

How Can We Be Sure? (Part 1)



Hearing God's Voice (Part 9)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we continue with our theme, "Hearing God's Voice."

As I said earlier in this week, I've found in my own life that hearing God's voice correctly is usually the key factor in achieving true spiritual success.

Today I'm going to deal with an extremely important, practical question directly related to our theme. The question is this: How can we be sure that it really was God's voice we heard? I'm going to explain to you three important ways in which we should look for confirmation that we have heard God's voice aright, three kinds of confirmation.

The first is agreement with Scripture. Does what we believe God has spoken to us agree with the Spirit and the tenor of Scripture? This is of tremendous importance, of supreme importance.

Let me present to you two interrelated facts. The first fact, it's the Holy Spirit who brings God's voice to us. The second fact, the Holy Spirit is the author of all Scripture. This is stated in many passages of the Bible and I'll just quote one. Second Timothy 3:16:

> "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness." (NASB)

"Inspired by God" carries with it the implication that it was the Holy Spirit that inbreathed the Scriptures, that motivated and directed the writers of Scripture. So the Holy Spirit is the ultimate author of all Scripture. Behind all the human writers there is one divine person responsible for the accuracy and authority of Scripture. That divine person is the Holy Spirit.

Now, let's put those two facts together again. It's the Holy Spirit who brings God's voice to us and it's the Holy Spirit who is the author of all Scripture. And one thing we know, the Holy Spirit never contradicts Himself. So the Holy Spirit will never bring to us the voice of God saying something that does not agree with Scripture.

So, the first way to be sure that you've heard the voice of the Lord is to check what you believe you've heard with Scripture. Does it agree with the words, with the Spirit, and with the principles of Scripture? If not, be sure it was not God's voice that you heard. We must be very careful to reject all Satan's counterfeits. Satan has many counterfeits for the voice of the Lord.

There's a passage in Isaiah 8:19-22 which really says it so clearly in a way that's so appropriate for our culture and our situation today. This is what Isaiah says:

> "When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, [the law and the testimony, the Old and the New Testament, the Scripture] they have no light of dawn; they're in the dark. [And then this is the judgment on those that bring messages or listen to messages that are not from God:] Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and looking upward will curse their king and their God. Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness." (NIV)

What a terrible list at the end of that verse, distress, darkness, fearful gloom, utter darkness, that's the result of being deceived, of listening to Satan's counterfeits. And all the world is so full of those counterfeits today. It would take a long time to list them all. Let me just mention some of them. First of all, mediums, spiritists (as mentioned there in Isaiah 8), then fortune tellers, horoscopes, Ouiji boards, tarot cards, tea cup readings, various forms of mental science, so called. Believe me, I'm talking from experience. Before I came to know the Lord Jesus, I was deeply involved in yoga and I know the darkness that I was in. I know the struggle that I had to turn from that darkness to the light and truth of Scripture and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is the end of all these counterfeits? Well, we've looked at the words. Let me read them once more. "They will see only distress, and darkness, fearful gloom, and utter darkness." But, if we walk according to the Scripture, we will have light.

Psalm 119:105 says this:

> "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." (NIV)

When we walk according to Scripture we never walk into the dark. We may not see far ahead, but we always have enough light for our path and for the next step to take. So bear in mind, the first and most vital requirement of all is that what we believe to be God's voice shall be in total agreement with Scripture.

Then there's the confirmation of circumstances. I'm going to turn to an example of Jeremiah. Jeremiah was in prison at this time. The city of Jerusalem was being besieged. Jeremiah himself had prophesied that the city would be taken and that the land would be ravaged by the Babylonian army and that there would be destruction and distress everywhere. And yet, while he was there in the prison, having actually prophesied these things himself, he heard a most amazing word from the Lord. Jeremiah 32:6-9, Jeremiah said:

> "The word of the Lord came to me: Hanamel son of Shallum your uncle is going to come to you and say, 'Buy my field at Anathoth, because as nearest relative it is your right and duty to buy it.' [Now that field was nothing as real estate values went in Israel at that moment. There was no reason to buy a field that was going to be overrun and ravaged by the Babylonians. It was an amazing thing. Then Jeremiah goes on:] Then, just as the Lord had said, my cousin Hanamel came to me in the courtyard of the guard and said, 'Buy my field at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. Since it is your right to redeem it and possess it, buy it for yourself.' [Now listen to what Jeremiah says:] I knew that this was the word of the Lord; so I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel." (NIV)

"I knew that this was the word of the Lord." The Lord had spoken to him something amazing, improbable. He wasn't quite sure but he kept it, as I would say, in his pending file. And then very shortly afterward something happened that made him know that this was the word of the Lord. His uncle did an amazing thing. He came to him in the prison and asked him to buy the very field that the Lord had spoken to him about. So that's what I call the confirmation of circumstances.

Let me give you a couple of possible examples that are really based on experiences of people. You may be prompted to buy a house in your area. The house isn't even up for sale. But you go and you knock on the door and you say to the lady who comes, "You know, if you ever should put this house

up for sale, I'd be interested to buy it." And the lady's response is, "Isn't that amazing; my husband and I have just decided to sell the house, we haven't had time to put it on the market." This is the word of the Lord. You see, you've got the confirmation of circumstances.

Or, you're a business executive in a certain city with a good home and a good position and yet the Lord speaks to you about moving to a different city and you can't understand it. You say, "Lord, I don't understand this, but if it's so, make it clear to me." The next day your boss calls you in and offers you a transfer to the very city that you felt God wanted you to move to, plus a raise in salary. What are you going to say about that? You're going to say, like Jeremiah, "Then I knew this was the word of the Lord."

The third important kind of confirmation that we should look for when we believe we've heard God's voice in our heart is God's peace in our heart. God's voice will always produce God's peace.

Let me read from Colossians 3:15-16:

> "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God." (NASB)

The key phrase there is at the beginning, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." That word that's translated "rule" means to act as an arbiter or an umpire, to decide on certain things, whether they're right or whether they're wrong. The Amplified Bible has a very good rendering of that. It says this:

> "Let the peace [soul harmony which comes] from Christ rule [act as umpire continually] in your hearts, deciding with finality all questions that arise in your minds..."

Do you see what it's saying? We have an inward umpire, an arbiter, one who decides questions that we cannot decide. What's that umpire, that arbiter? It's the peace of God. When the peace of God says "yes," it's right. But when the peace of God is not there, we need to be cautious. We need to say, "Well, God, if this is from you let there be peace in my heart." But if there's unrest and struggling, and particularly if you feel pressured to act hastily, then be on your guard because it would seem that God's peace has been withdrawn. And God means by that, "You didn't hear me right," or "You're not applying what I said right."

You see, there are three factors combined in that passage that I've read. There's God's peace, there's thankfulness, and there's God's Word in your heart. You want to keep those three together. God's peace will be there if it's the voice of God, and you'll be filled with thankfulness. If it becomes an awful effort to thank God, if your praise dries up, then it's probably not the Holy Spirit that's moving in you. And then it says let the Word of Christ or the Word of God richly dwell within you. You're checking it with the Scripture all the time.

All right, let me just recapitulate those three ways we should look for confirmation if we really think we've heard the voice of God.

First of all, the voice of God always agrees with Scripture. The Holy Spirit is the author of Scripture.

Secondly, there will be the confirmation of circumstance. In one way or another, things will work so that we will know that God is in this.

And thirdly, we need God's peace in our heart, God's peace umpiring, arbitrating, saying, "Yes, this is right. No, that is wrong."

All right, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. I'll be dealing with one other important source of confirmation in the matter of hearing God's voice.

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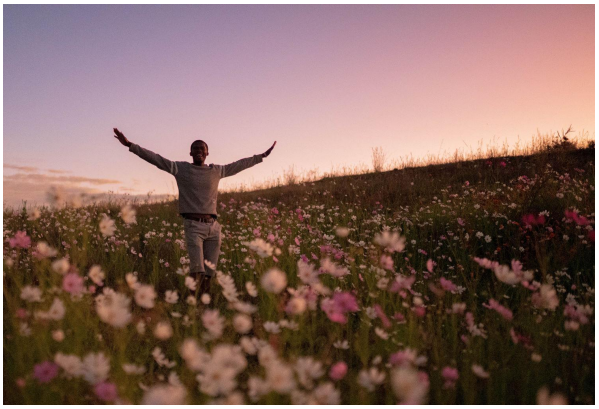
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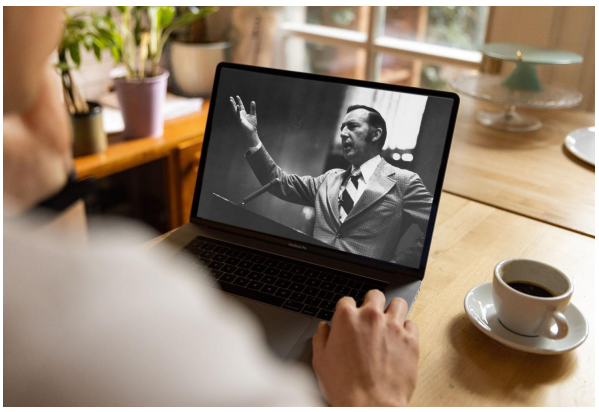
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