

# Tuning In To God

Teaching given by Peter Warren at FGPC, November – December 2016

## 1. The More Sure Word of Prophecy

### Proverbs 4.20

All this year we have been studying around the subject of Wisdom.

- Walking In Wisdom
- The Blessedness of Rest
- Humility In Wisdom

To close this year we are going to look at a new subject related to wisdom – that of hearing from God, or ‘Tuning In to God’ as I have titled it.

A few weeks ago I was scrolling through social media and saw a couple of posts about staying tuned into God and this set me thinking.

As a young boy I used to live very near to Heathrow Airport and our home was under one of the approach flight paths. So when the wind was blowing in a certain direction, normally accompanied by rain, the planes would fly over the top of our house. I was a keen ‘plane spotter’ and enjoyed watching them arrive from all over the world. I used to spend many hours over at the airport too, watching the aircraft come and go. I would record in a book all the registration numbers of the planes I saw. That was my hobby for many years but it became much more interesting when, for Christmas one year, I was bought a shortwave radio with which I could tune in to the conversations between the cockpit and control tower. This radio featured a dial tuner and tuning in was a precise art, if it wasn’t exact then all you heard was static noise and crackly broken voices, but when it was spot on the voices became very clear and understandable.

Also I recall my grandfather telling me of the days when they used to tune in the old radiogram to listen to the broadcasts, or making and tuning in an old crystal set – again these needed to be precise in order to pick up the signal.

If we want to hear from God we too have to be tuned in to him, slightly off and we won’t hear him but rather all the ‘static noise’ of the world. It is this thought that the wise king wrote about in Proverbs

“[My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings.](#)” - Proverbs 4.20

twice in this verse he says similar things as if to underline and emphasise the importance of the theme.

- **Attend** – listen, hear, pay attention, take note and mark well. A good definition of this word is ‘to prick up the ears’.
- **Incline** – stretch, spread, turn and bend towards .

In other words he is saying – BE TUNED IN

This was a problem that God's people had – few heard what he was saying. In the generations after the Exodus, people like Moses and Joshua heard the voice of God and a few others, but on the whole the people weren't hearing Him.

### **1 Samuel 3.1**

“the word of the Lord was rare in those days” – it wasn't that the word of God was not available – rather men weren't hearing what God was saying.

Many Christians are suspicious of those who say they hear from God – we should be careful about those who do not hear from God.

Jesus said that we can and should hear His voice. Three times in **John 10** we read “my sheep hear my voice” (John 10.3, 16, 27)

In Proverbs we read that we should “incline our ear” - tune our ears to his sayings so we can hear from Him.

### **How do we hear from God?**

This does not mean that we need to hear a clear audible voice coming from Heaven. Actually hearing a voice, or having God speak through angel visitations, visions or dreams are very rare. Be wary of those who hear from God this way on a regular basis. We are told to test or judge the spirits that they come from God - “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” 1 John 4.1

The first and the most basic way of us hearing from God is through the Word. This is the benchmark or standard by which we judge the spirits, dreams and audible voices we hear.

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10.17

### **Matthew 17.1-9**

- Jesus took Peter, James and John up a mountain
- He was transfigured (transformed) in front of them – His clothes became white like light and his face shone like the sun
- Moses and Elijah appear and talk with Jesus
- A cloud comes down on the mountain and God speaks from the cloud
- The disciples hear this voice

### **2 Peter 1.16-21**

Peter states:

- he was with Jesus on the mountain
- he heard the voice with his own ears
- we have something more certain and sure than the voice – the Scripture “We have also a more sure word of prophecy...” (vs19, AV)
- we will do very well if we listen to the word, it is like a light in a dark place to show us the way - “...which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place...” (vs19)

The Word of God, the prophecy of Scripture - This is the most sure way of hearing from God.

*The more you know of the book the less you can be deceived. The less you know the more opportunities you have of being deceived*

In times past God used various ways to speak to His people - angelic visitations, dreams, visions. He had to use these ways because they did not have the written word. We do not need the dreams or visitations because we have the word.

## **2. Distractions Disengage Us**

### **Proverbs 4.20**

Last week we began a new topic related to wisdom, that of hearing from God. I have called this series 'Tuning In To God'.

*"My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. "* - Proverbs 4.20

twice in this verse he says similar things as if to underline and emphasise the importance of the theme.

- **Attend** – listen, hear, pay attention, take note and mark well. A good definition of this word is 'to prick up the ears'.
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In other words he is saying – BE TUNED IN

A few weeks ago I was reminded of a radio that I was bought as a present when I was young with which I could tune in to a radio station with the dial. Finding music stations was fairly easy, but my real reason for wanting the radio was to be able to tune in to the aircraft, because I lived very close to Heathrow Airport and had a keen interest in planes. Tuning in to this signal was a little more difficult and required precision tuning. Slightly off and the signal was not clear but noisy and could easily jump to a stronger signal.

The same is true when it comes to listening to the voice of God, your spirit needs to be finely tuned in to Him to be able to hear Him.

*"To hear the voice of God you must turn down the world's volume"*

### **Luke 10 38-42**

*"Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. (39) And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. (40) But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." (41) And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. (42)*

But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.””

Jesus was in the house and He was speaking. But not everyone was hearing, not everyone was tuned in to Him – some were listening to other stations

Martha was **distracted** with many things

- much serving
- she could see all the work that was to be done
- she could see that her sister Mary was doing nothing to help.

So she approached Jesus and asked Him to tell Mary to help her.

*“Don’t You care Lord that she has left me to do all the work... tell her to help me”*

Jesus' response to Martha's request was simple - “**Martha you have many things on your mind...**” (vs41). The volume of all these things were drowning out the voice of Jesus.

It is not good to have many things on your mind – many things will cause you to become distracted, that is to divert your attention and focus from that which is necessary.

**“You cannot serve two masters” – Matthew 6.24,**

after Jesus said these words He went on to teach about worrying about the cares of this life:

- what we will eat
- what we will drink
- what we will wear

What is worry? The word literally means to take thought and in particular anxious thought (see KJV). Webster's defines worry as *'to tease, trouble, harass and vex the mind'*

Jesus told Martha that she was worried and troubled about many things. She was taking anxious thought about all these things – they were troubling her, harassing her.

She was tuned in to another station – she was listening to the worry and anxious thoughts that were on her mind. We cannot be tuned in to two things at a time.

We cannot focus on two things – look at the camera (focus on near object loses clarity on distant and vice-versa) **(story of Kingsley at Kokrobite beach)**

We need to be tuned in properly to hear from God.

## One Thing

Jesus continued with his response to Martha -

**“One thing is needed and Mary has chosen it and I'm not going to take that from her”**  
(vs42)

Mary was focused on (tuned in to) Jesus, she was single minded. She had chosen that. She wasn't listening to the same station that her sister Martha was listening to.

Jesus was telling Martha that she needed to turn down the world's volume and tune in to the voice of God, tune in to what He was saying. This is what Mary had done:

- she sat at Jesus' feet
- she heard Him teach the word

We too can choose to remain single minded, not to allow distractions to divide our attention and focus.

“The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine **eye be single**, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine **eye be evil**, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness! No man can serve two masters:...” **Matthew 6.22-23** (AV)

Jesus refers to our eye being either single or evil.

**single** - the Greek word used here is *haplous* and has the meaning ‘*simple, single, whole or clear*’ The idea is that it is free of any obstructions or impurities

**evil** - the Greek word used here is *poneros* and has the primary meaning ‘*full of labours, annoyances, hardships*’ (*Joseph Thayer's Greek Definitions*) it can also mean ‘*something that is bad or diseased*’. These labours, annoyances and hardships are distractions.

Having a single or clear focus brings light, it brings revelation – we will be in that position of receiving/hearing from God – anything else is evil

Mary had chosen that, we too can make that choice. We must turn the antenna toward God and tune in

### **Philippians 3.13-15**

“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but **one thing I do**, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, **as many as are mature, have this mind**; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.”

Paul too made a choice. He writes that he is still running his race – he hasn't arrived at the finish.

One thing I do – staying focused, looking unto Jesus, pressing toward the goal that's in Christ Jesus, forgetting all else and reaching forward.

He also states that mature people should have this mind – single, focused – tuned in

### **3. Communion and Fellowship**

#### **Proverbs 4.20**

“My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. ” - Proverbs 4.20

This verse is telling us that we need to tune our ears in to hear the voice of God. We must give our attention to hearing God speak when we read His word.

A couple of weeks ago we said that the primary way God speaks to us is through His word – in order to hear Him speak to us we must be familiar with and read His word.

We do not need an angel to speak to us, nor do we need to hear a loud clear audible voice – these are quite rare occurrences. We see in 2 Peter 2.16 that the apostle said that we have a “more sure word of prophecy”. The word of God is more sure, more certain than the audible voice.

Last week we were studying that distractions will cause us to become unattentive and we will tune out and not hear Him. This means that when we come to the word of God, in order to hear from God, we must be focused and give our attention to it. That means no distractions – go into the secret place where it’s just you and God. Switch off the phone, radio, tv or anything else that could take your attention. Cast down any thoughts of work, chores or any pressing needs you have and allow God to speak to you.

“To hear the voice of God you must turn down the world’s volume”

#### **How does God speak to us?**

He will impress upon you what He wants you to know. While reading the word a verse or portion of a verse becomes alive, almost like it jumps off the page. We will suddenly see something in it – this is God speaking to us.

One of the first things the enemy will do is to distract you, to get you to divert your attention from praying or reading the word, so that you do not hear from God.

Remember that faith comes by hearing the word. If we are not hearing the word then faith cannot come and we can be easily swayed.

“.... the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” **John 10.3-5**

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” **John 10.27**

Jesus said that His sheep hear His voice, they know His voice, they follow Him because they know His voice – it is a familiar voice and they will not follow any other voice.

Knowing the difference between the voice of God and other voices comes from being familiar with the voice of God. We get familiar with God's voice by spending time with Him and reading His word.

Although I have spoken with thousands of people during the course of my life, some on several occasions, I'm not sure I would recognise their voice on their phone. However, whenever my daughters call I instantly recognise their voice, I don't have to ask who they are or what their name is. I know them, I know their voice – how? We are familiar with each other, we've spent time together, listening to each other, talking – it's called relationship.

### **John 14.22-26**

Judas asks the question “How is it you are going to manifest yourself to us and not the world?” (vs22)

- Jesus told him that it would come through relationship – The Godhead indwelling in us, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (vs23) “we will come to him and make our home with him.”
- If we love God then we will keep His word – that word comes through hearing Him, which is an overflow of fellowship.
  - If you have a relationship but no fellowship, you don't really have a relationship. There is fellowship in relationship, communion in relationship.
- The Holy Spirit is our teacher – how can one teach without discourse, without communication. God speaks to us through the Holy Spirit. Part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to teach us and bring to our remembrance (cause us to recall) everything we have heard.

### **John 16.12-14**

- Again Jesus tells us that He will send the Holy Spirit, who will speak to us such things as God wants to say to us. He will take what is from Him and declare them to us.
- There is much more that God wants to say (vs12) and when we are ready to hear them, He will speak to us.

### **Romans 8.14**

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God”

The children of God are led by the Holy Spirit. How does the Holy Spirit lead us – not with a rope around our necks, such as we would lead a donkey. We have just read it in John – He leads by guiding us with the word of God. He reveals it to us so that we walk in it, and follow Him.

A few weeks ago we were studying the lives of some of the Old Testament patriarchs – Enoch, Noah, David - they walked with God, they had fellowship and communion with Him and they heard His voice.

### **2 Corinthians 13.14**

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.”

It is common for us to recite a benediction or a grace. Look at the words of this one, which is a very popular one.

It talks about the *communion of the Holy Spirit* - it is a prayer for the Holy Spirit to lead us and guide us through fellowship (two way communication, one of the meanings of this word is *participation*, there is a sharing in fellowship and communion)

### **1 Corinthians 1.9**

“God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Lastly, we have been created to be in fellowship and relationship with God.

God is faithful – He is faithful to His word. He will fulfil and accomplish all He has spoken.

He saved us to be in fellowship with Him. God didn't create robots – He created a people that He could love and that would love Him. He wanted a relationship and fellowship with His creation, like He had with Adam in the garden, where He walked with him and communed with him (Genesis 3.8).

### **2 Corinthians 6.16**

“And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM. I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE."” (quoting Ezekiel 37.23)

We must be careful who we are fellowshiping with – light and darkness do not mix (vs14-15).

God said ‘He will be our God and we will be His people’

### **Hebrews 8.10-11**

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'know the Lord,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them” (quoting Jeremiah 31.33)

When we commune with the Lord we hear Him speak – He will teach us, He will guide us. We will hear His voice.

see also: Jeremiah 24.7; Jeremiah 32.38; Ezekiel 11.20

## **4. The Inner Witness of the Spirit**

Last week were looking at the theme of communion and fellowship with God through the Holy Spirit as the basis for us hearing from God.

“ (3) .... the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. (4) And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. (5) Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but

will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers..... (27) My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” **John 10.3-5, 27**

Jesus said that His sheep hear His voice, they know His voice, they follow Him because they know His voice – it is a familiar voice and they will not follow any other voice.

Knowing the difference between the voice of God and other voices comes from being familiar with the voice of God. As His children we become familiar with God’s voice by spending time with Him and reading His word, and allowing God to speak to us from His word by the Holy Spirit.

This is the relationship we have with the Holy Spirit. Part of His ministry to us, as the children of God, is to teach us, to lead and guide us into the truth.

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” **John 14.26**

“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. (14) He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.” **John 16.13-14**

### Inner Witness of the Spirit

When we read the word of God, the Holy Spirit brings it alive to us and ministers it to us. This is God speaking, we are hearing from God. But another way the Holy Spirit speaks to us is through what we call the ‘inner witness’ of the Spirit. Again, and I repeat it, the Word of God is our benchmark and what the Spirit witnesses in our inner man must agree with what the word says.

Romans 8.14-16

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (15) For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." (16) The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,”

These few verses tell us that those who are sons of God are led by the Spirit of God and He does that by bringing us into fellowship with the Father and by bearing witness with our spirit.

‘bear witness’ is to testify, agree, confirm, give evidence to the truth.

- We have just read that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth.
- Since we are being led by the Spirit of God we should expect Him to lead and guide us into the truth.
- We shouldn’t wait and expect a voice from heaven – the Holy Spirit ministers (impression, knowing, sense, ‘gut feeling’) to our spirits and our conscience. He bears witness **with our spirit**.

“I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit” **Romans 9.1**

When the early church were seeking a word of direction from God, the Bible tells us that they had a sense of what the Lord was saying:

### **Acts 15.22-34**

“(22) Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren.... (25) it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul.... (28) For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:... (34) However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there.” **Acts 15.22, 25, 28, 34**

The disciples sensed (it seemed good) that these things were from the Lord – “it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us”

### **Acts 16.6-10**

“Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. (7) After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. (8) So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. (9) And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." (10) Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.”

The Holy Spirit did not speak to them in an audible voice forbidding them to go to certain places but the inner witness with their spirit. Then Paul had a dream – and they concluded (the witness in the spirit) that God was leading them to Macedonia.

### **2 Corinthians 2.12-13**

“Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia.”

Paul felt uneasy in his spirit, the prompting of the Holy Spirit, telling him to move on.

In all these instances these references are to the Holy Spirit speaking to them, bearing witness in their spirits.

In Troas Paul had a vision in the night, a dream, inviting him over to Macedonia. So does God use dreams and visions to speak to us – yes, of course, but the primary way is through the Word of God and the leading (inner witness) of the Holy Spirit. Notice that they didn't go to Macedonia because he had the dream but because the leading of the Holy Spirit – they concluded the Lord was leading them.

### Fleeces, Signs and Physical Manifestations

So what about other ways, like signs etc.

**Urim & Thummim** - In the Old Testament when people wanted to hear from God, they went to the priest and consulted what was known as the Urim & Thummim.

“And the governor said to them that they should not eat of the most holy things till a priest could consult with the Urim and Thummim.” **Nehemiah 7.65**

What these were and how they were used is not exactly known among scholars. They appear to be either the stones, or an addition to the stones of the breastplate worn by the priest. Their name means 'Lights and Perfections' and were used to give revelation and understanding on matters, and the will of God was ascertained by them.

**Gideon's Fleece** – In the book of Judges we read about Gideon. In an attempt to test the voice of God he set before the Lord a fleece from a sheep and asked God to confirm His word -

"So Gideon said to God, "If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said— look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said." And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together, he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece; let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew." And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground. " **Judges 6.36-40**

**Casting Lots** - Just after Jesus ascended to His Father, the disciples were left praying. They wanted to find a replacement for Judas. They had a few men in mind and consulted God by casting lots.

"And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles." Acts 1.26

Like these disciples, too often we look for tangible things to direct our spirits. We may not cast lots but we seek signs from God, we test Him with a fleece.

All of the examples given above were before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. After Acts 2 we do not read of the believers/brethren using these means of discernment – the two are not compatible. They may have had visions/dreams but they didn't ask God for a sign.

"For we walk by faith, not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5.7

Our leading comes from what we believe, through faith. It is not based on things we see.

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be." Romans 8.7

"[That is] because the mind of the flesh [with its carnal thoughts and purposes] is hostile to God, for it does not submit itself to God's Law; indeed it cannot." (Amp)

We do not base our hearing from God on tangible things – we have the Word of God and the inner witness of the Spirit. We walk by faith in the Word of God.

Tangible things will only confirm what we already know from the Lord

The Holy Spirit will lead, guide and direct us

## **5. The Practice of Biblical Meditation**

Last week we were looking at the area of the Inner Witness of the Spirit.

**“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” Romans 8.16**

When faced with a decision, a typical response would be to pray about it. The Bible tells us to let ‘peace be the umpire’ (Colossians 3:15). But even so, there can still be uncertainty about the answer. “Was that me, Lord, or was that You?” The good news is that when we spend time daily praying in the spirit, it becomes easier for us to hear the direction of the Holy Spirit as He reveals His will to our spirits,

This can still be an area of confusion when we are learning to walk in the spirit and hear from God. Most of the time we hear our own spirit speaking to our soul, which is our mind, will and emotions. The audible voice of the Lord is rare in most of our lives. Almost every leading we will receive in everyday life will be a prompting, an impression, a thought, an inward witness or a leading from our spirits. The reason it sounds like us is because it is ourselves that we hear, it comes out of our own spirit. The Holy Spirit communicates with our spirits, and our spirits prompt, or enlighten, our minds.

Some have called this inner witness the ‘*still, small voice*’ - many look for God in circumstances, or through tangible things such as visions, signs, fleeces etc. God speaks to us through His word and through the witness of the Spirit – He may use tangible things but these will only confirm what we already know. The prophet was looking for God and he did not find Him in the circumstances, the tangible things but in this ‘still, small voice’

**“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?" ” 1 Kings 19.11-13**

Since God is going to use our spirits, or our conscience (Romans 9.1) to speak to us, which is our mind, will and emotions – our mind must then be ready to hear from Him.

### **Romans 12.2**

**“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”**

We prove what is the good, acceptable and perfect will of God by having our minds (or spirit) renewed.

We renew our minds / spirit with the Word of God, but how? What is the process?

## **Joshua 1.8**

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it....”

Joshua was told to be careful to stay in the word of God – He had to read it, hear it, speak it and meditate it. It was through this that God was going to reveal to him the way and direction he should go as he went through the Promised Land. Following the leading of the Spirit, through meditating on the word, would make his way prosperous and successful

This is another way that we hear from God - through meditation. As we consider, contemplate and ponder the word. The Holy Spirit speaks to us by revealing things that we need to know.

## **What Is Meditation?**

Biblical meditation is not the same as meditation that the world understands. This is rooted in Eastern religions. This type of meditation is emptying the mind, but Christian meditating is filling the mind – with God’s word.

Think of meditating on the word as the act of *reading, thinking on, praying, memorizing, discussing, hearing, or singing God's word.*

The word meditation literally means to ‘murmur or mutter, to ponder’. Note that God told Joshua not to let the word depart from his mouth, but he was to meditate in it – to keep it in his mouth. To keep going over it time and again – not through vainly repeating a word, but through repetitive contemplation.

A good parallel to help you understand this concept is that of the ruminants. These are animals like the sheep, cow, deer, camel. These animals have more than one stomach chamber and when they graze and feed the food goes into one of the chambers. These animals are then able to bring the food back up and chew it again to extract even more nutrients. We call this act ‘chewing the cud’. This act of regurgitation to enable the animal to feed again is just like meditation.

We feed on the word of God, and then through meditation, bring it back and chew it again. When we do this we are allowing the word of God to renew our minds and the Holy Spirit will speak to us through it.

Let us look at some examples from the Scriptures:

## **Acts 10.17-19**

In the verses that preceded these, we read that Peter saw a vision of a large sheet descending from heaven. In this sheet were many different kinds of animals, insects and birds. In the vision he heard a voice telling him to ‘kill and eat’. But Peter’s response was that he wasn’t going to eat anything unclean. Then he heard a strange comment ‘What God has cleansed you must not call common.’ He saw this vision three times and he didn’t understand it and it troubled him.

“Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house,

and stood before the gate. (18) And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there. (19) While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you. (20) Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."

Peter was meditating on this vision –

- he thought about it, he pondered it in his heart,
- no doubt repeating the words to himself 'Rise Peter, kill and eat; Not so Lord, I've never eaten anything that's unclean'
- Why would God tell him to eat unclean animals?

As Peter pondered the vision, the Holy Spirit spoke to him. He heard the voice of God, the prompting of the Spirit inside

Later he testified:

"Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. " (vs 28)

"Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. " (vs34-35)

Where did he get this revelation, this perception? Through meditation – pondering the words that he heard, and being open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

**"I call to remembrance my song in the night; I meditate within my heart, And my spirit makes diligent search." Psalm 77.6**

The psalmist went over the words of a song, he meditated on it

– as we meditate our spirits search for the answer from God. Our spirit communes with God, looking for and seeking the witness of the Spirit.

### **John 15.7**

**"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. "**

We abide or live in the word, not just by reading it, but through mediating it.

The goal is "to let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." (Col 3:16). That is, live in the Word, like it's your spiritual house. Abide in it. Let it saturate your soul. Let it affect you through and through.

We commune with God through His word, not just a fleeting glance but by abiding in it and living in it – that is putting it in the heart.

***a parrot can memorize. Every addict knows a few verses. Satan knows verses. What's the difference? - Its not in the heart.***

**Click the 'save' button that takes it from our head into our heart!**

### **Psalm 119.11, 15-16**

**"Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.... I will meditate on Your precepts, And contemplate Your ways. (16) I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word."**

The psalmist knew the secret of hiding the word in his heart through meditation. He meditated and pondered the word of God through all of life's circumstances. Why because this is where his counsel came from, this is how he heard God's voice to lead him.

- a) While others plot, mediate on God's Word (23)
- b) When down, get up and going, by mediating on the word (25-32)
- c) Delight in God through meditation (47-48)
- d) While others make false accusations, meditate on the word (78)
- e) Meditate on it all day (97)
- f) Grow in understanding beyond your years by meditating on it (99)
- g) Rise early to mediate on the Word (148)

Paul's desire and prayer for Timothy was that God would give him understanding, revelation and leading as he pondered the word of God.

**"Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things" 2 Timothy 2.7**

## **6. Having Ears To Hear**

### **Proverbs 4.20**

**"My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings." - Proverbs 4.20**

We have been studying this verse in Proverbs for some weeks now and have seen

- the Bible is the usual way that God speaks to us
- practice of meditation
- communion and fellowship
- inner witness of the spirit
- distractions cause us to go out of tune

To conclude this teaching we are going to examine the phrase – *incline your ear*.

Previously we have said that this phrase means 'to bend/turn the ear towards' Solomon's instruction, and we have this in many of his proverbs, was that we bend our ears toward his sayings.

Even though we may read our Bibles and pray, there are times that we may not hear God speaking.

I was reading an online article about hearing the voice of God, and a comment was made by one reader that he has never heard God speak, nor had any answers to his prayers for direction – God never speaks to me was his complaint. In a reply to his comment another reader asked him the questions, "do you read the Bible on a daily basis rather than just in church? Do you pray everyday? Assuming the answer is yes to both these, do you actually stop and listen?"

This is the reason why most people don't hear the voice of God, they don't actually take the time to listen to Him.

We have to 'incline our ear' to His sayings – that means listen.

### **Matthew 11.15**

**"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"**

This phrase is repeated 17 times in the Bible

- 1 in Ezekiel
- 8 times in the Gospels (Matthew, Mark & Luke)
- 8 times in Revelation
- 15 of these come directly from the mouth Jesus (and are coloured red!)

Why did Jesus put so much emphasis on listening and hearing. It was how He lived while on earth, He only said and did the things He heard from His Father - and it is essential for our living on earth. It is how we will be guided and led through this life.

Jesus connected our hearing His sayings to a wise man who built his house on rock. We build our house (life) on the Rock of the Word of God by hearing it (Matthew 7.24-26).

We live our lives by faith -

**"For we walk by faith, not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5.7**

**"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2.20**

That faith comes by hearing the word of God -

**"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10.17**

**"But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, (15) and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (16) All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, (17) that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."**

**2 Timothy 3.14-17**

**"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, (16) redeeming the time, because the days are evil. (17) Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is." Ephesians 5.15-17**

Wisdom hears and understands the will of God – we can hear, we should hear from God.

So it is vitally important that we take time to listen to the voice of God. Having ears that hear.

**Revelation 2.7**

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

**Revelation 2.11, 17, 29; Revelation 3.6, 13, 22; Revelation 13.9**

Who will hear?

He who has ears to hear – some have ears that aren't hearing, they aren't listening.

The Spirit is speaking – the problem is why people aren't hearing is that they aren't listening. They are not tuned in to the broadcast.

**Isaiah 28.23**

"Give ear and hear my voice, Listen and hear my speech."

If you're listening you will hear His voice.

**Isaiah 30.21**

"Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," Whenever you turn to the right hand Or whenever you turn to the left. "

We need to tune in and hear what He is saying. We need to incline our ear to His sayings

**1 Corinthians 2.9-10**

"But as it is written: "EYE HAS NOT SEEN, NOR EAR HEARD, NOR HAVE ENTERED INTO THE HEART OF MAN THE THINGS WHICH GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God."

Those who are not listening do not hear, those who are not looking do not see. But God reveals them to us by His Spirit – He is speaking. If you have an ear to hear listen to what the Spirit is saying..

We need to be careful what we hear -

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things...." **2 Timothy 4.3-4**

be watchful in all things – be vigilant, be sober, clear-minded.

Keep focused and tuned in to God.

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*For a free audio mp3 of this teaching and others, please visit the ministry web-site of Peter Warren at [www.voice-faith.com](http://www.voice-faith.com) and connect with us on Facebook (Voice of Faith Ministries International) and Twitter (@VOF\_Ministries)*