



THE
NORTH JERSEY
UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

Pastor Gary Evensen

RECEIVING THE WORD

HOW DOES GOD SPEAK TO US?

*Recognizing God's Leading without
Mistaking Our Own Thoughts for His Voice*

*“Prove all things;
hold fast that which is good.”*

1 Thessalonians 5:21 KJV



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Hearing the Voice of God

How God Guides, Corrects, and Changes Us

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

— Romans 8:14

Introduction

Every Christian wants to know the will of God, yet many assume that God's leading comes only through dramatic experiences or extraordinary miracles. More often than not, however, God guides His people in quiet, consistent ways every day.

He speaks through His Word. He directs us by His Spirit. He lovingly convicts us when we begin to drift. As we respond in humility and obedience, He gradually transforms us into the image of Jesus Christ.

The greatest danger is not that God will stop speaking—it is that we will stop listening. A neglected Bible, an ignored conviction, or a hardened heart can slowly dull our spiritual sensitivity. On the other hand, a believer who treasures God's Word, listens to the Holy Ghost, and responds quickly to His voice will continue to grow in faith, holiness, wisdom, and spiritual maturity.

In this lesson we will discover three essential principles for hearing the voice of God:

- **Examine your life by God's Word.**
- **Listen to the leading of the Holy Ghost.**
- **Respond immediately when God brings conviction.**

As we practice these principles day by day, we become more sensitive to God's voice, more obedient to His will, and more like Jesus Christ.

Check Yourself by God's Word

Let's be honest—we are not very good at judging ourselves. Human nature has an amazing ability to excuse sin, justify wrong attitudes, and explain away disobedience. If left to ourselves, we will often convince ourselves that we are doing just fine when, in reality, we are drifting farther from God.

Jeremiah described the human heart this way:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

— Jeremiah 17:9 (KJV)

Our feelings are not a reliable guide. Our opinions are not the standard. Even our past experiences are not the final authority. Only God's Word can accurately reveal our true spiritual condition.

The Bible is like a mirror. James wrote:

"For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass."

— James 1:23 (KJV)

A mirror does not change our appearance—it simply tells the truth. In the same way, Scripture reveals both our strengths and our weaknesses. Sometimes we like what we see. Sometimes we don't. But if we are serious about living for God, we must allow His Word to examine us honestly.

That is not always comfortable. Solomon wrote:

"My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction."

— Proverbs 3:11 (KJV)

God's correction is not punishment for His children—it is evidence of His love. A loving Father refuses to leave His children unchanged.

Through preaching, personal Bible reading, prayer, and the conviction of the Holy Ghost, God continually shapes us into the image of Christ.

The more time we spend in God's Word, the more sensitive we become to the things that please Him and the things that grieve Him.

David declared:

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

— Psalm 119:11 (KJV)

When Scripture fills our hearts, it also governs our decisions. The Word becomes our standard for doctrine, our guide for daily living, and our protection against deception.

Every believer should regularly ask:

- Does my life agree with God's Word?
- Is there anything I am defending that Scripture condemns?
- Am I obeying everything God has shown me?

- Am I allowing God's Word to change me, or am I trying to change God's Word to fit my lifestyle?

A wise Christian never judges the Bible by his life; he judges his life by the Bible.

Listen to the Holy Ghost

When a person repents, is baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and receives the gift of the Holy Ghost, he receives far more than an emotional experience. Christ comes to dwell within the believer by His Spirit. The Holy Ghost becomes the continual presence of God working in the believer's life.

Jesus promised:

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost... he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance."

— John 14:26 (KJV)

The Holy Ghost is our Teacher. He illuminates Scripture, convicts us of sin, strengthens us against temptation, and leads us into a life that honors God.

Sometimes His voice is gentle. At other times His conviction is unmistakable. He may prompt us to pray, to witness, to make restitution, to avoid temptation, or to separate ourselves from something that would hinder our walk with God.

Paul wrote:

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

— Romans 8:14 (KJV)

Being led by the Spirit is more than having occasional spiritual feelings. It is living each day in willing submission to God's direction. The Spirit produces conviction before sin becomes bondage and guidance before mistakes become disasters.

The Holy Ghost also guards the truth that has been entrusted to us.

"That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us."

— 2 Timothy 1:14 (KJV)

The Spirit and the Word always work together. The Holy Ghost inspired the Scriptures, so He will never lead us contrary to them.

Any impression, feeling, or experience that contradicts God's Word does not come from God.

The Bible warns us that Satan himself "is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14). Not every spiritual experience, impression, dream, or voice is from God. Every experience must be tested by the Word of God, because the Holy Ghost will never contradict the Scriptures He inspired.

As we pray daily, study the Scriptures faithfully, and remain sensitive to His voice, the Holy Ghost molds our character, deepens our relationship with Jesus Christ, and empowers us to live a holy life.

The Christian life is not lived by human determination alone. We overcome because God Himself lives within us, strengthening us, correcting us, and leading us one step at a time.

"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

— Galatians 5:16 (KJV)

The more we obey the promptings of the Holy Ghost, the more clearly we recognize His voice.

Every act of obedience strengthens our walk with God and deepens our trust in His leading.

Respond Quickly to God's Conviction

One of the greatest blessings a child of God can experience is the conviction of the Holy Ghost. Conviction is not condemnation. It is God lovingly calling us back into closer fellowship with Himself.

Too often people fear conviction, but we should thank God for it. As long as God is still dealing with us, there is hope, opportunity, and mercy.

The writer of Hebrews reminds us:

"Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

— Hebrews 3:15 (KJV)

Notice the emphasis on **today**. God's conviction is meant to produce an immediate response. Delayed obedience often becomes disobedience.

Conviction Is Evidence of God's Love

God does not correct us because He wants to discourage us. He corrects us because He loves us and desires our spiritual growth.

The Bible says:

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

— Hebrews 12:6 (KJV)

A loving father disciplines his children because he wants them to mature. Likewise, our heavenly Father lovingly corrects us so that we become more like Jesus Christ.

When the Holy Ghost convicts us after we speak harshly, neglect prayer, entertain sinful thoughts, or compromise biblical holiness, He is protecting us from spiritual damage that could grow much worse if ignored.

Never Ignore the Voice of God

Every time we respond to God's conviction, our hearts become more sensitive to His voice.

Every time we resist conviction, our hearts become a little harder.

Paul warned believers:

"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

— Ephesians 4:30 (KJV)

Stephen spoke even more strongly to those who continually rejected God's dealings:

"Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost."

— Acts 7:51 (KJV)

No Christian suddenly falls away from God. Spiritual decline usually begins with ignoring small convictions.

A neglected prayer life.

An unforgiven offense.

A compromised standard.

A secret sin.

An unwillingness to forgive.

A neglected responsibility.

What begins as a gentle conviction can eventually become a hardened heart if repeatedly ignored.

Respond Immediately

When God speaks, the safest response is immediate obedience.

If He convicts us to pray—pray.

If He convicts us to repent—repent.

If He convicts us to forgive—forgive.

If He convicts us to make something right—do it quickly.

If He convicts us to witness to someone—obey.

Partial obedience is still disobedience. God honors those who respond promptly to His voice.

Every time we obey God's conviction, our hearts become more sensitive to His voice.

Every time we knowingly resist His conviction, our hearts become a little less responsive. If a person continually rejects the voice of God, he risks developing a hardened heart and, eventually, what the Bible describes as **"having their conscience seared with a hot iron"** (1 Timothy 4:2).

A seared conscience no longer responds to God's correction as it once did.

What once brought conviction no longer troubles the heart because repeated resistance has dulled the conscience. This is why Scripture repeatedly warns us:

"To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

— Hebrews 3:15 (KJV)

Never ignore the conviction of the Holy Ghost. Respond while your heart is tender, for a sensitive conscience is one of God's greatest gifts and one of the Christian's greatest safeguards.

Conviction Produces Growth

Every time we obey God's conviction, we become more spiritually mature.

Our discernment increases.

Our fellowship with God deepens.

Our prayers become more effective.

Our spiritual ears become more sensitive.

Our character becomes more like Christ.

This is one of the ways the Holy Ghost transforms believers from glory to glory.

Keep a Tender Heart

David provides one of the greatest examples of responding correctly to conviction.

When the prophet Nathan confronted him about his sin, David did not make excuses or blame someone else. He humbled himself, repented sincerely, and sought God's mercy.

His prayer should become our prayer:

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."
— Psalm 51:10 (KJV)

God is not looking for perfect people. He is looking for humble people who are willing to repent whenever He speaks.

Questions to Ponder

At the end of each day, ask yourself:

- Did the Holy Ghost deal with me about anything today?
- Did I obey immediately, or did I delay?
- Is there anyone I need to forgive?
- Is there anyone I need to apologize to?
- Is there something I need to confess to God?
- Have I become less sensitive to God's voice than I once was?

A tender heart is one of the greatest treasures a Christian can possess.

Closing Thought

The safest place a believer can live is under the continual conviction and guidance of the Holy Ghost. Never fear God's correction. Fear becoming unable to hear His voice.

Respond quickly when God speaks.

The Holy Ghost does not convict us to drive us away from God—He convicts us to draw us closer. Every act of repentance, every step of obedience, and every surrendered decision allows God to continue His transforming work in our lives. As long as our hearts remain tender and responsive to His voice, He will faithfully lead us, strengthen us, and prepare us for eternity.

A Prayer for a Heart That Hears God

Lord Jesus,

In a world filled with so many voices, opinions, and distractions, I want to learn to recognize Your voice and understand Your direction for my life.

There are times when I have questions, face difficult decisions, or simply do not know which way to turn. Help me understand that You have not left me without guidance.

Open my heart to receive Your Word and my understanding to recognize the truth You have revealed in Scripture.

Teach me to distinguish between Your direction, my own desires, the influence of others, and the many voices competing for my attention.

Lord, help me never to confuse my feelings with Your voice or assume that every thought that enters my mind comes from You.

Give me a humble and teachable spirit, willing to examine everything in the light of Your Word. When You correct me, help me receive correction.

When Your Word challenges my thinking, give me the courage to change.

When You reveal something I need to do, give me the faith and determination to obey.

Remove the distractions, pride, fear, and stubbornness that might prevent me from hearing and responding to Your truth.

Lord, I do not want merely to hear what I want to hear. I want to hear what You have to say.

Help me develop a daily habit of reading Your Word, seeking You in prayer, and allowing Your truth to shape my thoughts, decisions, and actions.

Your Word declares, *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me”* (John 10:27).

Help me not only to recognize Your voice but also to follow You faithfully.

Above all, lead me into a deeper knowledge of who You are, so that I may walk in truth and live according to Your will.

In the name of Jesus Christ,

Amen.

YOU'RE INVITED!

The North Jersey United Pentecostal Church

We would love to have you join us!

Whether you are searching for a church home, beginning your walk with God, or simply desire to learn more about Jesus Christ and His

Word, there is a place for you here.

Come experience heartfelt worship, biblical preaching and teaching, prayer, fellowship, and the presence of God.

WEEKLY SERVICES

SUNDAY WORSHIP 11:15 AM

MIDWEEK WORSHIP & THE WORD — ENGLISH

Wednesday • 8:00 PM

SERVICIO EN ESPAÑOL Viernes • 8:00 PM

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Watch our services and Bible teaching on YouTube:

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We hope to see you soon!