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IS THAT YOU SPEAKING, GOD?

By Richard & Tanya Curren

We understand firsthand how difficult discerning the voice of God from the millions of other impulses we feel throughout the day can be. Trust us, we've broken almost every single rule a financial planner would tell you to do! It is scary sometimes to base your family's entire economic future on a "feeling." You're combating visions of homelessness, poverty, mockery, destruction and devastation falling upon your family if you make the wrong choices. The pressure is heavy to make sure that you know that you know that you are following God's will.

And, have you ever doubted if you even heard God's voice at all? You're hoping and praying that you're hearing the right things and not just feeling the effects from last night's bad burrito! If you've questioned yourself, questioned God and wondered if you're even totally sane, don't worry – you are completely normal. This is all part of the process of choosing to yield yourself fully and completely to a God you cannot see. It can be scary, frustrating and even confusing at times as you filter through your human emotions to focus on your Godly calling.

But let us reassure you of three things. First, God still talks to His people. Second, He often asks us to do very challenging and scary things. And third, if you are honestly trying to be in His will, He is not going to drop you if you "miss" it. He will reward your faithfulness and obedience with protection, discernment, peace, wisdom and resources.

God is interested in your obedience far more than your results. Sometimes the results take a long time to appear. Does that mean you are a failure until the final result arises? No, of course not! What God wants is your continued faithfulness, trust, love and obedience throughout the process. The toughest thing that God ever asked of us was not to believe in Him – but it was to TRUST HIM. Believing in Him was pretty easy. But trusting Him during the difficult times has been so hard. God will not make sense at certain times in your life. He says in Isaiah 55:8, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways."

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU ARE HEARING GOD'S VOICE?

1. DOES IT LINE UP WITH GOD'S WORD?

The first and probably most tried and true way to check if you are hearing God's prompting is to see if what you are feeling lines up with the Word of God. We mean this both literally and figuratively. Obviously, God is very clear in the Bible about what He considers holy and Godly and what He does not. He will never ask you to break His commandments to do something for His kingdom. When God calls you to do something, you will be able to gain peace from seeing examples in the Bible. God grants us peace by showing us examples of others who have gone before us and how He saw them through the challenge He laid before them. You will also find Scriptures that remind you of your calling. We encourage you to write those down and remember them when the going gets tough.

Figuratively speaking, you will also find that if God is speaking to you regarding something, you will start to see that trend in your Bible and in other Biblical teaching resources that cross your path. For example, if God is calling you to go on a mission trip, you might start seeing Bible verses in your devotions about evangelizing in far away places. (Oddly enough, we sometimes see trends just in church billboard signs!) God speaks to us through many mysterious ways, but you will clearly start to see a trend if it is something with which He is trying to get your attention.

2. IS IT POSITIVE?

One way to know for sure that you are hearing from God is to look at the nature of what He is asking you to do. Is it positive? Does it benefit God's plan? Does it benefit others? These are very important questions to ask and answer honestly. In the Bible, God does not ask people to do negative things in order to receive positive results. Here's an example for our modern times: God is not going to ask you to watch 900 hours of online pornography so that you can one day speak to a men's group about overcoming such an addiction. Nor is He going to send you forth to become a drug addict so that you can one day run your church's overcomers group!

No, in fact it is the exact opposite. God will take what you have poorly chosen to do and use it for good. This is what He means when He promises to give you beauty for ashes in Isaiah 61:1-3. Truly, no experience is wasted by God! So if you have viewed 900 hours of porn or have been a drug addict in your past, know that God can use your experiences to show others how to avoid them. But He will never call you into a destructive lifestyle or negative behaviors that will harm you. The results you receive by following God's will are always positive!

3. IS IT CORROBORATED BY OTHERS?

Often when we feel a stirring in ourselves, we talk to others about it. This is natural, because everyone likes reassurance to know they are doing the right thing. (Many times at the beginning of our ministry, we came to each other and asked, “Am I crazy or do you feel this too?”) Let us be perfectly clear – this is not the time to post your questions to the thousands of vacuous friends that you have on Facebook who don’t know you from Adam regarding a spiritually pressing matter. Instead, this is a time to go to the small circle of trusted Godly friends that you know will be honest with you. This is probably no more than 2 or 3 people. Many more than that will give you too many opinions and can make this step confusing instead of encouraging. People who really know you and are discerning will tell you if what you’re telling them seems like something God is doing in your life. Some may even say that have seen you in this role for years. Don’t be surprised if they’re not surprised by the question you ask; God often uses other people to confirm His will in our lives!

4. DO YOU FEEL PEACE?

This is an easy one. In the end, whatever God is asking you to do may seem big, tough, daunting, overwhelming or even scary, but you will have peace as you take the first steps forward. If you don’t, we strongly advise you to wait and pray. There’s a big difference between having some fear of the unknown, yet feeling an inner peace versus being afraid combined with restlessness and a nagging uneasiness that just won’t go away. You need to know the difference. How do you determine the difference? By following the steps above and through much prayer.

Peace is God’s reward for following His will. It doesn’t mean that you won’t be uncomfortable or won’t go through difficult times, but it does mean that you will be strong, content and willing to face any challenges that come with your calling. The Bible is full of examples of people who were asked big things by God and who were afraid to face the challenge, yet had peace on the journey. Nehemiah, David and even Jesus Himself are wonderful examples of this! If we can offer one excellent piece of advice that will **NEVER** fail you, it is this: ***FOLLOW YOUR PEACE!***

5. DOES IT BEAR FRUIT?

Last but certainly not least, as you begin to act upon what God is telling you to do, you will watch it bear fruit. For example, if God is calling you to start a ministry at your church and suddenly you notice people expressing an interest in what you are doing, you will see that your calling is bearing fruit by fulfilling a need for others. You will also see resources begin

to come your way. This does not necessarily mean huge windfalls or masses of people being saved. But it does mean that you will either have the talent to create resources or resources supplied that care for your needs. As you continue to be obedient and step out in faith, God will continue to provide. Obedience is developed on a small level long before God brings you the masses. (Remember, David herded sheep years before he ever put on the crown.)

No matter what God asks you to do, if you are operating in His will and following His precepts, you will notice fruit and see positive results. Don't judge your results by the quantity – judge them by the quality. Don't just look for financial results, either. Sure, financial results are important and definitely matter, but they are not the be-all-end-all way to gauge your success. Some of the most meaningful and life-changing things you do will never pay a dime. But they are to be valued and treasured and are just as important as any paycheck.

As you use these 5 steps to determine if you are hearing God's voice, your faith will deepen and you will learn how God speaks to you and through you. It is a powerful and beautiful process, and one that we want you to enjoy! The Holy Spirit will guide you with discernment and wisdom as you continue to be faithful and obedient to Him! Here is an excellent promise for you today: John 10:27, "My sheep listen to My voice; I know them and they follow Me." God knows you and loves you more than you can fathom. He will guide you with His voice every step of your way!

In His Love,

Rick & Tanya

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Richard R. Curren III is the co-founder and President of Boundless Limits International, Live Guilt Free and Best Life Strategies. He is a regular co-host of WATC TV's *ATLANTA LIVE*, an inspirational television show broadcast internationally. He is the co-author of **ON COURSE: Strategies For Successful Living** and its companion **ON COURSE: Life Application Study Guide**. He is also the producer of several inspirational videos including "*IT'S ABOUT TIME!*", which has been broadcast on television worldwide. He is also the developing producer for Scaly Adventures, a positive influential outreach to children using animals and nature to explore the wonders of God's creation. Rick's passion is to speak and motivate others to live to their maximum potential physically, mentally and spiritually. Through their events and publications, Rick and his wife Tanya inspire others and show that every person has boundless potential to change our world. He is a former United States Army Officer. Rick serves on the Board of Directors for the So Help Me God Project as an Advisor and is a founding Board Member. With a passion for health and fitness, he is a 2nd Degree Black Belt in Korean Olympic Tae Kwon Do, and serves as an Associate Instructor for Palmetto Martial Arts School.



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