

Hear and Obey God's Voice



If You Want God's Best (Part 7)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, sharing with you precious truths out of Scripture that have made the difference between success and failure in my life and can do the same in yours.

This week I'm continuing with the theme that I commenced last week, "If You Want God's Best…" We've been looking together at various ways in which it is appropriate to complete that sentence. "If you want God's best, do this, do that, and so on." So far, I've suggested four ways: first, want God's best. If you want God's best, settle for it, don't settle for less. That's a decision.

Second, if you want God's best, focus on Jesus, never take your eyes off Him, He's the beginning and the ending, He's the author and the finisher of our faith.

Number 3, if you want God's best, meditate on God's Word, that's the key to true prosperity and success.

And number 4, make friends with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a Person, He's the administrator of the total wealth of the kingdom of God. Only as we relate to Him can we truly enter into our inheritance and become mature sons of God.

Today, I'm going to share with you a fifth way to complete the sentence: hear and obey God's voice. Let me make the complete sentence: If you want God's best, learn to hear and obey God's voice.

First of all, I want to emphasize that this is not something that comes to us naturally. I would have to say, in a certain sense, the old Adamic nature is born deaf to the voice of God. It's not natural for the old Adam, the old carnal nature, to hear God's voice. It's something that has to be learned. It's something that has to be cultivated and cultivated with care. So, I'm suggesting to you that if you want God's best, you're going to have to cultivate hearing God's voice. And the world today is full of innumerable voices that blast us, that crowd in upon us, that demand our attention; and yet, in the midst of it all, there's that still, small voice of God which has endless wisdom, endless authority and which is the key to our well-being.

I want to suggest to you that there's tremendous motivation revealed in Scripture for cultivating the ability to hear the voice of God. The success of our relationship to God and our walk with Him depends on this; that is, hearing His voice.

I would like to give a few specific examples. First of all, in the matter of receiving from God healing and health, without any question, the Scripture makes it clear that the key is the ability is to hear God's voice. This is brought out so clearly in Exodus 15:26, where Moses is speaking to the children of Israel and he says this:

> "If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God [the Hebrew says, 'If hearing, you hear the voice of the Lord your God. That's a Hebraism, a very emphatic form. If you listen with the most tremendous care to the voice of the Lord your God…] and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the Lord who heals you.'"

So God offers to be your personal physician. But the basic condition is if you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord. And then, further on in the Old Testament, in the book of Deuteronomy, Moses reveals that the key to all God's blessings is hearing and obeying His voice. In Deuteronomy 28, verses 1 and 2, He says this:

> "Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God [but the Hebrew is the same, if hearing you hear the voice of the Lord your God…] to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you on high above all nations of the earth. All these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord you God."

Notice, twice Moses says, the key condition is hearing and obeying the voice of God. And he says if you do that, "all these blessings will come upon you and overtake you." You do not need to pursue the blessings, the blessings will pursue you if you cultivate hearing the voice of God. On the other hand, in the same chapter, Deuteronomy, chapter 28, a little further on in verse 15, he warns that if we fail to hear the voice of the Lord our God, it will be the exact opposite: instead of blessings it will be curses. Deuteronomy 28:15:

> "But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you."

So, failure to hear and obey the voice of the Lord brings upon us all the curses. Hearing and obeying brings all the blessings. That's the watershed between blessing and cursing. It's either the hearing and obeying the voice of the Lord or failing to hear and obey the voice of the Lord.

And then, further on, in Jeremiah, chapter 7, verses 22 and 23, the Lord lays this down as the key condition for being His people. He says to Israel:

> "I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people.'"

God says the ordinances of the law relating to the temple and the priesthood and the sacrifices are secondary. He said, "The first thing I required of you when I brought you up out of Egypt was not sacrifice or offering or a lot of legal requirements, but I required of you to hear and obey My voice." And, by implication, what He's saying is, "The sacrifices are good if they proceed out of hearing My voice but if you merely offer sacrifices without hearing My voice, that does not qualify you to be my people. You will be My people if you hear and obey My voice."

That's about the shortest statement I know of in the Scripture about what it is to be God's people. "Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people."

Now, this doesn't change in the New Testament. In the New Testament the condition for belonging to Jesus Christ is just the same. Jesus states it very simply in John, chapter 10, verse 27:

> "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

Who are "My sheep"? They're the people of Jesus, they're not necessarily Catholics or Protestants or Baptists or Methodists or whatever. The people that belong to Jesus are the people who hear His voice and follow Him and if you don't hear His voice, you cannot follow Him. That's always the mark of God's true people: hearing His voice.

In connection with this theme of hearing God's voice, I want to give you two important warnings: the first is, cultivate prompt obedience, and I want to emphasize prompt. Now, Abraham is set forth in the Bible as an example for all who believe and one of the ways in which it is an example is that whenever he heard God's voice, he obeyed Him promptly, without delay. Here's an example in Genesis 22, verses 2 and 3:

> "[the Lord] said [to him], 'Take now your son, you only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.' So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son [and so on]"

Notice, Abraham rose early in the morning the next day, as soon as it was possible, he set out to obey what he'd heard God say to him. And I want to tell you from experience and from observation, the longer you delay to obey God, the harder it becomes. The only easy way to obey God is to obey Him promptly, the first time He speaks.

And then, the second warning, or rather, let us look at a negative example, somebody who delayed to obey God, that's Lot's wife, who was willing to come out of Sodom but she came so slowly that she never made it. She looked back, she was turned into a pillar of salt. And one of the shortest verses in the New Testament is this in the teaching of Jesus, in Luke 17:32: "Remember Lot's wife." In other words, don't delay to obey, you may leave it too late.

And the second warning I want to give you is be prepared to seem foolish in the eyes of people. In 1 Corinthians 1:25, Paul says this: "...the foolishness of God is wiser than men... the weakness of God is stronger than men." If you're concerned with what people think is wise, you may miss God. And, again, in 1 Corinthians 3:18, Paul is very emphatic. He says:

> "Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise."

In other words, to become truly wise, you have to start by becoming a fool and a lot of people stumble on that. There are many examples of this in the Bible. Noah, who built a ship on dry land, when no one had ever seen rain, that was foolish, but it was the wisdom of God. Naaman, the captain of Syria, who went down into the River Jordan and exposed his leprous flesh, dipped himself seven times, how foolish! But he was healed. The man born blind in John, chapter 9, on whose eyes Jesus placed clay and said, "Go and wash in the pool of Siloam", how foolish he must have looked, groping his way to the pool of Siloam with clay on his eyes, but he was healed!

And I can think of a situation in my own life, years ago when I was preaching in East Africa. I held a series of services, seven days, and at the end of each message I said, "If anyone wants me to pray for their healing, stand up and I'll pray for you." And there was a blind woman led to the meeting by a boy and every day, for six days, she stood up, I prayed, and nothing happened. I became embarrassed for her. The seventh day, again, she was there. I said, "If you want me to pray for your healing, stand up!" I closed my eyes and prayed and I couldn't help wondering, "What's going to happen to that poor woman?" When I opened my eyes, bless God, there she was, walking forward, alone, without the boy, to show that her eyes had been healed! But, you see, she had to be willing to become a fool first.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll continue to share on the things that it is most important for you to do if you want God's best.

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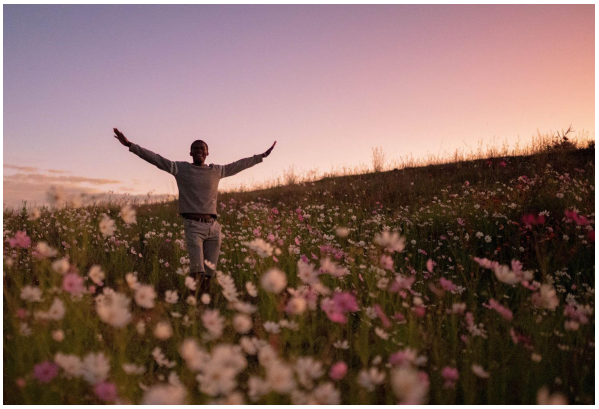

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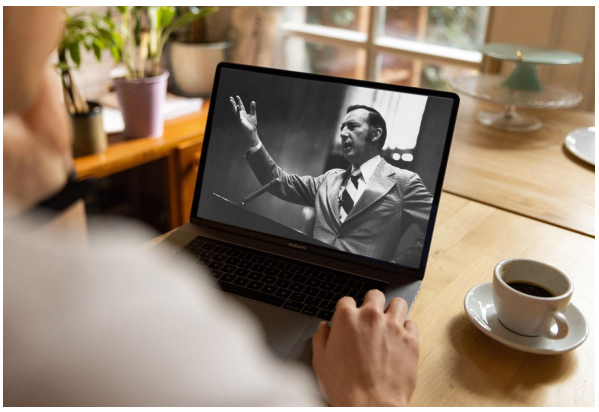

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