do not recognize a stranger's voice.**"*(John 10:4-5 NIV)

Outline:

- **What to do with SILENCE.**
- What was the last thing God told you?
- **What to do in STORMS**
- How to cut through the noise.
- **What to do with SHAMS (Counterfeits and spirits of deception)**
- False messages and messengers.

Intro – Humor

A marine biologist was telling his friends about some of his most recent research findings.

"Some whales can communicate at a distance of 300 miles," he said.

"What on earth would one whale say to another 300 miles away?" asked his sarcastic friend.

"I'm not absolutely sure," the expert said, "but it sounds something like 'Can you hear me now?'"

This series is about hearing from God. Pastor Ken has talked to us about:

Part 1 The importance of hearing from God and how God speaks to us.

Part 2 Why it is sometimes hard to hear from God.

Part 3 Preparing your heart to hear from God.

Tonight we're looking at "What To Do When It's Hard to Hear."

We're going to talk about:

- **What to do with SILENCE.**
- **What to do in STORMS.**
- **What to do with SHAMS (false messages and false messengers).**

First, let's look at **What to do with SILENCE.**

Sometimes it's scary when God seems silent. Psalm – David – "Oh, Lord, do not be silent." There are times in my life when I can't hear God's voice.

What do you do during those seasons? Do you crash and burn? If you're not careful, when God is silent, that is when we make the biggest mistakes in life.

1. When God seems silent, check your heart for unconfessed sin.

- The wages of sin is death (separation from God); cutting the wires.
- Before we get mad at him; cry out to Him. "Search me, oh God."
- Don't blame others. Nobody cuts of my wires (my communion with God) but me.
- Jesus came to earth to repair broken relationships with God. Jesus came saying, "My Father," and gave us the privilege to say, "Our Father!"
- *If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. (Psalm 66:18 NIV)*
- Right along with that is the truth that, "If I cherish sin in my heart, I won't be able to hear his voice."

2. When God seems silent, it may be to guard us from ourselves.

We are so inclined to hear what we want to hear. This is the greatest "deception danger" most of us face.

Lord, if you want me to go fishing today, make the light turn green. Praise the Lord, it went from red to green! God wants me to take a day off and go fishing!

That's kind of funny if it's about going fishing on a sunny day instead of going to work. But what about the situation in which we rationalize sin to the point that we hear God saying that our marriage isn't going to work, besides, I'm not happy and the Bible says God wants me to be happy and if I could get hooked up with someone who really understands and appreciates me that would be better for everyone involved. After all, God wants us to be happy and fulfilled, right?

We aren't ready to face what He has for us with the depth we have now. If He shows us a peak, we get proud. If He showed us a valley, we get bitter. Or we would try to bring it to pass in our own power.

3. When God seems silent, it may be to check our obedience to what we've already heard.

- What was the last thing God told you? Did you do it? Are you doing it?

- Truth in our heads alone makes us Pharisees. Truth in our heart makes us disciples.
- "God left Hezekiah alone only to test him that he might know all that was in his heart."
- When God seems silent, you need to have something in your memory that is solid. Scripture in your heart is like wires that hold a sapling up during a storm.
- We pray and ask God for things we should obviously know is not the Lord's will. We should have internalized God's word so much that we know we shouldn't even be asking for that. Don't ask for a rhema that violates God's logos.

What is the last thing God told you? Have you done it? Are you doing it? Then why keep asking for God to talk to you now? Are you hoping God will change his mind and tell you something different?

It's not what you know, it's what you do with what you know!

What to do in STORMS

- Life has storms. Storms are noisy and scary. We live in a noisy world ... radios going, etc. ... we have to have noise (From Old English referring to strife or conflict. From Latin 'Nausea.")
- White noise. White noise is a sound that contains every frequency within the range of human hearing in equal amounts.
- Music – every generation says the music of the next generation is "noise."

How to cut through the noise

Withdraw to a quiet place. If you can't go away, go inside! Turn off the sources of noise that become so much a part of our environment. Background music, elevator music, entertainment.

Tune your inner ear to God's frequency. This can be Bible reading and meditation, listening to the appropriate music, a discussion with a mature Christian friend.

Listen to the Shepherd's voice. Training for recognizing counterfeit money has nothing to do with counterfeit money and everything to do with the real thing.

*"4 ..His sheep follow him **because they know his voice.** 5 But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they **do not recognize a stranger's voice.**"(John 10:4-5 NIV)*

What to do with **SHAMS** (False messages and False messengers)

Astrology- horoscope, fortune cookies, spiritual voices, and well meaning Christians.

Odd Prophecies:

1. "I am not in this place!" saith God. "I mean it, I'm not in this place!"
2. "Yea, My children, I know you get scared. I get scared sometimes Myself."
3. "Yea, My children, I have been in Africa for the last few weeks, but I am back now to hear and answer your prayers."
4. "As I have said in My Word, I think it's in Jeremiah somewhere..."

Possible sources of an impression or a prophetic word:

- God's Spirit
- Human spirit and mind. A fallen world (Romans 3:23) (religious people trying to connect with a creator. Self-made spirituality with YOU as the center.) Our ability to mis-hear or make up God's voice (Ezekiel 13: -- their own imagination/spirit)
- Satanic spirit source. Subtle and convincing enemy -- Satan, (2 Corinthians 11: -- even Satan can disguise; Matthew 4: Satan can be a voice)
- Mixture of any two or three of these.

4 After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they recognize his voice. 5 They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't recognize his voice." (John 10:4-5 NLT)

Five Ways To Test An Impression

The Bible says to test the spiritual source. (1 John 4:1) *(insert verse)*

Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world. (1 John 4:1 NLT)

The Bible says revelations should be weighed carefully. (1 Corinthians 14:29)
Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. (1 Corinthians 14:29 NIV)

So we're going to look at these five ways to test an idea from God. But first let me make this point. God doesn't like it when people put words in His mouth and say, "God told me to do this," when God didn't really tell them. So how do you know when it's God talking to you? **Five ways to check and see if it's really from God:**

1. Does it agree with the Bible?

That's the first way you can test an idea or an impression. Does it agree with the Bible? Because God will never contradict what He's already said in His word. The Bible is God's word given to us over thousands of years and God will never tell you to violate a principle that's in this because God is consistent. So He'll never tell you to ignore what He's already said. He'll never tell you to deny what He's already said. He'll never tell you to contradict what He's already said.

2. Is it consistent with how God has directed me?

Before you were born God planned the contribution He wanted you to make in this world and He gave you the shape. That means the abilities, the heart, the passion, all the things it takes to be able to complete that contribution that He made you for. He shaped and designed you for a specific purpose.

3. Does my church family confirm it?

First you ask, Does this idea agree with the Bible? Second, Does it make me more like Christ? Then third, Does my church family confirm this idea? You see, you need the wisdom and counsel and advice of other godly people in your life to help you stay on track. God never meant for you to go through life as a Lone Ranger, on your own. That's why He created the church family because we need each other. Nobody has all the answers. Nobody has it all together. Nobody knows the right decision every time. Nobody. Not me. Not you. Not anybody else. That's why we need a church family. We need spiritually mature friends to bounce ideas off of and get feedback from.

Begin building these relationships on a day-to-day basis. Get in a small group, develop a relationship with other Christians. When the crisis occurs is not the time to try to build the relationship.

4. Is it convicting rather than condemning?

Let me explain the difference. Conviction comes from God. Condemnation comes from the devil. The purpose of conviction is to correct something that's out of whack in your life. The purpose of condemnation is just to put you down and make you feel miserable and guilty and ashamed. The motivation behind conviction is God loves you and wants to help you be better. The motivation behind condemnation is Satan hates your guts and wants to make you miserable. When God speaks to you about an area in your life for conviction He's very specific. Condemnation is general. Conviction is specific.

5. Do I sense God's peace about it?

If you get an impression and it makes you feel pressured, it makes you feel overwhelmed, it makes you feel confused, you ought to question whether that impression is from God. Because God wants us to sense His peace, not to live lives of pressure.

Close:

Let's put our things aside and think about what we've just heard.

- Sometimes it's hard to hear God's voice because we are in a season of silence.
- Sometimes it's hard to hear because we're in a storm.
- Sometimes it's hard to hear because it really isn't God speaking – it just doesn't ring true. Or because we've been misled before and it's hard to trust.

Are any of these situations that you have or that you are experiencing? How many are finding it difficult in the season you're in right now to hear God's voice clearly?

Questions for study and discussion:

1. Have you experienced a time when it was difficult to hear God's voice in a season of Silence, Storm, or due to a Sham (false message or messenger)? What was that like for you? How did you deal with it and get through it?
2. Have you ever been intimidated or felt excluded by the terminology many Christians use; "God spoke to me.." "God told me to tell you.."? What are some ways we can express the experience of "hearing God's voice" so that it isn't intimidating or excluding of others?
3. Can you think of other ways besides the five described above to test an impression to see if it's really from God?