

Hindrances to hearing God's voice

- Psyche dominance
 - You are a spirit being with a psyche, temporarily living in a physical body.
 - Psyche functions include: conscious traits (awareness, thoughts, reasoning, intellect, memory), feelings/emotions, attitudes, perspectives, behavior patterns
 - Problem: your psyche is accustomed to being in control, using these functions, and ignoring your spirit
 - Solution: not constantly appeasing your psyche; being alert in case he speaks
- Self-centeredness (pride)
 - Makes it easy to think you know what God would say in a given situation
 - Motivates you to disobey what God says, to think you know better, or even think what God actually said came from Satan instead
 - Solution: be constantly alert for any expression of self-centeredness; counter it with humility
- Nurturing a favorite sin
 - You really don't want to hear God's voice because you already know he'll address that sin
 - If you want to hear God's voice, you must be ready to have every sin exposed and cleansed
 - Excusing or deliberately overlooking sin in your life will interfere with your ability to hear God speak to you
- Depending on others to hear God for you
 - You don't want God to address your sin
 - Fear or discomfort
 - Want someone else to make the effort, meet the requirements to hear God
 - If you don't like what the other person says, you can write them off & conclude they didn't hear God correctly
 - You only want to hear good things
 - 2 Tim 4:3, “. . . to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.”

Preparing to hear God speak

Preparing your spirit

- Beneficial practices
 - Spiritual nourishment: Bible study, be being filled with the Holy Spirit, enjoy nature & fine arts
 - Spiritual exercise: prayer, journaling, praying with your spirit, meditation, worship, celebration, thanksgiving,

- praise, development & use of your spiritual gifts
- Spiritual hygiene: accept responsibility, stop making excuses, accept correction, forgive
- Spiritual dominance: fasting, giving, (tithes, offerings, generosity to people), solitude, quietness, restrained speech, sacrifice, keeping Sabbath rest, service, confession, submission
- Most important: daily Bible reading
 - Jn 14:24, “These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.”
 - Jn 6:63, “The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.”
 - “spirit” (Gk, *pneuma*): breath, wind, spirit
 - “life” (Gk, *zoe*): (1) natural life possessed by humans & animals; (2) life in the absolute sense, life as God has it; (3) spiritual life as opposed to spiritual death resulting from sin
 - Does this mean God’s word (the Bible) also is spirit and life?
 - If so, what does that reveal about the benefits of reading the Bible?
 - How relevant do you think Bible reading is to your spiritual growth?
- One of the easiest: praying with your spirit
 - Ro 8:26, “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”
 - “groan” (Gk, *stenagmos*): groan or sigh
 - So who’s making the sounds that words cannot express in this verse?
 - When the Holy Spirit intercedes in this manner, how are our human spirits involved, if at all?
 - “intercede” (Gk, *hyperentychano*): intercede, personally make a petition in behalf of someone else
 - According to this verse, what is one source of the language and words you speak in a tongue?
 - 1 Co 14:14, “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.”
 - Does this refer to the Holy Spirit or human spirit?
 - 1 Co 14:4, “He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself.”
 - “tongue” (Gk, *glossa*): (1) literal tongue; (2) known language; (3) ecstatic or unknown language; (4) speech
 - “edify” (Gk, *oikodomeo*): (1) build, construct; (2) make more able, edify, strengthen
 - How does speaking in tongues affect your spirit? Your psyche? Your body?

- Conclusion: praying/speaking in tongues helps make your spirit dominant over your psyche
- You can pray with your spirit (in tongues) any time you choose
 - When does a person receive the Holy Spirit?
 - How much of Holy Spirit do you receive at salvation?
 - I suggest baptism in Holy Spirit is not a matter of receiving Holy Spirit or more of him, but of more fully surrendering yourself to him
- Speaking in tongues is not same as gift of tongues
 - 1 Co 12:7, 10, “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good... to another the ability to speak in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.”
 - According to verse 7, who benefits from the gift of tongues?
 - 1 Co 14:2, 4, “² For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. . . ⁴ He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself.”
 - According to verse 2, who is the target audience?
 - According to verse 4, who benefits from speaking in a tongue?
- Do you have to wait for the Holy Spirit to “come on” you before you can speak in tongues?
- Do you need to speak in tongues to hear God speak?

Preparing your mind

- Speaking in tongues, praying with your spirit
 - Helps submit your mind to your spirit, cooperate with your spirit
 - What part of you does God interact with?
- Most frequent solution to overcoming a problem is to **concentrate!**
- Mind is vulnerable to many distractions
- Dealing with mental distractions when preparing to hear God speak
 - Random thoughts: form a mental image of Jesus
 - Things to do: write them down
 - Becoming more aware of your sinful condition: confess
 - Take positive steps to deal with mental distractions, so you can relax your mind & focus on God
- Cultivate a receptive mind
- Repent, change the way you think
 - Includes deliberately changing your thoughts
 - 2 Co 10:4-5, “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.”

- Php 4:8, “. . . whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.”
- These things are more compatible with God’s nature, so how will thinking about them help us hear God speak?
- Focus on God
 - Center down & focus on him
 - Forming a mental image of him is helpful
- Allocate a time to listen
 - Schedule a time to slow down & eliminate distractions

Preparing Your Environment

- Mk 1:35 “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”
 - Jesus frequently withdrew to a *secluded* place
 - It’s important to eliminate distractions

Preparing Your Body

- If you are physically uncomfortable, your body makes demands of your mind
- If you are physically active, your mind may be too preoccupied with the activity
- Until you become experienced at hearing God, sit comfortably and do nothing physically

Closing

- Next session: two weeks from tonight; probably our last session
 - Two topics: what to do when God is silent & journaling
- 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