

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES:

Listening to God

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

Seeking and finding God requires developing spiritual ears that listen to His instructions: Rev 2:7— He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- I. Train your spiritual ears by understanding and applying the biblical principles below:
 - A. Embrace God's promise to reveal His thoughts to His people:
 - Jn 10:27-- My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.
 - Amos 4:13 NIV-- He who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man, he who turns dawn to darkness, and treads the high places of the earth - the Lord God Almighty is his name.
 - Is 30:21— Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.
 - B. Personally receive that the promise of hearing from God is yours to enjoy: Jn 14:21 NLT—Because they love me, my Father will love them, and I will love them. And I will reveal myself to each one of them."
 - C. Acquire and develop a taste for God's word: 1 Pt 2:2-3— As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.
 - D. Build your baseline of spiritual hearing by establishing a firm foundation of Scripture knowledge: 2 Tim 2:15 KJV— Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.
 - E. Meditate on portions of the written word until they become "yours." Ask God to speak faith-bearing personal words into your life and trust Him to do so:
 - Rom 10:17—Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
 - Principle + Meditation = Personal Word
 - F. Wait on the power of the Holy Spirit to make God's word "living and active": Acts 1:8-- But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you
 - G. Ask and expect the Holy Spirit to apply God's word to your specific situation: Jn 16:13-14—When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth...He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.
 - H. Anticipate that God will give the appropriate amount of light based on your current set of circumstances and stage of development: Jn 16:12--I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.
 - I. Look forward to sharper discernment as interfering signals from your flesh decrease: 1 Cor 3:1-3 AMP— Brethren, I could not talk to you as to spiritual [men], but as to nonspiritual [men of the flesh, in whom the carnal nature predominates], as to mere infants [in the new life] in Christ [unable to talk yet!] I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not yet strong enough [to be ready for it]; but even yet you are not strong enough [to be ready for it] for you are still [unspiritual, having the nature] of the flesh [under the control of ordinary impulses].
 - J. Give Wholehearted Attention to the revelation of God with every part of your being: Ps 119:16-17 AMP— I will delight myself in Your statutes...I will observe Your word [hearing, receiving, loving, and obeying it].

II. Test the message you believe you have received by examining it in light of what Scripture teaches about how God communicates. His personal words to you will:

A. Agree with the whole counsel of Scripture:

- 2 Tim 2:13 AMP— He remains true (faithful to His Word and His righteous character), for He cannot deny Himself.
- Acts 17:11-- they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

B. Lead progressively, so that you will have enough light to do your “Next Right Thing”:

- Ps 37:23 NAS—The steps of a man are established by the Lord, and He delights in his way.
- Pr 4:18 NLT--The way of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, which shines ever brighter until the full light of day.

C. Invite you to closer fellowship and relationship with Jesus: Rev 3:20— Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

D. Correct and convict gently and without condemnation: 2 Cor 7:9-10 NIV— For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way... Godly sorrow brings repentance... and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

E. Offer confirmation and reassurance of God’s revelation: Jn 7:17— If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God

III. Examine the hearer when your spiritual hearing is dull. Ask yourself the following:

A. Have I consistently practiced using my spiritual ears? Heb 5:14 AMP-- But solid food is for full-grown men, for those whose senses and mental faculties are trained by practice to discriminate

B. Do I move in faith when God gives me a personal word, acting in harmony with the revelation? Heb 4:2—The word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith

C. Have I adequately processed and applied the revelation I have received? 2 Tim 2:7 AMP-- Think over these things I am saying [understand them and grasp their application], for the Lord will grant you full insight and understanding in everything.

D. Have I been disobedient to the light already given? Jn 12:35 NIV-- Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going.

E. Am I too hurried and distracted to hear clearly? Mk 4:19 NIV--The worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

F. Is my focus on earthly answers instead of knowing God more? Ps 27:4 TM-- I'm asking GOD for one thing, only one thing: To live with him in his house my whole life long. I'll contemplate his beauty; I'll study at his feet.

G. Have I been stingy with my time? Mt 26:40--He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour?"

H. Do I have a wholehearted commitment to having the Holy Spirit take the lead in my life? Phil 3:15 TM--So let's keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision--you'll see it yet!

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