

Knowing God's Voice



Many Voices



- ☞ There are many voices and messages in our world
- ☞ It can be hard to tell which voice is God's

- ☞ All the voices are telling us how to think, feel, and fit in with the culture around us
- ☞ It's a perfectly natural mechanism in human nature

Matthew 13:18-21 NLT

"Now listen to the explanation of the parable about the farmer planting seeds: The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message about the Kingdom and don't understand it. Then the evil one comes and snatches away the seed that was planted in their hearts. The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word.

Matthew 13:22-23 NLT

The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life and the lure of wealth, so no fruit is produced. The seed that fell on good soil represents those who truly hear and understand God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!"

Seeds



- ☞ Every message and action that we see or hear is like a seed that is planted in our hearts and minds.
 - ☞ If we accept the seed, it will grow in our hearts
 - ☞ If we reject the seed, it won't
- ☞ How do we know what the good seeds are and what the bad seeds are?

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 NLT

These people are false apostles. They are deceitful workers who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ. But I am not surprised! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no wonder that his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. In the end they will get the punishment their wicked deeds deserve.

Upside Down



- ☞ The servants of the enemy disguise themselves as servants of righteousness
 - ☞ Calling good evil and evil good
 - ☞ Makes sense to our rational/worldly minds
 - ☞ The kingdom doesn't make sense
- ☞ E.g., "This is so offensive; everyone should be upset about this. Everyone who isn't offended about this isn't a good person."

Love vs. Offense



Proverbs 10:12 ESV

Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.

Proverbs 17:9 NIV

Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.

Everybody Struggles, Right?



- ☞ "Everybody struggles with that."
- ☞ Romans 8:37 NIV - No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.
- ☞ We are overcomers (Luke 10:19, 1 John 4:4, 5:3-5)
- ☞ Romans 12:21 NIV - Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.
- ☞ Jesus set us free from sin (Romans 6:1-23)

- ☞ Which direction are we growing in?

Discipline



- ☞ Selfishness, anger, offense, unforgiveness, pride, lust, etc. tickle our ears and seem easy, so we want to instinctively agree with them.
- ☞ Forgiveness, sacrifice, service, humility, unconditional love, etc. sound hard and scary and make no sense to our natural minds so we tend to instinctively disagree with the hard truths God speaks to us
- ☞ We have to discipline ourselves to listen and obey God. It doesn't come naturally.

Distinguishing Good from Evil



1Jo 4:5-6 NIV

They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we **recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.**

Hebrews 5:12-14 NIV

In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, **who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.**

Growth



- ☞ Whatever seeds we water & nurture will grow
 - ☞ Good seeds will grow into mature good fruit
 - ☞ Bad seeds will grow into overgrown weeds and bad fruit

- ☞ We become mature by constant use and training
- ☞ Seeds that are watered grow. Seeds that aren't don't.

Weed out Sin



☞ Matthew 13:24-26, 41 NIV - Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. ... The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will **weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin** and all who do evil.

☞ How do we know the difference?

Character



- ☞ Every voice, message, and action tells us about the character and nature of the speaker
- ☞ So, it is quite easy to tell the difference if you know who God is and what He is like.
- ☞ The influences, thoughts, feelings, and voices that sound like what God is really like are from Him.
- ☞ The ones that sound like the opposite aren't.

Misconceptions



- ☞ God is good, but the culture says He isn't
 - ☞ Natural disasters are "acts of God"
 - ☞ In unfortunate circumstances, we ask "Why is God doing this to us?" or even worse, "This is God's wrath for your sins."
 - ☞ We have a tendency to blame God for things the enemy does, or are a result of people's poor choices
- ☞ How many give God credit when good weather or good circumstances happen?

God is Good



- ☞ James 1:17 NIV - Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.
- ☞ God can only give us things that are purely good
- ☞ He doesn't have anything bad to give us.
- ☞ God works bad things out for good (Romans 8:28)
- ☞ Let's put the responsibility where it really lies
- ☞ We can trust God completely without worrying about anything bad happening if we know God's character and nature.

Distance



- ☞ Culture says,
 - ☞ God is emotionally distant, not listening, doesn't care, and not active
 - ☞ There aren't many "spectacular" miracles anymore
- ☞ We often think we have to beg God or jump through some religious hoops to get God to answer us
- ☞ God loves us and the people we are praying for more than we do
- ☞ God is working, even when we don't see it

God is in the Details



- ☞ Every big thing is made up of a bunch of little things.
- ☞ The big thing is happening. It is just happening step by step in little pieces at just the right pace.
- ☞ It is typically not good for the big things to happen all at once.
- ☞ God is patient, and will give us good things at just the right speed.
- ☞ We have to trust God and not trust what we think is best.
- ☞ We have to believe God and not the voices accusing Him of not acting or loving us enough.

Know God



- ☞ If we know what God is like, we will be able to hear the difference in the voices and know which ones to listen to and which ones to reject.
- ☞ Meditating on what God is saying and what He is like will water the good seeds and weed out the bad ones
- ☞ Study the Scriptures to know what God is like