

# Testing what you hear

## Introduction

- The most common way God communicates is through scripture
- Second way: an internal, inaudible voice; “spontaneous thoughts”

## Why you should test what you hear

- 2 Co 11:14, “Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.”
  - What warning does this provide as we’re learning to hear God speak?
- 1 Jn 4:1, “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”
  - Why does it say to “test the spirits,” not “test the false prophets”?
  - How is this relevant to our desire to know God’s voice?
- 1 Th 5:21, “Test everything. Hold on to the good.”
- You don’t dare do everything that pops into your mind, or follow every whim
- Many of us have opposite problem: allow our minds to remain dominant

## Tests you should use

- Is it compatible with scripture?
  - This is the most important test: what God says to you will always be biblical
  - Ps 138:2, “. . . for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.”
    - What does this reveal about God’s opinion of what he says, specifically the Bible?
  - Bible is **objective standard** for everything you hear; God will never violate his word
  - Jn 14:26, “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.”
  - Principle of supersession: at times, one biblical law or principle will supersede another

- Does it glorify and honor God?
  - Php 2:9, “Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name.”
  - Rev 5:13, “Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!’”
  - God will never say anything that diminishes his glory or honor; or that of his Son
- Does it promote godly nature?
  - Ro 8:29, “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.”
  - “firstborn” (Gk, *prototokos*) could be translated “prototype”
  - 1 Jn 3:2, “But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”
    - point #1: we **shall** be like him; that is God’s objective, he intends to achieve it
    - point #2: this verse strongly implies that we cannot see Jesus as he really is until we’re like him
  - God’s highest priority for you is to develop godly nature, be like Christ, image of God
  - Humility — opposite of a sinful mindset, which is self-centered
  - Agape — considering others more important than self, willing to serve them, even at great cost to yourself
- Is it consistent with your God-given character?
  - What God says to you usually is consistent with your character, relevant to your realm of responsibility
  - He occasionally asks you to do something uncomfortable or unnatural to your character
    - reason: you’re more inclined to turn to him for help
  - We should rely on him at all times, even in our area of specialty
- Do you have spiritual peace?
  - What God speaks to you will always produce peace in your spirit, regardless of mental state

- Col 3:15 “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.”
- We need to distinguish between peace of mind and spirit peace
  - spirit peace is dependent on God & independent of circumstances
  - mental peace is usually dependent on circumstances & whether you think you can handle them
- Important point: your mind *often* will be skeptical of what comes from your spirit
- 1 Co 2:14, “The man without the spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”
  - “the man without the spirit” literally is “the *psychikos* (psyche-oriented) man”
  - Person who is psyche-oriented honors his understanding, knowledge, feelings, emotions
- Spirit peace: conscious rest, internal assurance or conviction regardless of circumstances & regardless of your mental/emotional state
- Spirit peace should be the deciding factor when making a decision or testing what you think God is saying to you
- God uses spirit peace to reveal his will to us
  - Deut 28:65-67, curses for disobedience, being out of God’s will: anxious mind, despairing heart, suspense, dread
- Lack of peace is a symptom that something is wrong
- Satan *cannot* counterfeit spiritual peace
- God may give overwhelming desire for something he wants you to do
- God may deal urgently with you
- God isn’t pushy or demanding
- Is it convicting, not condemning?
  - Jn 16:8 (referring to Holy Spirit), “When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.”
    - “convict” (Gk, *elencho*): expose; refute, show one’s fault; implies there is a convincing of that fault
  - What do you think God’s intent might be in exposing your sin?
  - Ro 8:1, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation

for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

- “condemnation” (Gk, *katakrima*):  
condemnation, punishment resulting from a legal sentence
- If you “hear” something that belittles or humiliates you about something you’ve done, is that coming from God?
- Do you have confirmation?
  - Biblical principle of 2 or 3 witnesses; when something is important, God repeats it
    - Deut 19:15; Mt 18:16; 2 Co 13:1; 1 Tim 5:19; 1 Tim 6:12; Heb 10:28 et al
  - The more confirmations you receive, greater confidence you can have
  - Unsolicited confirmation
    - Something you hear or read, or something someone says, or some circumstance confirms what you sense
  - Solicited confirmation
    - may be wise to talk to other believers (someone whose spiritual maturity you respect), especially if what you “heard” seems important
    - Pr 11:14, “For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure.”
    - Pr 15:22, “Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.”
    - What is the value of asking mature believers about what you heard?
  - Confirmation is not majority vote or general consensus

### **Exercise**

- “Lord, I love you and I want to please you. Please help me understand why humility is essential for pleasing you.”

### **Closing**

- Recommended activity
  - At least twice a week, set aside 15 minutes to sit quietly before God
  - Form a mental image of the Lord, worship him quietly, pray with your spirit briefly
  - Write a simple question, be prepared to write down any significant spontaneous thoughts