

Be Careful How and What You Hear



If You Want God's Best (Part 8)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again sharing on this week's challenging theme, "If You Want God's Best..." In this series of talks, I'm suggesting to you, or sharing with you, various ways in which it's appropriate to complete that sentence,"If You Want God's Best..." So far, I've shared with you five ways and in each case I'll give you the complete sentence.

1. If you want God's best, want God's best. In other words, settle for nothing less. Make up your mind you're going for God's best.

2. If you want God's best, focus on Jesus.

3. If you want God's best, meditate in God's Word. That's the key to all true prosperity.

4. If you want God's best, make friends with the Holy Spirit. He's the administrator of the total wealth of the Godhead. And,

5. If you want God's best, hear and obey God's voice promptly.

Today, I'm going to share with you a sixth way to complete the sentence and it is this: ...be careful how and what you hear. Or, let me give you the complete sentence: If you want God's best, be careful how and what you hear.

Obviously, this relates closely to the theme of my talk yesterday, ...hear and obey God's voice. We're going on with this theme of hearing. I pointed out yesterday that all through the Bible from the Old Testament into the New, the basic requirement for belonging to God's people is hearing and obeying His voice. In the Old Testament, God said to Israel, "Obey My voice and I will be your God and you will be My people." In the New Testament Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me." That requirement never changes in any dispensation, in any age.

And so, today, we're going to go on and consider some more of what is involved in hearing God's voice. Jesus said two things at different times in the gospels. He said, "Take heed what you hear." And later on He said, "...take heed how you

hear." Let's examine both of these statements and see what they have to say to us. The first one, "...what you hear," in Mark 4, verses 23-25:

> "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."

I understand that to mean, "If anyone has ears to hear God's voice." I pointed out that we are not born naturally with the ability to hear God's voice. It's something that has to be imparted to us by the Holy Spirit. It has to be something that has to be cultivated. But, Jesus is saying, "If anyone has ears to hear the voice of God, let him hear", cultivate it, use it. And then He went on to say:

> "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

There are three principles, I believe, which Jesus unfolds there. First of all, the basic requirement is having the ability to hear; that is, to hear God's voice. "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."

Secondly, by right hearing, by listening to the right thing, we increase our spiritual resources. "To you who hear," Jesus says, "more will be given." The same measure that you use it will be measured back to you. The more you give of yourself to hearing God's voice, the more God will give Himself back to you. In other words, we settle the measure with which God will give Himself to us. The measure with which we hear is the measure with which God will impart Himself to us.

The third principle is that by wrong hearing or failure to hear, we decrease our spiritual resources and finally become spiritually bankrupt. Jesus says, "...whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him." I know, in my experience, I've encountered Christians who seem to be totally bankrupt and yet I could look back in past years and remember when they were abounding in the blessing of the Lord. What had bankrupt them? They has lost the ability to hear, they had ceased to cultivate that ability and they had begun to listen to the wrong things. They'd cut God off and they'd opened up to evil, negative sources, which had bankrupt them spiritually.

Second, Jesus said also, "Be careful how you hear," in Luke 8:18:

> "Therefore take heed how you hear. [Not merely what you hear, but how you hear.] For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him."

Again, the same solemn warning: the way in which we open up to God to hear Him will determine the way in which God imparts Himself to us but if we shut God out by wrong hearing, then we become bankrupt. So, it's the same principles of increase or decrease according to what we hear and how we hear.

Now, I want to say a word more about how to hear. We must learn, when we hear, what to accept and what to reject. There's a very pertinent statement in the book of Job. Job, chapter 12, verse 11:

> "Does not the ear test words as the tongue tastes food?"

So, to what we hear to words, the ear fulfills the same function as the mouth does to what we eat. We all know that if we take something into our mouth and it's bitter or unpleasant or impossible to swallow, we don't swallow it, we spit it out. Well, what that statement in Job is saying is the ear needs to do the same to what we hear. If we hear something that is bitter or negative or destructive of our faith, then we don't admit it, we reject it. Just as the tongue tastes food, the ear tests words. I've often said to people, "When you listen to a preacher, whatever it may be, whatever situation you're in, do what you do when you eat fish. Swallow the flesh and spit out the bones. But, if you swallow the bones, you're going to be sorry for it." That's my simple application of what Jesus meant when He said, "Be careful how you hear. Let the right thing in but keep the wrong thing out. If you let the wrong thing in, you'll regret it."

I want to go on to another principle that relates to hearing. This is stated in Romans, chapter 10, verse 17; a very, very important principle.

> "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

That's a tremendously important truth: "...faith comes..." You don't need to be without faith. I remember a time when I was without faith. I was sick, in hospital, a year on end, doctors couldn't heal me, I was hopeless. But one day, the Holy Spirit quickened to me that statement, "...faith comes..." If you don't have faith, you can get it. How do you get it? By hearing. Hearing what? The Word of God. And I began to hear God's Word and through it faith came and, eventually, I was released from the hospital and I was healed, not by medical means, but by the supernatural power of God, because I

received faith through hearing the Word of God.

But, the important thing that I want to emphasize today is this: Not only does faith come by hearing, but unbelief comes by hearing, too. And Paul says this in 2 Timothy, chapter 2, verses 16-18, where he is advising Timothy on how to lead a successful Christian life. He says this:

> "Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene [or like cancer, the same word means both]. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth. [These are people who are spreading godless false teaching.] They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some."

So, Paul says, "If you want to keep your faith, don't listen to that kind of godless chatter. Don't listen to that kind of false teaching. Because if you go on hearing it, it will enter into your heart and into your mind and it will eat away your faith just like a cancer eats away sound flesh." So, cultivate the practice of right hearing: what you hear and how you hear. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

And, as a logical consequence, choose your friends and associates with care because they'll be the people you'll do the most listening to. So you'll want to listen to people who have something good to say, not something that destroys your faith. This again is brought out clearly in Scripture. 2 Corinthians 6:14, Paul says:

> "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?"

And in Ephesians 5:11 and 12:

> "Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret."

Don't associate with people whose speech and conduct is evil, it will poison you spiritually. But, on the positive side, Paul says this to Timothy. 2 Timothy 2:22:

> "Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

In other words, if you're going to pursue the good things, you have to pursue them in the right company. Those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be sharing on another thing that it is important for you to do if you want God's best.

Radio Program

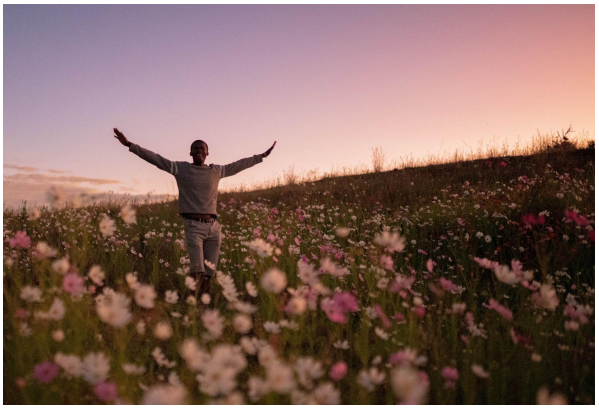
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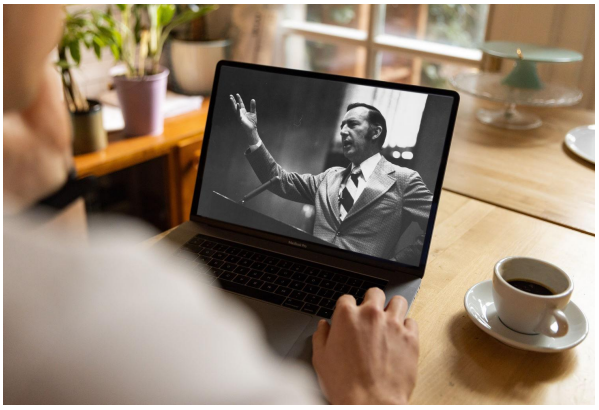
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