

Lesson 5: The Whisper and the Three Strangers

Purpose of the Lesson:

To understand what God's voice sounds like, how to recognize it, and how to distinguish it from other voices.

Review of Previous Lessons:

Lesson 1: God never stopped talking.

God is not distant or silent. He did not simply give us the Bible and step away. The Holy Spirit is active in guiding believers daily.

Lesson 2: Hearing God is for every believer.

Hearing God's voice is the birthright of every child of God, not just something reserved for a few special people.

Lesson 3: Not hearing God is abnormal.

In Scripture, men and women of God regularly heard from Him. Hearing God is meant to be normal in the life of a believer.

Lesson 4: We do not have a hearing problem but a heart problem.

We hear God with our heart. The condition of our heart affects our ability to recognize and receive His voice.

Main Questions About Hearing God

1. What does God sound like?

Many people wonder if God's voice is loud, booming, angry, or dramatic.

2. How do I know it is God?

This is important because many people claim to hear God, but not every voice is actually from Him.

1. Tuning to Hear God's Low Whisper

God often speaks in a low whisper, not through noise, panic, or pressure.

Example: The Barn Owl

A barn owl is designed to hear what others miss. In the same way, believers have been spiritually shaped to hear God's voice.

Key Thought:

What if God is not being quiet, but we have never turned down the volume on everything else?

God has equipped us to hear Him through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not a suggestion; He is the receiver within us, helping us recognize God's voice.

Elijah's Story: 1 Kings 19

Elijah had followed God faithfully. He had declared drought, confronted evil, seen fire fall from heaven, and prayed for rain. But after Jezebel threatened his life, he became afraid, exhausted, and ready to die.

Elijah needed to hear from God.

In 1 Kings 19, God was not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire. After all of that came the sound of a low whisper. Elijah recognized it because he knew God's voice.

Key Thought:

You do not need God to speak louder. You need to quiet everything else.

What God's Voice Is Like

God's tone is quiet, but not weak.

God's voice rarely arrives with volume, and it never arrives with panic.

God speaks to bring you up, not simply to build you up.

God is not your cheerleader, but He is a good Father who calls you into who He created you to be.

God speaks with kindness and clarity.

2. Training Against the Three Strangers

There are other voices that try to lead us. These can be grouped into three categories: self, culture, and the enemy.

Key Thought:

When you know the real, the fake just feels wrong.

Example: Recognizing Counterfeit Money

Cashiers are not mainly trained by studying counterfeits. They are trained by handling real money so often that they can tell when something feels wrong.

In the same way, the more we know God's voice, the more we recognize when another voice is not Him.

John 10:5

Jesus said His sheep will not follow a stranger because they do not know the voice of strangers.

The Three Stranger Voices

1. The Voice of Self

The voice of self condones.

It sounds like you.

It reasons, justifies, excuses, and defends.

It often supports your own agenda.

Example: Peter in Matthew 16

Peter correctly recognized Jesus as the Christ because the Father revealed it to him. But shortly after, Peter resisted Jesus' teaching about suffering and the cross. Jesus rebuked him because Peter was focused on human thinking, not God's plan.

Lesson:

Self can cause us to miss God's voice because we already have a preferred outcome in mind.

2. The Voice of Culture

The voice of culture conforms.

Culture does not usually force us to follow it. It simply says, "Go with the flow."

Example: The Lazy River

On a lazy river, you may not feel like you are moving until you stand up and feel the pull of the current. Culture works the same way. As long as you drift with it, it feels easy. But when you stand against it, you feel the resistance.

Romans 12:2

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

Lesson:

The world will always try to slowly shape us into its mold.

3. The Voice of the Enemy

The voice of the enemy condemns.

It is harsh, aggressive, and accusing.

It attacks your identity.

It is like a spam caller who keeps talking, pressuring, and trying different angles until you hang up.

Lesson:

The enemy does not simply want to correct behavior. He wants to accuse, shame, and define you by failure.

Comparing the Voices

God's Voice:

Convicts

Specific

Targets behavior

Offers a way forward

Sounds kind and clear

Feels like a coach helping you grow

Self's Voice:

Condonates

Sounds reasonable

Targets comfort or preference

Gives you a pass

Sounds like your own excuses

Culture's Voice:

Conforms

Sounds popular or normal

Targets acceptance

Encourages drifting

Says, "Everyone is doing it"

The Enemy's Voice:

Condemns

Sounds harsh and accusing

Targets identity

Brings a verdict

Says things like, “You are a failure,” “You will never change,” or “You are not enough”

Key Difference:

God corrects behavior without attacking identity.

The enemy attacks identity and leaves you hopeless.

Final Takeaways

God’s voice is often a low whisper.

To hear Him, we must quiet the noise around us and within us.

God speaks with kindness, clarity, and conviction.

Self condones.

Culture conforms.

The enemy condemns.

The more we know God’s voice, the easier it becomes to recognize what is not Him.