

Preparation

Living in the Spiritual Realm 3, Session 2

Intro

- Last week:
 - The spiritual realm is eternal and distinct from the physical realm, which is temporal
 - You are a spirit being with a psyche, temporarily living in a physical body
 - Your spirit is the real you; your body is not
 - You currently exist in both the spiritual and physical realms, although you may not be aware of it or even think about it

Develop Your Relationship with God

- Have you realized that the longer you have something, the more you take it for granted?
- Father told me:
 - *My people are so distracted, intensely focused on the world they don't even seriously consider me and I long to interact with them. I'm so full of love for them, but they're so full of indifference about me. They need to wake up to reality – who I am, what I'm doing, how I care for them. They overlook my love and focus instead on self-indulgence. It's the same old lie from the devil; that they can find fulfillment and ultimate satisfaction from what they do for themselves. I want [to] change all of this, to redirect their attention to me, the only one who can satisfy them.*
- Col 3:1-2, ¹ “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”
 - v 1, “set your hearts” (Gk, v, *zeteo*): (1) to desire; (2) to seek, or look for; (3) to try to get or reach something one desires
 - “things above” (Gk, adv, *ano*): in or to a place that is higher
 - What is “above” according to verse 1?
 - Mt 6:33, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”
 - “seek” (Gk, v, *zeteo*): [same as Col 3:1]
 - Col 3:1: set your hearts on or seek things above; i.e., make them your priority
 - v 2, “set your minds” (Gk, v, *phroneo*): (1) to set one's mind on; (2) to direct one's attention and thought to something
 - “things above” (Gk, adv, *ano*): [same as verse 1]

- We need to change our priorities!
- Your relationship with God is – or should be – most important to you and should occupy your thoughts
- We need to repent; literally, change the way we think
- Communication is essential to any relationship
 - Do you have to wait until Father is around before you can talk to him? Explain.

Knowing God's Voice

- As we become more aware of the spiritual realm & begin to have spiritual experiences, some things become absolutely essential: clearly recognizing God's voice, training ourselves in spiritual matters, learning to use our spiritual authority

Thoughts generated by God

- God speaks to you spirit-to-spirit
 - Jn 16:13, "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come."
- Usually spontaneous, compared to what our mind is thinking about
- God's "voice" is light & gentle
- God speaks to you personally (uses words like "I" and "you")
- Unusual content; not what you normally think about or the way you think

Thoughts generated by Satan

- God communicates with us spirit-to-spirit, so can Satan also communicate with us? How?
- Acts 5:3, Satan filled Ananias' *heart* & caused him to lie
- Satan can plant thoughts, motivations, feelings in your spirit
- Same form as thoughts from your own spirit or God
- Speaks in first-person; usually masquerades as your own thoughts
- Why would Satan speak to you? What would he be trying to do?

Testing what you hear

- When God speaks to you, what he says is always compatible with scripture
- What God says is always consistent with his nature
- What God says is always compatible with his kingdom
- When God speaks to you, you'll always have peace in your spirit, regardless of mental state

- Col 3:15 “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.”
- “rule”: refers to role of arbitrator, like an umpire
- Must distinguish between peace of mind (psyche) and spirit peace
- Something you’re thinking may seem to make sense, but your spirit isn’t at peace; red flag!
- When God speaks, what he says usually requires humility, service to others
 - Humility – opposite of self-centeredness, which is characteristic of your flesh
 - Agape – considering others more important than self, willingness to serve them
 - Your flesh is intensely self-centered, opposed to God, opposite of godly character
 - Don’t be surprised that what God says requires humility
- What God speaks is often consistent with your character (a little tricky)
 - This causes people to think, “That’s just me, not God”
 - Who gave you your character?
 - Don’t be surprised if he asks you to do something you normally would do
 - Occasionally asks you to do something uncomfortable or unnatural to your character as a learning experience, but not typically
- When God speaks, what he says may be confirmed
 - Bible principle of 2 or 3 witnesses
 - Deut 19:15, “A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”
 - Unsolicited confirmation
 - Something you hear or read, something someone says, or some circumstance confirms
 - The more important something is, the more likely it is to be confirmed
 - Solicited confirmation
 - May be wise to talk to other believers (someone whose spiritual maturity you respect), especially if what you “heard” seems important
 - What is the value of asking mature believers about what you heard?

What about those “little” impressions you have?

- “If you have nothing to lose, try it”
- Try following your hunches on small issues; excellent learning opportunities
 - Issue: not finding better ways to do something, but becoming sensitive to your spirit

- This is not spontaneity for its own sake
 - Your mind needs to relinquish some control
 - Make your mind submit to your spirit
 - God proves us in small things before he trusts us with greater things
- As you become more experienced, can follow impressions even when greater risk involved
 - You learn by experience

Recommended Daily Activity

- At least two times this week, get in a quiet place & meditate on God for a few minutes
- Write a question to him, such as: “Father, what do you want to say to me?”
- Wait quietly & meditate on him, don’t try to imagine what he might say, but be prepared to write down any spontaneous thoughts
- Repeat with another question, such as the following:
 - “How can I improve my relationship with you?”
 - “How can I prepare myself to experience the spiritual realm?”
- Afterward: use the tests to determine whether it likely was Father speaking to you

Closing

- The Lord blesses you and develops you spiritually so you can participate in what he’s doing in the physical and spiritual realms