

HOW TO BE LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT SERIES

CONDITIONS TO HEARING THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the last message, we talked about how we need to learn to recognize the voice of the Holy Spirit, which is different from the voice of the human spirit. We touched on some of the differences, like for example, the Holy Spirit's voice has a greater presence. Just before He speaks, He manifests His personality in a tangible presence. Then the other difference is the realm of authority that the Holy Spirit functions in. When He speaks, His voice is authoritative. You don't question Him. You don't argue with Him. You can only obey or disobey. It's different from the voice of the human spirit where there is room for discussion. There is room for seeking clarity. But when the Holy Spirit speaks, His voice is authoritative and instructive. In the last message, we considered the voice of the Holy Spirit from His side; that when the Holy Spirit speaks, He brings a greater presence and authority.

Now we want to consider our side of hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit. We need to prepare ourselves before we are ushered into His presence for Him to speak. We realize of course that He lives inside us, but He is God. And just as we come to the Father, we enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His court with praise, don't think that you can come to the presence of the Holy Spirit without preparation. He is also God. Just as much as the Father is God and as much as the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is also God. We don't just come into His presence without preparation.

In the book of Acts 5, disobedience to the Holy Spirit is regarded as disobedience to God. The Holy Spirit is not just a presence although He is and He carries a presence. The Holy Spirit is not just a power although He does have power. But most of all He is a person and the third person of the Trinity. He is part of the

Godhead.

Acts 5:3 *Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? Notice that it was a deception and it was a lie that he told not to men but to the Holy Spirit. We need to have more respect for the Holy Spirit than what people are giving today.*

Verse 4 *While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."* Notice whatever you do to the Holy Spirit you do to God. He is a part of the Godhead. And we need to prepare ourselves before we come into His presence. The records in the bible show that some preparation is required before the Holy Spirit speaks or says something.

Now the voice of the human spirit is part and parcel of our very being. Our born again human spirit is the new creation that God made of us when we came to know the Lord Jesus Christ. So the human spirit speaks and teaches us all the time. But it does not carry the same presence and weight as the Holy Spirit does.

As we relate to different people in the society, we learn to give them the proper respect and honor that is due to them. Give honor where honor is due, respect where respect is due. You would not think of approaching our king without following some protocol, like bowing and uttering some formal words of address. You have to inform the palace administration in advance. If you work for a big company, you don't just walk into your CEO's office just like that. No, you will have to prepare yourselves. For example, if you want to speak to our Prime Minister, you must prepare yourself. There is a preparation that is needed. We give honor where honor is due and respect where respect is due, as Paul says in the book of Romans. How much more should we do the same as we approach Almighty God? How much more to the Holy Spirit who was sent to be in our midst? We need to give Him the rightful place that He deserves. There is a certain preparation that is required before we can Hear His voice clearly. Some times due to intercession and preparation, either other people has done it for us or we do it ourselves He

intervenes in the events of life and He speaks. But yet, there is some preparation done, either by us or by others. There is always a pre-requisite before God moves and intervenes. Otherwise, we are responsible to hear what He has already placed in our human spirit.

Obedience

Lets look at Acts 8 and see the preparations that are required before the Holy Spirit speaks. Acts 8 is in the life of Philip the evangelist. Acts 8:26 *Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza. This is desert. So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot he was reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot." So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"*

Philip was waiting at a crossroad. He was told to go there by an angel of the Lord. And while he was waiting there, there were possibly many chariots passing by. The Ethiopian eunuch was not the only one traveling in a chariot. There were possibly many chariots going by. And it was while he was waiting he heard not the voice of the human spirit but the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking clearly "Go and join yourself to this chariot." Obviously, he knew the voice of the Holy Spirit. Some of us may be standing at the same position when the Holy Spirit speaks and said "Go and join yourself to this bus." You will probably ask, "Lord is that you? Was that voice from me? Is that the devil telling me? Very few people can say, "I know the voice of the Holy Spirit."

And it was critical. See the chariot is not going to wait for you. The Ethiopian eunuch is not going slow motion waiting for you. There was no time to waste – the chariot will pass by very quickly. And in fact, Philip had to run to obey. If he were slow, he would have missed the whole thing. Some times God speaks to us; it's so critical if you miss it, if you miss the bus, you will miss the opportunity passing by

and you may find that you are redundant. If Philip had missed the chariot, he would automatically be redundant. The Ethiopian eunuch may take another year to come by since he went there yearly.

Why did the Holy Spirit speak to Philip and what were the preparations? Philip was in obedience. See he had met an angel. And the angel had instructed him but not fully. He just told him to wait there. The rest depended on the Holy Spirit. And because of his obedience to the instructions of the angel, he put himself in a position to hear the Holy Spirit. And that is important for if we are not obedient to what the Holy Spirit spoke through an angel or through a vision or through a dream, we are living in disobedience. We will not be able to hear Him any further. You may hear your human spirit. Your human spirit will be teaching you all the time. But the Holy Spirit will not speak any more until you obey the previous instructions. That's the way He operates. If you are not faithful to that one instruction, He will not give some more. And sometimes we got to retrace our steps where we left the highway and search ourselves where we have disobeyed the Holy Spirit before He continues speaking. The Holy Spirit is such a person. The human spirit will keep instructing you in all kinds of areas. When you are not fully obedient, the inward human spirit will deal with you and continue speaking to you. But the Holy Spirit will not until there is obedience. So, in Acts 8 we see one condition: obedience. Obedience to former instructions. We can take the instruction of the angel as in the realm of the supernatural, which is done through the Holy Spirit. No one can see an angel unless the Holy Spirit grants the discerning of spirits. So, the Holy Spirit was in operation all the time before the angel manifest. Angels are always with us all the time but we don't see them unless the gift of discerning of spirit operates. So, we can take the instruction of the angel as a work and operation of the Holy Spirit. And because Philip was obedient to that first instruction, the second instruction came easier. He could hear the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer

Lets look at Acts 10 another incident where the Holy Spirit's voice is recorded this time to Peter. In verse 10 *Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat, but while they made ready, he fell into a trance. Peter fell into a trance. And saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and le down to the*

earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat." But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean." And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

So Peter had a closed vision. We do not know whether the voice he heard was the Father's, or the Son's or the Holy Spirit's or an angel's. But that was in a vision. When he came out from the vision, he was still puzzled. Verse 17 *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. And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there. While Peter thought about the vision, "The Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you. Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing for I have sent them."* The Holy Spirit said He was the one who sent them. Earlier in the book of Acts 10, the angel told Cornelius to send for one Simon Peter who will tell him things concerning the word of life. No record of the Holy Spirit was there but the Holy Spirit said, "I sent them." Any appearance of angel or any supernatural work is done through the Holy Spirit.

Here is a different incident from Acts 8. Here Peter was in a house. Apparently, Peter was praying about the sixth hour. The sixth hour is about 12 noon. He was praying and seeking the Lord and that was when the vision came and the Holy Spirit spoke. Again, there was a condition for the Holy Spirit to speak. Peter was praying. He had come into God's presence. And in that attitude of prayer, he heard the Holy Spirit spoke. In Acts 8, the condition was obedience; in Acts 10, it is prayer. An attitude of prayer is important to tune ourselves to be ready for the Holy Spirit to speak to us. It's in prayer that we hear His voice.

Ministering with Fasting

Acts 13:1-3 Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been

brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.

Now here in Acts 13 is the Holy Spirit speaking again. The Holy Spirit said something. He gave instructions to them as to what to do. The background before He speaks was ministering to the Lord and fasting. Ministering to the Lord implies worship and waiting. They were worshipping the Lord; they were waiting on Him with fasting. And in that atmosphere, the Holy Spirit spoke.

The three conditions before we get into the presence of the Holy Spirit are obedience, prayer, ministering to the Lord and fasting. If we were to meet those conditions, we would put ourselves in a position to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. Now there are some things that we want to notice here in all the three instructions given. Do you notice that the instructions are authoritative? He does not leave you room to reason or argue.

Let us just refer very quickly to Acts 8, Acts 10 and Acts 13. Notice the instructions and compare them together. In Acts 8 His instruction to Philip was to go near and overtake this chariot. There was not enough time to reason or argue. Any delay and the chariot would be gone. Do you notice it was all commands? I am talking about the Holy Spirit speaking directly and not through any instruments. The latter would be different. We are going to look at that later in Acts 21. But when the Holy Spirit speaks directly, He is very authoritative about that. It's a command. It is almost like a command that a drilling instructor gives to his troops. You don't question the commander. You learn obedience if you are in the uniformed group. When the general shout, "Attention!" and you say, "Excuse me," you would be made to run around the field several times. A command is given and you don't question. When the general shout, "About turn," and if you walk straight on, you will be the only one disrupting the march. There is a certain authority about the voice of the Holy Spirit. They do this kind of drilling for soldiers because in a battlefield you got no time to question. If you question you would probably upset the whole warfare strategy. And the Holy Spirit acts that way. "Go near and overtake this chariot." You don't even question whether you could run faster than the chariot. This is the

first running preacher you read about in the bible. “No question,” “Go,” “Come,” “Do,” “Separate,” that’s the way the Holy Spirit talks.

Many people say they heard the voice of the Holy Spirit. I asked, “What did the Holy Spirit say?” They say, “The Holy Spirit said, ‘Go to the room now and pray.’” I replied, “Not now.” The Holy Spirit said, “O.K.” That’s not the voice of the Holy Spirit. Some people claim that they hear an audible voice all the time. If you are hearing an audible voice giving all kinds of instructions from morning, noon to night, “Get up,” and you get up. “Make your chocolate drink,” and you say, “I have no chocolate drink.” “OK, then make coffee.” That is the work of the devil. He wants to rule your life. God doesn’t speak that way. Even when the human spirit speaks, it is not as authoritative.

So, we can understand why the Holy Spirit does not speak all the time – it is because He carries such authority. If He speaks frequently and lets say He gives you a thousand instructions a day, you would have no time to be a normal human being. But the human spirit speaks all the time. All the time the human spirit leads you and guides you. The human spirit functions very much like our natural mind. Our mind is thinking all the time. The human spirit is functioning all time. He is telling you this is right, that is wrong. All the time he is giving instructions. And you can understand why God does not want the human spirit to carry authority. But when the Holy Spirit speaks, there is no question; His voice is authoritative. So, He chooses to speak at certain area and certain time.

Notice in Acts 10 He gives instruction in the same authoritative way. When Peter was in the housetop while he was thinking the Holy Spirit interrupted his thoughts. The Spirit said, “Behold three men are seeking you. Arise therefore go with them.” Do you notice how authoritative that is? “Arise, go with them,” no question allowed. That’s the Holy Spirit; His voice is very authoritative.

Acts 13 is the same. Notice in verse 2 and 3, “Separate Me Paul and Barnabas, which I have called them.” You are only left with a choice to carry out His instructions. The Holy Spirit is very authoritative. That’s the Holy Spirit speaking. And many

people mistook the human spirit for the Holy Spirit and they say, "Thus says the Lord." That was not, but it is only, "I perceived." When the Holy Spirit speaks, you cannot ask any question and He doesn't make a mistake. He does speak and we have to prepare ourselves.

Let's see the operation of the voice of the Holy Spirit through the voice of a human vessel in Acts 21. We are learning how to be led by the Spirit and we are learning the functions of His voice and all the things that go on in helping and preparing us to hear His voice. Acts 21:10-11 *And as we stayed many days a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, "So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."*

It was a very delicate prophecy. But do you notice the way it was delivered? It was very authoritative. Here you are fellowshiping in Philip's house. As they were fellowshiping together suddenly here comes this man who takes off your belt. How would it be if you meet some strangers, the stranger doesn't tell you anything just grab your belt and pull it off. The first thing is you would be glad that your trousers didn't drop down. The second - you are thinking who is this guy. Here he comes takes your belt and tie your hands and feet and there you are tied by your own belt. Then comes this voice and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit is very authoritative.

I remember in Smith Wigglesworth in his prophecy as mentioned in David Duples' book. He spoke about how before God started using him to unite the churches. One day he was with Smith Wigglesworth and Smith Wigglesworth pointed a finger at him and said, "Thus says the Lord," and started prophesying prophecy after prophecy about his life. Then before he could recover from his shock Smith Wigglesworth turned round and walked away. Five minutes later he came in again like a gentleman, greeted him normally as if nothing had happened. Smith Wigglesworth told him he was under unction and an anointing. He had a word from the Holy Spirit to deliver. And he turns not to the left or to the right. He didn't talk to anybody; he went and delivered the word and became normal again. Before that, he was a vessel for the Holy Spirit.

There was a case of a woman whose son had died and who came to Elisha begging for him to have mercy. Elisha told Gehazi to take this rod, turn not to the left or to the right don't speak to anyone don't greet anyone, what an instruction, but go straight take this rod and place it on that child. Lets look at II Kg. 4:29 *Then he said to Gehazi "Get yourself ready and take my staff in your hand, and be on your way. If you meet anyone do not greet him, and if anyone greets you, do not answer him but lay my staff on the face of the child.* That looks like an easy command but it's not easy. Just take the staff and walk. Somebody says, "Hello Gehazi," no answer. "How are you today?" no answer. Rude fellow. That was not an easy command in the natural.

How would you like if the Holy Spirit sends you and said, "Go from here. Bring a message to so-and-so in such-a-such a place and give him or her this message. Greet nobody along the way." Your mother asks you, "Where are you going?" You never answer her back. Your children ask, "Daddy where are you going? No answer. That is difficult; it's not easy to obey the Holy Spirit's direct instructions under an anointing. That is why people find it strange when the anointing comes upon a man of God and he sometimes behaves funnily. When the anointing comes, you don't function in the same way although you are the same person. Like when the anointing of the Holy Spirit comes and you have to obey certain instructions that He gives, you got to concentrate on the instructions. Maybe He gives you instructions to go to the church member who lives at the end of the street and pull him or her up from the wheelchair. But along the way, you fellowship with some other church members down the road and they joke with you and you laugh - you lose the anointing. The bible does not mention it but I know the Holy Spirit's anointing long enough to know that it can wear off when you are frivolous and lighthearted and didn't obey 100%.

And when Gehazi he took that rod, put it down, then came back to Elisha, and said, "Nothing happened," I cannot prove it but I have a funny feeling that he didn't fully obey the instructions. In those days when you walk down a road, you would meet plenty of people along the way. I have a funny feeling that this Gehazi is not a fully obedient guy. He may have taken the rod and then chitchatted for a while and then continued the journey. He may have done that. I have a funny-inside feeling that he had not been fully obedient because if he had been fully

obedient what was spoken would have come to pass. The Holy Spirit's instructions are very authoritative; He gives you no room to move out of it until you obey.

Let's look at another example in I Samuel. Here he talks about the voice of God but it's the similar principle in regard to the Holy Spirit. In I Sam. 3, we see that Samuel had what I call the pre-requisites. And there are three pre-requisites that you have been obedient that you are in prayer and that you are ministering to the Lord. In I Sam. 3 the boy Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli. Do you know by doing that he was positioning himself before God? And if some of you are saying, "I have never heard the voice of the Holy Spirit," give yourselves to those three areas, obey God as much as you know how whether the inward witness or whatever instructions He had already given you in the past. Secondly, continue in it faithfully. There will be a point of time when the Holy Spirit starts speaking. It may take weeks or it may take months. For some He may test and prove you and it may take years. But the moment He starts speaking, He opens a new channel, a new avenue and a new phase in your life.

Samuel the young boy was faithful and he continued ministering onto the Lord. Apparently, he had never heard God's voice before. He was not familiar with the spoken *rhema* of God. He was only obedient to God. He ministered to the Lord. In I Sam. 3 one day while he was asleep in verse 4, it said, *The Lord called Samuel. And he answered, "Here I am!" So he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me," And he said, "I did not call, lie down again." And he went and lay down. Then the Lord called yet again. "Samuel!" So Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." He answered, "I did not call, my son, lie down again." (Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, nor was the word of the Lord yet revealed to him.) And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. So he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you did call me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord had called the boy.*

See Samuel did not know the voice of the Lord. When he went back Eli said the next time you hear it you say "Here am I Lord. Speak Lord for thy servant hears." So the next time the Lord called again and Samuel woke up and said, "Speak Lord for thy servant hears." Then the Lord starts speaking. Isn't it interesting that he had to indicate his response before God spoke. Why didn't God speak to Samuel when He called him and revealed everything to him before he went to Eli? He wanted an

acknowledgment from Samuel before He spoke. Although it says, "The voice of the Lord," it could be the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit yet the same principles are involved. You see the same authority that is involved, the same preparation and pre-requisites to hearing the voice.

We see a few other things here that are important to us. That is as the Lord speaks to him the voice seems to be an outward voice. If you hear a voice inside you, you would not run to another person, unless it sounded like it was outside. And he heard that it was from the outside. That is why he thought that it was Eli who was calling him. The voice of the Lord is strange in this fact although you could recognize it distinctly yet it could sound like anything. Yet you know it's an audible voice. It has its own characteristics and if you didn't hear carefully, it sounds like somebody else's voice. The Holy Spirit lives in us but when He speaks in His authority and power although He is in us it sounds like outside. He lives in us but when He speaks, it sounds like an audible voice that instructs.

There is something about the life of Jesus Christ and how the Holy Spirit instructed Him. In Isa. 50 realizing that, this is a prophecy in regards to the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 4 *The Lord God has given Me the tongue of the learned.* If you have the New King James you will notice the *Me* is capitalized. In the context, it is also referring to the Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah was speaking in the first person under the prophetic anointing and it was the Lord Himself. It refers to Jesus Christ. *That I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning. He awakens My ear to hear as the learned.* So, he says that He awakens My ear. It is not just the physical ears as otherwise it would have mentioned ears. Notice that when its singular it usually refers to spiritual ear.

Notice that in Revelation 2 and 3 that at the end of every message to the church Jesus' instructions seven times at the end of it He says "He who has an ear". Why doesn't He say he who has ears? But when He refers to the spiritual ear He says he who has an ear, a spiritual ear. In Isa. 50, the prophecy is speaking about how the Holy Spirit continually speaks to Jesus. I like the way he phrases it because that makes it sounds like an outside person speaking to us. When the Holy Spirit speaks, He sounds very much like on the outside although He lives on the inside of

us. The resonance of it is so great that it feels like it's on the outside. It is not just having your inner thoughts. A lot of these inner thoughts are from the voice of the human spirit. But as you see in Acts 10, the Holy Spirit can interrupt your flow of thoughts. While Peter was thinking, the Holy Spirit spoke. He interrupted the flow of his whole thoughts. That shows that He is greater than your level of thinking. Unlike the voice of the human spirit, it's a strong voice. Yet, although He sounds like He is on the outside don't mistake every voice to be the Holy Spirit that comes from the outside since the devil will also try to imitate. Any audible voice you hear you have to check it out.

I believe that when Philip was on the cross road and the voice spoke, he did not hear it just audibly with his physical ears. I believe that nobody heard it but him. If the Ethiopian eunuch had passed by and everybody had heard that voice of the Holy Spirit booming, "Go near and join yourself to this chariot," the eunuch might have fallen off his chariot. But it was a voice that only Philip heard but it was loud and clear. The problem that people have is differentiating the voice of the Holy Spirit and the voice of the human spirit. But if you listen carefully to what we taught last message, you could tell the difference. Like just now, when we were having the Holy Communion none of you heard anything as I tuned to the Lord. The Lord said there was a Chinese lady who is having a left ear problem and that she would be healed if she exercises her faith. I am sure the one behind me didn't hear that. But it was loud and clear. Sometimes three or four people can hear the same voice. Obviously as in Acts 13, the whole group heard His voice. And the Holy Spirit said to the whole group, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work that I have called them." It is audible to the hearer and it sounds like as if it's from the outside yet it's from the inside. There is a resonance inside your spirit man and it vibrates into your spirit man. But the person next to you did not hear it. It's so loud that you thought that it's audible yet the next person close to you did not hear it. The voice was there but it was inaudible to the physical realm; that's what the voice of the Holy Spirit is like. It sounds not just like your own thought. It sounds just like someone talking to you. If it was your inward voice of your human spirit there is a possibility, you are wondering whether these thoughts are yours etc. But if it's the voice of the Holy Spirit there is no doubt about it. That's how Jesus receives instructions - He hears God and speaks to Him. Because of the way He speaks and because of His great authority, He does not speak continually. Otherwise, it reduces us to nothing but mere robots. But He prefers that the human inward witness and the human inward voice of the Holy Spirit lead us and then

from time to time He adds to it by giving His instruction. In that way, we have a real relationship with Him.

Summarizing the whole thing that there is a preparation before you can hear His voice. You have to tune and enter His presence just like you enter into God's presence. You have to have obedience, prayer and praise and worship or ministering unto the Lord and fasting. Then you need to recognize the peculiarities of His voice. You recognize that it is authoritative, it's a command given, and sometimes it sounds like from the outside although He lives on the inside.