



Conditions for Listening to God's Voice

To continue listening to God's voice clearly, we must live surrendered, clean and Spirit-controlled lives. Don't make hearing from God complicated. It's learning to quieten ourselves for "*in quietness and trust is your strength*" (Isaiah 30:15). In His Presence, there is a deep rest (Ex. 33:14). Rest is a place of quietness where God can give revelation.

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him ... Psalm 37:7
The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still. Exodus 14:14

The following principles are essential in listening to God's voice.

1. Lordship

Jesus must be Lord of your life. You cannot hear His voice until you are willing to do whatever He says, before He says it. God has asked us to be willing to lay down our lives as a living sacrifice to do His will, not ours (Rom 12:1-2). It is a question of submission of our will to His (Rom 14:8-9; 2 Cor 5:15; Phil 3:8).

- Do people control your life, or does Jesus?
- Do you do what you think people expect, or what God tells you to do?
- Do circumstances control your life, or does God?

In the New Testament, 'Lord' is mentioned approximately 745 times; 'Savior' 24 times. Together they are mentioned 16 times, and 'Lord' is *always* first in sequence.

We must confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord (Matt 10:32-33; Rom 10:9-10).

First, we make the initial commitment to make Jesus the Lord of our lives. Then daily we offer ourselves as living sacrifices (Matt 10:37-39; Luke 14:26-27; Rom 12:1-2; 1 Cor 15:31; Phil 3:7-11).

Please see my story in the chapter “Relationship with God: The Four Levels” where Jesus is not only my Savior but became my Lord. Now I try to remember daily to have Him as Lord of my life.

Faith involves inward belief, as well as, outward confession. When we submit to His Lordship, we ask Him to help us silence our own thoughts and desires, and the opinions of others, which may be filling our minds (Prov 3:5-6; 2 Cor 10:5). God has given us good minds. We want to submit our minds to Him so we can hear His thoughts (Prov 28:26; Is 55:8-9).

A good question to ask ourselves: Have I obeyed the last thing that God told me to do?

We must embrace the Lordship of Jesus if we want to experience true fellowship with Him. As we offer our minds to Him, the Holy Spirit can illuminate our thoughts, giving us supernatural wisdom and insight. We can receive direct revelation from the Holy Spirit to our spirits. There will be a thirst for Jesus and a hunger for His Word. You will start to discern, be awakened in your spirit and no longer want to *play* church but *be* the church.

Lordship means:

- You will *yielded* to His Spirit.
- If God asks, you would be willing to leave your family, home, friends and possessions - trusting God (Mark 10:29-30). Our citizenship is in Heaven (Phil 3:20; Heb 11:13-16).
- You will surrender yourself absolutely - no longer being in control - you will let Him have complete control, even to the point of being a martyr (Luke 9:57-62) - 'Holy' unto Him - set apart for God and His purposes – It is about our hearts, not what you do, but who you are. What are the motives behind what we do? (1 Pet 1:13-16) God is using one of my friends mightily for His Kingdom. This friend prays every day to stay holy, humble, and hidden.
- You will have a humble and teachable spirit. *'He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them His way'* (Psalm 25:9-10).
- You will be a people dead to sin, offering your bodies as living sacrifices (Rom 6:11-14; Rom 12:1-3).
- You will count the cost (Matt 16:24-25; Luke 14:28-33; Prov 3:5-6).

You will never have an intimate relationship with God unless you are willing to confess Him as Lord. How could He trust you to be the Bride of Jesus? **There cannot be friendship or intimacy without trust** (Psalm 25:14; John 15:9-17; Psalm 4:3; Rom 9:33). Trust is the hardest thing to build, and the easiest thing to break.

*... I have trusted in the Lord without wavering.
Test me, O Lord, and try me,
examine my heart, and my mind,
for your love is ever before me,
and I walk continually in Your Truth. Psalm 26:1b-3*

2. Repent of any unconfessed sin.

Repentance is . . .

- admitting guilt and taking responsibility before God,
- confessing sins, not only with our mouths but also our hearts,
- receiving forgiveness,
- making restitution.

Repentance restores love. Discipline and time restore trust.

Eph 4: 22-27	Isaiah 43:25
Psalm 32:1-5	Micah 7:18-19
Psalm 51: 1-12	Acts 3:19
Psalm 103:8-13	Acts 19:19-20
Proverbs 28:13-14	Romans 4:7-8
Isaiah 38:17	

*Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity.
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord."
And you forgave the guilt of my sin. Psalm 32:5*

A word of repentance was spoken to every church in Revelation except Smyrna - a poor and persecuted church, and Philadelphia - a loyal church. Usually a persecuted church is a purified church. Repentance is a prelude to revival.

A clean heart is necessary if you want to hear God.

If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; Psalm 66:18

*We know that God does not listen to sinners.
He listens to the godly man who does His will. John 9:31*

*He who conceals his sin does not prosper,
but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. Prov 28:13; see also verse 14*

You must repent of your sin. To repent means to change one's mind. It is not only an emotion, but a decision, an inner change of mind, resulting in an outward turn around. True repentance must always go before true faith (Mark 1:14-15; Luke 24:45-47; Acts 2:37-39). Repent of a wrong lifestyle, false securities, idols, unforgiveness, unbelief, pride, the occult, sexual sins, etc.

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9*

Ask God for forgiveness. God gives grace to the humble but opposes the proud.

He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them His way. Psalm 25:9; see also James 4:6-8

Pride says there is no need to inquire of God (Psalm 138:6; Zeph 1:4-7).

*God looks down from heaven on the sons of men
to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. Psalm 53:2; see also verse 1*

God's silences can sometimes be attributed to the sin of disobedience that we have not dealt with in our lives.

I tell my thirteen-year-old son, "Tidy your room before you go to school." He doesn't tidy it. He comes home after school and asks if he could go surfing.

I say, "What was the last thing I asked you to do! Don't ask me something else until you've done the last thing I've asked you to do."

You must forgive others (Matt 6:14-15; Matt 18:21-22; Eph 4:32; Col 3:13) and forgive yourself. Receive God's forgiveness and do not keep reminding Him. He has chosen to forget (Isaiah 43:25).

*As far as the east is from the west,
so far has He removed our transgressions from us. Psalm 103:12; see also 8-18*

*Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.
Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him. Rom 4:7-8*

*Who is a God like you, who pardons sin
and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance?
You do not stay angry forever
but delight to show mercy.
You will again have compassion on us;
You will tread our sins underfoot
and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. Micah 7:18-19*

Corrie Ten Boom, one of my first teachers in YWAM, used to say that after we put our sins in the deepest parts of the sea, we should put a "No Fishing" sign up!

*You love righteousness and hate wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions
by anointing you with the oil of joy. Psalm 45:7*

We must continually keep our hearts right before God - He looks at the motives of our hearts, not the outward appearance and actions (1 Sam 16:7; Psalm 44:20-21; Prov 16:2-3; 1 Cor 4:5; James 4:3; 1 Peter 3:12).

We have nine grandchildren. One day my husband said in front of his grandson, "I'm so thirsty." David, who was two years old then, wanted to please his grandpa so much. He found a cup, went outside to where there was a puddle and scooped up some water. He came back and said, "Here Grandpa!"

Is his heart right? Yes.

If I go out and find a cup someone has left and scoop up water and bring it to my husband, is my heart right? No. It is the same action but a different heart motive. I'm saying, "get it yourself." God looks at our hearts!

Let's ask God, "What pleases You, and what makes You happy?" Quietly listen and write down what He says.

Some things God loves:

- Faith (Rom 4:19-24; Heb 11:6)
- Righteousness (Psalm 33:5; Psalm 45:7; 1 Peter 3:12)
- Justice - *'For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice; upright men will see his face.'* (Psalm 11:7; see also Psalm 9:8)
- Unity - Jesus prayed for this (Psalm 133; John 17:20-23; Phil 2:1-5; 1 Peter 3:8-9)
- Cheerful giver (2 Cor 9:7)
- Worshipping Him in Spirit and truth (John 4:23-24)
- Humility (1 Peter 5:5; James 4:6; Micah 6:8)
- Prayers of the saints (Rev 5:8; 1 John 5:14-15; James 5:16; Psalm 34:15)
- Obedience (Deut 11:13-15; John 14:15, 23; 1 Sam 15:22-23)
- Our response of love to His love (2 John 1:6)
- When we love others as He does (John 17:26; John 13:34-35)
- A pure heart (Psalm 24:3-6; Matt 5:8; Heb 4:13; Phil 4:8)
- Faithfulness (Josh 24:14a; 1 Sam 26:23a; Psalm 51:6a)
- Gentleness (Phil 4:5; 1 Tim 6:11)

Read the Word and ask Him what He loves. Now ask God what hurts Him.

Some things God hates:

- Haughty eyes - pride, lies, hands that shed innocent blood, deceitfulness, false witness, someone who causes disunity (Prov 6:16-19)
- Immorality, impurity, idolatry, sorcery, strife, jealousy, envy, drunkenness, selfish ambition, dissensions (Gal 5:19-21; 2 Tim 3:1-5)
- Unbelief (Heb 3:7-19)
- Disunity
- Unwholesome talk (Eph 4:29-32; Eph 5:4)
- Unforgiveness (Matt 6:14-15)
- Disobedience
- Greed, love of money (1 Tim 6:10; Heb 13:5; 1 Tim 3:1-5; Matt 6:24)

Again, read the Word, and ask the Holy Spirit what our Father God hates.

3. You must have faith.

. . . faith to believe that God wants to speak to you. And faith to believe what He says. Walking with God and fellowshiping with God will not happen without faith.

*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for
and certain of what we do not see. Heb 11:1*

We live by faith, not by sight. 2 Cor 5:7

Hope is a good thing in the development of faith. Every person has a measure of faith (Rom 12:3).

- Faith is a gift from God (Eph 2:8).
- Faith transforms the impossible to the possible (Matt 17:20-21; John 20:29; James 2:5; 1 John 5:14-15).
- Faith is based on the character of God & the Word of God.
- Faith always includes an action (James 2:14-26).
- Faith fights (1 Tim 6:12).
- Faith rests in Him and His Promises (Psalm 91:1-2; Matt 11:28).
- Faith receives (Mark 11:24).

Jesus only did what pleased the Father (John 5:30; John 8:29). Without faith, it is impossible to please the Father (Heb 11:6).

Faith in man is humanism.

Faith in faith is mysticism.

Faith in God is Christianity.

How do we grow in faith?

- Obedience (Deut 5:27; John 14:15; John 15:10; Heb 3:17-19; 1 John 2:5; 1 John 5:3)
- Disobedience destroys faith. If you are having a hard time with faith, check and see if there is disobedience (James 1:22; Rom 24:23).
- Know God and His character; His trustworthiness, His faithfulness, His Fatherhood. And know God's Word. Don't get to know God, and then do His will. You get to know Him by doing His will.
- Know His voice (John 10:27).
- Exercise your measure of faith. Your faith is being developed according to your walk with Him in the Spirit, and according to His Word. Talk *to* the mountain, not *about* it (Mark 11:20-25).

Tests and trials of faith:

- *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds . . . Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial* (James 1:2-8,12)
- Test of time - God uses time to prepare us for what will happen. Between the promise and its fulfillment is when growth happens. God's perspective of time is often different from ours. E.g. Joseph went through a lot of trials before his dreams were fulfilled.
- Fear (Mark 4:36-41) - unbelief causes fear. Fear allows the enemy to work in our lives. We cannot base faith on experience, but on what God says and who He is. The enemy says, "Did God really say?" (Gen 3:1)

Watch your confessions during trials of faith. Death and life are in the power of the tongue (Prov 18:21).

The righteous will live by faith. Hab 2:4; see also Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:35-39

Without faith it is impossible to please God ... Heb 11:6

When you believe, you can enter into God's rest. In His presence there is rest - but you must believe (Ex 33:14; Matt 11:28-30; Heb 4:9-11).

"I do believe," you say. Now rest in Him and His promises. It is only by believing that we can truly enter into God's rest. He is who He says He is. He will do what He says He will do.

Faith does not ask, "Why?" There are times when we just trust with no questions. Sometimes I will ask the Lord why a person reacted in a certain way, or a situation happened, and He will tell me. But even if He does not tell me, I will still trust Him. Faith works by love.

Ask God for more faith (Luke 17:5). When you have faith, you have peace (Rom 5:1).

4. You must be filled with the Holy Spirit (God in the person of the Holy Spirit).

When someone is born again, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside them (John 3:6-7; Rom 8:9-11). Our Father gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit when we ask (Luke 11:11-13). The Holy Spirit is the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4,5). He is sent from Heaven (1 Peter 1:12). We need to be poured out before God can pour His Spirit into us (Acts 2:33).

*Because you are sons,
God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts ... Gal 4:6; see also Rom 8:14*

*Be (being continually) filled with the Holy Spirit ... Eph 5:18
(Be continually yielded to the Spirit of God.)*

We must fulfill the conditions in order to be controlled by His Spirit (Rom 8:5-11). If we are disobedient, the Spirit will be quenched.

*Do not put out the Spirit's fire ... 1 Thes 5:19
And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God . . . Eph 4:30*

When Jesus baptizes someone in the Holy Spirit (love and power) and with fire (refining and purifying) (Matt 3:11; Mk 1:8; Lk 3:16; John 1:32-33), they are immersed, or filled with the power of the Spirit (Acts 1:8). It is important to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, and to use the gifts that come with that filling (Acts 2:4; Acts 11:15-16; Acts 19:6).

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 1 Cor 12:7-11

The Holy Spirit will come and teach us to pray (Rom 8:26; Eph 6:18). The Holy Spirit is one of the persons of the Trinity. He has a personality, character, all the attributes of God, and ministers through the life of the believer.

The Holy Spirit has a ***mind***.

He is all-knowing - has all knowledge of God's truths. He can reveal these truths to us as He wants to and as we are available (Rom 8:27; 1 Cor 2:10-11).

The Holy Spirit has a ***will***.

The Spirit distributes the gifts of the Spirit to every man as ***He wills***, not as we will (1 Cor 12:11).

The Holy Spirit has ***emotions***.

He groans (Rom 8:26).
He loves (Rom 15:30).
He can be grieved (Eph 4:30).
He can be quenched (1 Thes 5:19).

The Holy Spirit has all the ***attributes*** of God.

omnipresent - He is everywhere.
omniscient - He is all-knowing.
omnipotent - He is all-powerful.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, and He will set us free (John 8:31-32, 34-35; John 14:15-17; John 15:26; John 16:12-14). When we listen to the Holy Spirit, His truths set us free.

Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. John 8:32

I want to see the truth about the Holy Spirit rather than cling to the traditions of the church, or my own personal experiences. Never let experience, or lack of experience, judge the truth. We can only judge the truth by God's written Word; not by our experience, or lack of experience. Like Moses in Exodus 33:13-14, I've been praying that the Holy Spirit and the Word will teach me God's ways. I'm tired of man's ways. I want His Presence to go with me wherever I go, or whatever I do. Then there's a deep peace and rest.

*But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit,
whom the Father will send in My name,
will teach you all things
and will remind you of everything I have said to you. John 14:26*

Jesus promised us the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13; John 14:15-18, 25-27; John 15:26; John 16:7-15). He is a gift and a Person (Acts 1:4-8).

The Holy Spirit speaks. So, listen to what He says; not what the world is saying, or the lies of the enemy.

Peter and I walked with Pastor Bob Birch for many years. God used Bob mightily for His Kingdom through the power of prayer and intercession. He didn't say much, but often he said: "You who have ears to hear, listen to what the Spirit is saying."

. . . Hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Rev 2:7

*The Holy Spirit spoke . . .
(Matt 10:20; Mark 13:11; Acts 1:16; Acts 13:2; Acts 28:25; Heb 3:7)*

For the first 20 years of my life, I was taught that God spoke through the Word, and through pastors & teachers of the Word only. When I totally submitted my life to the lordship of Jesus, I started to recognize the voice of the Holy Spirit. I began to receive deeper understanding of who He is, and why Jesus sent Him to live in me.

*This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom
but in words taught by the Spirit,
expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. 1 Cor 2:13*

Here are some of the functions of the Holy Spirit that God has revealed through His Word:

- He enables us (Acts 2:4).
- He calls men into service (Acts 13:2).
- He directs men in service (Acts 13:4; Acts 16:6-7).
- He teaches (Lk 12:12; John 14:26; 1 Cor 2:13; 1 John 2:27).
- He witnesses (John 15:26).
- He calls for the bridegroom (Rev 22:17).
- He guides (Acts 13:2-4; Rom 8:14).
- He leads and directs (Matt 4:1; Mark 1:12; Luke 2:27; Luke 4:1; Acts 8:29; Acts 10:19-20; Acts 11:12; 1 Tim 4:1).
- He casts out demons (Matt 12:28).
- He anoints (Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38).
- He reveals truth (John 14:17; John 15:26; John 16:13).
- He strengthens and encourages (Acts 9:31; Zech 4:6).
- He transports (Acts 8:39).
- He convicts (John 16:7-11).
- He commands (Acts 8:29).
- He performs miracles (1 Cor 12:4-11).
- He reveals hidden things of God (John 16:13; 1 Cor 2:9-16).
- He empowers us (Micah 3:8; Luke 4:14; Acts 1:8; Acts 4:31).
- He makes us holy (Rom 15:16).
- He gives spiritual gifts (Acts 2:4, 17, 18; Acts 11:28; 1 Cor 12).
- He created (Gen 1:1-2).
- He gave inspiration to writers of Scriptures (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21).
- He caused the miraculous conception and birth of Christ (Luke 1:35).
- He regenerates us (John 3:6).
- He renews us (Titus 3:3-7).

He dwelled with the disciples during Christ's ministry (John 14:16-17).
 He dwells within believers since Pentecost (John 14:15-21; 1 Cor 6:19).
 He seals us (Eph 4:30) - we are children of God and belong to Him (Eph 1:13-14).
 He guarantees our inheritance (2 Cor 5:5).
 He was promised to us by the Lord Jesus (John 14:15-18, 25-27; John 15:26; John 16:7-15; Acts 1:1-8).
 He brings revelation (Luke 2:25-27; 1 Cor 2:10-12; Eph 1:17-19; Eph 3:5).
 He sanctifies, washes, purifies, justifies (Rom 15:16; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Thes 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2).
 He gives freedom (2 Cor 3:17).
 He restrains (Acts 16:6).
 He bears witness in our lives (Acts 5:32; Acts 15:28; Rom 8:16; Heb 10:15; 1 John 4:13; 1 John 5:6-8).
 He comforts us (2 Cor 1:3; Isaiah 66:13).
 He gives us hope (Rom 15:13).
 He gives us peace (John 14:25-27).
 He gives us joy (Psalm 4:7a; Psalm 21:6; Psalm 30:11; 1 Thes 1:4-7; 1 Peter 1:8).
 He gives discernment (1 Cor 2:10-16).
 He gives us love (Rom 5:5; Rom 15:30), faith, life and vitality (Rom 8:11).
 He intercedes on our behalf (Rom 8:26-27).
 He helps us in our weakness (Rom 8:26; 2 Cor 12:9; Eph 3:16; Phil 1:19).
 He saves us time if we simply ask Him what we are to do or if we have forgotten anything.
 He hears (John 16:13-14).

We have communion with the Holy Spirit.
 We are born of the Spirit (John 1:12-13; John 3:6; Titus 3:4-7).
 We sense His presence which gives us rest (Ex 33:14).
 We have fellowship and share together (Acts 15:28; 2 Cor 13:14; Phil 2:1-2).
 We participate with the Holy Spirit.
 We have close friendship.
 We have intimacy with Him.

God pours out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5).
 He flows like a river (John 7:38-39).

He bears fruit in our lives when we are continually filled with the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22-23,25).

- joy, peace, faithfulness - when dealing with changing circumstances in our lives and the world
- patience, gentleness, self-control - when we respond to God and not react towards others
- love, kindness, goodness - when helping and encouraging others and wanting the highest good for them

We are promised that, if we ask, we will receive (Luke 11:9-13). We lead people to Jesus who is the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit. Luke calls it . . .

- *the promise of the Father - the gift* (Acts 1:4; Acts 10:45)
- *filled with the Spirit* (Luke 1:15,41,67; Luke 4:1; Acts 2:4; Acts 4:8,31; Acts 6:3,5; Acts 7:55; Acts 9:17; Acts 11:24; Acts 13:9,52)
- *coming upon* (Luke 1:35; Luke 2:25-27; Luke 4:18; John 1:32-33; Acts 10:44; Acts 11:15; Acts 19:6)
- *clothed with power* (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8)
- *poured out* (Acts 2:33; Acts 10:45)

The writers of the four Gospels called it being '*baptized in the Holy Spirit*' (Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:16).

5. Spiritual Warfare

Many Christians are being destroyed by lies from the enemy. He is defeated. He was defeated at the cross. We must put everything at the foot of the cross. The enemy knows his time is short. The Church that the Lord Jesus is coming for is not down trodden, or backslidden, but filled with the glory of God (Eph 5:27).

There will be an increase of satanic attacks. The blood of Jesus is one of our primary weapons because the enemy was defeated at the cross (Rev 12:10-12). The name of Jesus is another primary weapon available to us. In the name of Jesus, the enemy has to go! We need to understand the power of the cross, and the power of the name of Jesus. The name of Jesus can save (Matt 1:21; Rom 10:13), heal (Acts 4:10-12), and deliver (John 14:12-14; Mark 3:14-15).

*Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place
and gave Him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father: Phil 2:9-11*

*And whatever you do, whether in word or deed,
do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through him. Col 3:17*

When I walk into a situation, and I sense the enemy's presence through discord, confusion, or fear, I speak out loud enough for the enemy to hear: "In the name of Jesus, Satan and demon powers you must go!" Or I speak out very loudly under my breath, "Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!"

We have to speak out loud the name of Jesus. The enemy can't read our thoughts, but he hates the name of Jesus. The enemy loves darkness and will often attack people in the night time through dreams or thoughts coming to their minds. So, if this happens to me, I just speak out, "Jesus! Jesus!", or "Satan, you must go in the name of Jesus!" And he goes! Daily I submit myself to the Lord Jesus Christ to lead and guide me by His Spirit.

Our greatest weapons are the name of Jesus, and the power of the cross where the enemy was defeated.

We are part of the kingdom of God. Our Father wants to see His Kingdom come, and His Will done on earth through us (Matt 6:10). To do this, we need to know & exercise the authority He has given us, through the name of Jesus, and the power of His blood shed on the cross.

We are priests of the living God, and Jesus, the King of kings (1 Peter 2:5-10). We must keep ourselves pure, and holy. Keep listening to the King of kings to have a deeper understanding of the spiritual warfare we battle.

Therefore:

*Submit yourselves then, to God.
Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. James 4:7; see also verses 6, 8-10; Rom 12:1-3*

We must not have any open doors where the enemy can come in; whether it's through the eye gate, ear gate, or the attitudes of our hearts. This means, be careful what you look at, what you listen to, and the thoughts of your mind (Phil 4:4-8).

The enemy controls the airwaves (Eph 2:2). So, we must be careful about what comes out of our mouths (Matt 12:34; Matt 16:18), and what we write in social media. The enemy twists words. He also takes away words that are sown (Mark 4:15). So, what comes out of your mouth may not be what people hear. Be careful when you communicate, how you speak, what you say, and to whom.

Therefore, before you speak, T H I N K, and pray. Ask God if it's something He wants you to share. Consider first, if it is:

Tue
Helpful
Inspiring
Necessary
Kind

When you 'notice' something: one family communicating and another not; one church growing and another not; a pastor burned out; one city full of homosexuality and another not - we can do one of two things:

- a) be critical, frustrated, bitter, angry, an accuser ... or ...
- b) be an intercessor

How do you deal with difficult situations? Do you ask yourself, and ask God?

- What is in this situation that can deepen my character, and can make me more like Jesus? Usually it is in forgiveness and extending grace.
- Can I thank the Lord for the situation, and use it for His glory?
- Is it spiritual warfare? Is the enemy involved?

There are five areas of conflict:

1. the devil (Gen 3:15; 1 John 3:8; 2 Cor 2:10-11; Eph 6:12; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9; Rev 12:17)
2. the flesh (Rom 7:21-25; 1 Cor 9:25-27; 2 Cor 12:7; Gal 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11)
3. our enemies (Psalm 38:19; Psalm 56:2; Psalm 59:3-15)
4. the world (John 16:33; 1 John 5:4-5)
5. death (1 Cor 15:26; Heb 2:14-15)

There is warfare! Remember ...

- We are not to wrestle against flesh and blood (Eph 6:12).
- The devil is wrecking families, ministries, and churches.
- The enemy is out to destroy the family unit through abortion, divorce, loss of identity, materialism, and the voices of the world through social media.
- The accuser of the brethren is Satan (Job 1:1-3, 9-11; Zech 3:1; Rev 12:10).
- Speak out against the sin, not the person – when we stop fighting each other in the body of Christ, and start fighting the devil, we will see revival. We have a choice - are we going to be on Satan's side and be an accuser of the brethren, or are we going to be on God's side as an intercessor with a pure heart? The prayers of righteous people are powerful and effective (James 5:16).
- The enemy does everything he can to disrupt our communication with each other, and with our Father. He twists words so that what I say may not be what you hear. He is the ruler of the kingdom of the air (Eph 2:2).
- The enemy roars like a lion and paralyzes people with fear. Relying on God's love takes away all fear (1 John 4:16-18). Fear comes mostly from unbelief.

We are in the days where the kingdoms are clashing; the kingdom of this world against the kingdom of God. Satan is god of this world.

*We know that we are children of God,
and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. 1 John 5:19*

The enemy knows that his time on earth is short, and that he will be driven out (John 12:31; John 14:30; John 16:11).

We are sons and daughters of the King of kings, so we must prepare for battle. We are part of the army that He is raising up in these last days (Rev 19:14).

Prepare for battle ...

1. Jesus must be Lord (Rom 10:9)

- Cast all your anxieties on Jesus (1 Peter 5:7).
- Instead of focusing on the problem, focus on Biblical promises for problems.
- Walk in humility (James 4:6-7).
- Be self-controlled, alert, resist the enemy and stand firm in the faith (1 Peter 5:5-9).

2. Put on the armor (Eph 6:10-18). There are two fronts:

- offense - advancing the kingdom, attacking, not passive
- defense - we already have the victory, and we need to defend that victory

We put on the full armor of salvation ...

- Stand firm with the belt of truth (honesty and Scripture).
- Put on the breastplate of righteousness (faith and love).
- Put the gospel of peace on your feet.
- Hold up the shield of faith.
- Put on the helmet of salvation over your mind.
- Hope (if you do not have Christ, there is no hope).
- Take the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God and say, "It is written . . ." (Matt 4:1-11).

Either God is who He says He is, or He is not. Either the Bible is true, or it is not. We must believe truth. It is up to us.

*Let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love
as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. 1 Thes 5:8*

The breastplate protects the heart. The helmet protects the mind 24 hours a day. If we lay aside the helmet, and begin to dwell on negative thoughts, our minds will be vulnerable to Satan's subtle attacks.

3. Use our weapons:

- the Name of the Lord Jesus, His blood, the power of the Spirit, and the sword of the Spirit.
- your position, seated with Christ in heavenly realms (Eph 2:4-7)
- realize and take the authority given to you (Luke 10:19)
- take the place of protection (Prov 18:10, Eph 6:10; 2 Thes 3:3)

*The name of the Lord is a fortified tower;
the righteous run to it and are safe. Prov 18:10*

*But the Lord is faithful,
and he will strengthen you
and protect you from the evil one. 2 Thes 3:3*

There has been a lack of balance in the area of spiritual warfare. The two extremes are:

- overemphasis on demons - the tendency to call every bad thing a demon
- under-emphasis - some people do not want to talk about the devil, or even acknowledge he exists

The nature of warfare is wrestling.

- It is constant.
- Be alert in mind, heart and mouth. Spiritual power comes forth from your mouth when it is coupled with attitude. Out of the same mouth can come blessing and cursing - we can aid the attack of the enemy through our mouths.
- Get in shape - be strong.
 - Don't just read - meditate and apply.
 - Don't just talk when praying - listen.
 - Praise and worship.
 - Fellowship through openness and humility.
- Know the 'holds' - the tactics the enemy uses in wrestling with us (2 Cor 2:10-11).
 - Unforgiveness
 - Carrying offense
 - Reaction in anger
 - Immaturity

- Respond in the opposite spirit
 - Forgive. We must forgive so Satan won't outwit us, for we are not unaware of his schemes (2 Cor 2:10-11).
 - Respond to the Lord and do not react in anger (Eph 4:26,27).
 - Perseverance will lead to maturity. When we are mature, we will more easily discern what is of God and what is of the enemy (James 1:2-4; Heb 5:14).
 - Don't conform to the world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind (Rom 12:1-3).

The battle is constant, but if you know the strongholds it is not a big deal. As challenges come up, you will know how to deal with them.

The Christian life is warfare!

*For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.
The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world.
On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.
We demolish arguments and every pretension
that sets itself up against the knowledge of God,
and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2 Cor 10:3-5*

We must learn to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of Satan, as well as, our own strengths and weaknesses in the flesh. The enemy gets away with as much as we let him, and he keeps us in defeat because of:

- lack of knowledge of the enemy
- unconfessed sin - it gives a platform for the enemy
- not making restitution for sin
- unbelief
- lack of the 'fear of God' (Prov 8:13)
- lack of love for God and each other

We are on the winning side! (Eph 1:18-23; Phil 2:5-11; Col 1:15-20)

We are all different. When we notice what we consider to be negative personality traits in another Christian, we can either become critical (an accuser), or become an intercessor and see that person through God's eyes. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Jesus Christ (Phil 2:5-11).

Speak in such a way that others love to listen to you.
Listen in such a way that others love to speak to you.
- Anonymous

Why do we keep praying to God to change people's hearts, when we are not willing to be answers to Jesus' prayers for unity in John 17? Jesus taught us to pray in Matthew 6:5-15 to see His Kingdom come, and His will be done. We are to be the answers to His prayers.

Satan had no power over Jesus Christ because sin has no foothold on Jesus. Satan quoted the Word, but Jesus loved the Father and did exactly what His Father commanded Him (Matt 4:4,7,10; John 14:30-31).

How to Battle

- Resist the enemy (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9).
- Bind the enemy (Matt 12:29; Matt 16:19).
- Attack with the sword of the Spirit using appropriate Scriptures as led and directed by the Holy Spirit (see Matt 4:1-11 for how Jesus used the Word).
- Declare the victory of Calvary (Col 2:15; 1 John 3:8).
- Confess victory through the Blood of the Lamb and the word of your testimony (Rev 12:11).
- State your authority in the Lord Jesus (Luke 10:19; 1 John 4:4).
- On the authority of the Word of God, smash the enemy's stronghold, and loose from bondage, the person or situation for whom you are praying.
- Declare verses of victory to give glory to God - prophetic declarations.

- Live a holy life:
 - Pray: *'... the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective'* (James 5:16).
 - Worship and praise: God inhabits the praise of His people and pushes the enemy back.
 - Walk in humility and repentance (2 Chron 7:14).
 - Have fervent love for God and others.
 - Watch your mind and your thoughts (Phil 4:8; Rom 12:1-2).
 - Watch your attitude/heart (hatred, bitterness, jealousy, envy, anger). The devil watches what irritates you. And then keeps pushing on that weakness through your mind and through other people. Respond to the Lord, and don't react towards people.
 - Watch your mouth. The devil wants you to put others down. Instead of grumbling and complaining, have an attitude of praise (James 3:3-12).
 - Watch what you look at (Psalm 101:3; Matt 5:29; Matt 6:22-23).

Sometimes when I am speaking to a group, we ask the Lord if there is anything in our rooms (homes) that does not glorify God. If there is, I encourage them to destroy it (Acts 19:18-20). Many times, we have had bonfires of CD's, videos, magazines, even wooden idols and t-shirts. God sets the people free.

When we go to a movie, or read a book, or watch TV, we need to include the Holy Spirit. In the Islands, I had many Island 'spiritual children' and one day 3 or 4 of them came to see me. They said they were going to a movie (which I knew was R rated). I said, "Did you ask God?" They said, "No, we didn't ask God." So I said, "Whose money are you using?" After a few seconds, they said, "God's." So, I said, "Is He going with you?" They thought and said, "We hope so." I responded, "Well, I don't think He wants to. But the least you could do is ask Him. If you go, He has to go, because He lives within you."

If you look at something that doesn't please God, it grieves Him, and will quench the Holy Spirit living within you. It will also open a door for the enemy to come in. The enemy can't read our thoughts, but he can see what we look at, and hear what we listen to, and what comes out of our mouths.

6. Wait - Be Still

As God's people, we need to learn to 'rest' in Him. In His presence, there is rest (Ex 33:14-16).

They were given rest by the Spirit of the Lord . . . Is 63:14

*Come to me all you who are weary and burdened
and I will give you rest.* Matt 11:28

*... Ask where the good way is and walk in it
and you will find rest for your souls.* Jer 6:16

Wait to hear - waiting is active! (Psalm 27:14; Psalm 130:5-6; Is 28:23; Is 30:18-21)

Speak in such a way that God loves to listen to you.

Listen in such a way that God can speak to you.

Listen more. Talk less.

*In the morning, O Lord, You hear my voice;
in the morning I lay my requests before You
and wait in expectation.* Psalm 5:3

Be still and know that I am God . . . Psalm 46:10a

There is a deep, inner knowing in your spirit that you can experience when you quiet your flesh and your mind.

At first, you may need to go to a quiet place. Focus on the Lord Jesus. Becoming still is not doing something. It is being in touch with the Spirit of God inside. Inner stillness and spiritual encounter are God's gifts to the church. With practice, you will regularly sense the stillness.

Here are some ways to be more sensitive to the voice of our Lord Jesus speaking through the inner witness and inner voice:

- Let your mind be controlled by the Spirit of God (Rom 8:5-6; Gal 5:16). *Whatever is true ... noble ... right ... pure ... lovely ... admirable ... excellent ... praiseworthy - think about such things* (Phil 4:8).
- Express love aloud to God in words, as well as, silently in your spirit. Praise Him in your thoughts and words, through songs and conversations. Thank Him and tell Him how much you love Him.
- Day by day ask God to teach you what inner guidance really is (John 14:26-27).
- Wait on God often in prayer. Those who know His will, and are sensitive to His Spirit, spend time in prayer. Relationship is the most important reason for hearing the voice of the Lord. When you wait on God, your 'natural giftings' become 'supernatural' as you listen and see things through His perspective.
- Don't doubt (James 1:5-8).
- Listen, obey, confess and turn away from sin. A clean heart is necessary if you want to hear from God. Ask the Lord to convict you (Psalm 66:18).
- Pray in the Spirit (Eph 6:18).
- Don't give up because of mistakes. It is okay to make mistakes. God looks at the heart. Don't give up.
- Be teachable and humble. Humility is a vital attribute in listening to the voice of God.
- Be careful what you look at, listen to and the attitude of your heart. When you are born again, your spirit is new and has to be developed - exercised, and 'built up.' Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit and where we go, He goes. Know that some secular music and movies can affect our spirits.

Rest in Him. Obey as we listen. We will be transformed as we abide in Him. He shares his secrets with those who fear Him and listen to Him (Psalm 25:14).

The Lord is going to change us in His presence ...

From . . . 'effort' to 'rest,'

. . . 'performance' to 'obedience,'

. . . 'being rewarded' to 'being transformed'

Now the Lord is the Spirit,

and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom.

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory

are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory,

which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. 2 Cor 3:17-18; see also 2 Cor 3:7-16

APPLICATION

Dear Lord,

Is there anything in my heart that hinders me in hearing from You? Please show me as I wait in Your presence.

Jesus, You are my Lord. It is written in Your Word that if I am submitted to Your Lordship, I can resist the enemy (James 4:7). Therefore, Satan and demon powers, you have no power over me, or my thinking. You must be gone in Jesus' name!

Lord, I die to my ideas, desires, and what I want. I just want to hear from You and be led by You.

Holy Spirit, fill me, lead me and guide me.

I know that You will.