



Spirit Life (Part 3) – Finding the Frequency

Pastor Jerry Gillis – June 25, 2017

So my wife has said to me on a number of occasions recently that she thinks that I am increasingly poor in my hearing. Of course, I disagreed with her because I didn't hear anything she said. But she's told me, she said "I think your hearing's getting worse".

And so unbeknownst to her I went online and actually did one of those hearing tests. You can look them up online, and it's not the best place to do it, with your computer keyboard because it may not be able to get all the frequencies. But nonetheless, I got on there and it does like tests from like 8,000 kHz to 20,000 kHz, and it just makes sounds periodically and you try and see if you can hear them. And again, computer keyboard's not ideal for this. And so, a kilohertz is basically just a way, a measurement of wave frequency that you're hearing. And so it started at 8,000 and I could hear that, it was this high, you know, high pitch, whatever, like I'm good. And then 10,000 I'm like, I'm good. At 12,000 I can hear that. And then after that, nothing. Zero, nothing.

Now when I began to read on this, I thought is something really wrong with me or whatever. And I began to read on hearing and understanding some of these kinds of things. And I realized that the particular parts of our ear, which I won't go into detail explaining because I don't know what they are, but the particular parts of our ear that can detect wave frequency, they actually degenerate over time and you don't get them back. And so once they're gone, they're gone. That's just kind of how it is. And so as we get older, and I'm really telling this for you because I'm not getting older, but just for you. As we get older, we have an inability to be able to hear and to make out certain frequencies as we get older.

Younger people can do it. My kids one time pulled up something on line and it was these really high-pitched sounds and they could hear them and I couldn't hear them. And I was like "you're lying, there's not even any sounds. Like I can't even hear anything" and they're like "we can hear them", because they've got young ears, you know. And so as we get older that's what happens. It degenerates and it won't regenerate, so it's kind of what it is, right? As we get older it's just kind of how it happens.

Now, I didn't bring you in here, you know, this morning and start this just to depress you. When you're going hey, thanks man, you told me that I'm getting worse at my hearing and you know, good night. Thank you Buffalo. You know, mic drop. That's not what we're trying to do. I wanted to set up a contrast and I'll show it to you in just a second, because as we're. kind of understanding now the older that we get the worse our hearing becomes, and that's just a part of getting older, right? But spiritually it's different than that.

Now I want to remind you that a few weeks ago when I started this series on the Holy Spirit, I talked about who He is and what He does. And one of the things that we talked about is that we talked about the Holy Spirit speaks. We kind of settled that from the words of Jesus to us that the Holy Spirit actually speaks. In fact, what we talked about was in John chapter number 16 and Jesus said, "But when He, the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth and He will not speak on His own, He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come and He will glorify me because it is from me that He will receive what He will make known to you."

So the Scripture clearly tells us and Jesus clearly tells us that the Holy Spirit actually does speak. Now here's the good news. Unlike our physical hearing that as we get older, we have an inability to detect certain frequencies because there are parts of our ear that degenerate and never come back, the opposite is true spiritually. That as we mature in our spiritual faith, as we mature in Christ, our ability to hear the Spirit's voice increases over time, not decreases. That should be really good news to us.

Now, I said if we spiritually mature. Just because we get a year older does not mean that we got more spiritually mature, right? We could be sixty-five and have come to Christ maybe when we were twenty-five, but we're really only one-year old with forty do-overs. You see, spiritual maturity comes, it's different than kind of our physical age and some people are mature at younger levels, some people mature as they get older, but the goal is that as we grow in age, with every passing day that we grow in the

likeness of Christ, that we actually have an increased ability to be able to hear the Spirit's voice.

Here's why that's such good news. Like I was saying to our deaf community, this is great news because this doesn't have anything to do with your physical hearing. That as you, if you are deaf even, as you mature in Christ spiritually, you will better be able to hear the voice of God in your mind and in your heart than you ever could even if you can't physically hear. You see, this is really good news for us and I wanted to set up that contrast.

Now, so we're going to talk about the idea of the Holy Spirit speaking and how we can hear the Spirit's voice, but here's how I want to do it so that you know where we're going. Let me give you just a quick kind of map, or a guide. I'm going to begin by talking in the book of Acts and I'm going to survey a number of places in the book of Acts where the Spirit speaks and leads in the book of Acts. The reason I'm choosing the book of Acts is because it chronicles the acts of the Holy Spirit through the apostles, and because it is a great place to study the Holy Spirit because it mentions the Holy Spirit over ninety times in the book of Acts.

So, we're going to look at kind of a quick survey of the book of Acts. We're not going to stay there for very long but we're going to see how He speaks and how He leads in that context. Then I'm going to talk to you about the only way that God promises to speak to us and then I'm going to conclude by giving you some really practical application. I'm going to take one instance from my own life and I'm going to use it as an illustration all the

way through every point that I'm making on the application so we can kind of keep a consistency and understand what we're doing. So that's where we're going. Are you ready?

So, we're going to start in the book of Acts, and we're going to ask the question real quickly, "how does the Spirit of God actually speak to us"? The first way that I'm going to point out, and you're going to say "thanks professor", is with words. The Spirit actually speaks with words. And we can see that in the book of Acts.

Now, there was a disciple of Jesus, one of the apostles of Jesus named Philip. And Philip was ministering and then was called to a different place. He was ministering in a place where a lot of people were coming to Christ and then God called Him out into the middle of Samaria in the middle of nowhere. But notice what happened in Acts chapter number 8. It says: "So Philip started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means the 'queen of Ethiopians'). This man had gone to Jerusalem (the Ethiopian eunuch) had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home he was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." That's pretty clear, isn't it? Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him."

That's incredible. So God moves Philip out into the middle of nowhere, and then basically says, "Philip, you see that chariot? I want you to go stand near it." And he goes and stands near it. Does exactly what the Spirit told him with words to do. And then he hears the Ethiopian eunuch reading the book of Isaiah. Do you know where he was reading specifically? Isaiah 53, which is a messianic prophecy that talks about Jesus. And so the Spirit of God put him in that spot for that very purpose and then he said, "hey, do you know what you're reading?" He said "how could I unless somebody explains it to me?" And he said "have I got some explaining for you". And he sat with him and he led him to Jesus and then he baptized him. It was an incredible work by the Spirit of God who spoke to Philip using words.

But that's not the only way we see in the book of Acts. The Spirit also speaks through visions and dreams. When you study the book of Acts, you see this happen in a few different places. Here's the first place that I'll point out to you. It's in Acts chapter number 9. Here's what it says: "In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. And the Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," Ananias answered. And the Lord told him "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul." How explicit are those directions? He gives him GPS coordinates and people, right? He's like "Go to Judas' house, it's on Straight Street, you have to make a left over there and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. And in a vision Saul has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

So in this vision, God speaks to Ananias to do what He called him to do and he places his hands on Saul, prays over him. Remember, Saul had gone

blind, the scales fall off of Saul's eyes, Saul begins to minister in the name of Jesus and writes, by the leadership of the Holy Spirit two-thirds of the New Testament. Because of the Spirit of God's influence there.

Now, there's another place that we could point to it's with Peter in Acts chapter 10. It says: "About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, and when the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. (Had a vision.) He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. And it contained all kinds of four-footed animals as well as reptiles and birds (this would be scary for a Jewish guy, right? Because they didn't eat those things.) Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat." This was kind of a parable of sorts, it really happened, but it was kind of a vision parable of sorts to kind of help Peter understand that the Gospel was going to both the Gentiles, who he viewed as unclean, and the Jews who he viewed as ceremonially clean. And so this came through a vision.

So we see the Spirit of God speak not only with words, but also through visions, but also the Spirit of God speaks through other people. In fact, when you look in Acts chapter number 11 it says this: "During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) And the disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea. This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul."

In other words, the disciples testified to the fact that what God had led, in this man's heart, Agabus to proclaim about an upcoming famine was true, and they actually acted on that and collected money and they were going to help out with the impending famine. So sometimes God will speak through other people.

There's a fourth way. Sometimes God will speak internally. In other words, God's Spirit testifies with our spirit, as it says in another place in the Scripture, that we are the children of God. Sometimes that happens. But let me show you a place in the book of Acts where we can see this. It was at the council of Jerusalem and all the apostles had come together to discuss what should happen, because there were Gentiles coming to Jesus and what about all the Jews and the Gentiles, how do we work all of this out? So they came up with some resolutions about what they would do, and here's what they said in a letter that they were going to write to all the churches. "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements." And then they named all of the requirements. It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.

You see, what God was doing as they were collectively together in community seeking Him about what ministry to the Gentiles would look like, God testified by His Spirit inside of their hearts together and they were able to say it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us. So sometimes God will speak by His Spirit internally.

But He'll also speak externally. Let me explain to you what I mean there. You're going to see it and that sometimes can mean circumstances. Let me

explain what I mean. Let's take a look at Paul when he's on one of his journeys. Acts chapter 16, it says: "Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the Word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went to Troas. And during the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us. And after Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them."

So all Paul wanted to do was preach to gospel, and he had these people with him, right? He wanted to preach the gospel and he said "Hey, let's go here. So let's go north and preach the gospel." And the Bible says the Spirit of God said no, I'm not letting that happen. What? I don't know how He did that, circumstantially, somehow He closed the doors. And He closes them there. So Paul said okay, we'll go this way. The Spirit of God goes nope. All right, we'll go this way. Nope. Okay, so we're going this way, which is basically now next to the sea. And I don't know how seaweed responds to the gospel. But Paul's sitting there thinking to himself I tried to go each direction and the Spirit said no. And all I want to do is preach the gospel. And while he's there a vision comes to him and he sees a man on the other side of the sea from Macedonia saying, "come and preach to us". And Paul says okay. Now I know what's going on. Now we go and we preach to them. That's the Spirit of God working. Maybe with circumstances externally to get us to the place where He wants us to go.

So the Spirit speaks in a number of ways. When we read the book of Acts we figured that out. The Spirit speaks in a number of different ways. But, here's what we need to remember about the book of Acts. The book of Acts is chronicling the early church where the Spirit of God is working predominantly through the apostles. That's why some of your Bibles calls it the "Acts of the Apostles". It's really the Acts of the Holy Spirit through the apostles is what we see in the book of Acts. But here's what's going on. This is all happening and this is a chronicle of all that's happening before there is an actual New Testament. There is not a canon of Scripture at this point. This is before that, right? Because this is all happening historically. In fact, sometimes some of Scripture is being authored by the Spirit of God through human vehicles during the history that we read about in the book of Acts. But it's before we have a completed canon of Scripture.

But later on, after some period of time, the writer of the book of Hebrews wants to tell us something very important. The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus, as you read the book of Hebrews, is superior to everyone and everything. Compare anybody that you want - Moses, or David or Aaron the priesthood, or the covenants, or the law. Jesus is superior to angels and to everything. To anyone and everything. When you read Hebrews that's what you figure out. But what the writer of Hebrews does when he begins is he tells us about how God has promised to speak to us. That God can and does speak in a variety of ways, but He has promised to speak to us today in a specific way.

Notice what it says in Hebrews chapter 1: "In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in

these last days He has spoken to us by his Son, his Son is the one who He appointed heir of all things, and through whom also He made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being sustaining all things by his powerful Word. And after he had provided purification for sins, Jesus sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven."

You see, God can and does speak in a variety of ways, but the only way that God promises to speak to us today is by his Son. Now, let me help you with something because I want to remind you of something that we talked about recently, a couple of messages ago when I started this series, and I want you to be able to hang onto it, because I want you to remember something that Jesus said about the Spirit in John chapter 15: "When the Advocate comes, (Jesus said), whom I will send to you from the Father - the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father - He will testify about me."

You remember when we talked about that if you were here that the Spirit of God is going to testify about the Son of God. He's going to call attention to Jesus. This is important for us to remember, because what I talked about in that message is I talked about what was one of the biggest things that the Spirit of God did to testify to the Son of God. Listen. He authored and inspired a book to reveal Him. The Scripture. He authored and inspired a book through human personalities to reveal the Son of God to us. This is why the Holy Spirit uses his Word to be able to speak to us. S

So, if you wanted to condense that and maybe say it in a different way, say it simply like this: "The Holy Spirit calls attention to Jesus by speaking

through the Scripture." Here it is again: "The Holy Spirit calls attention to Jesus by speaking through the Scripture." This is really important for us to grab hold of. And it's something that when we understand who the Holy Spirit is and what the Holy Spirit does, we begin to understand that when God said that, "I promised to speak to you through my Son" because in these last days which is now, by the way, in these last days, this is how I'm speaking, through my Son. And how do we know of the Son? Because the Spirit is revealing the Son to us through the Scripture. The book that He has authored and inspired to reveal Jesus to us.

So the primary means in which God is going to speak to us, in which the Spirit is going to speak to us is through the Word of God. That is the primary means, though God can, has and does speak in a variety of ways, there is a primary means. And by the way, it is the means by way we measure all of the other things. Because we have a standard that we can measure it by. That's what is imperative for us to understand. God's given us His Word, and therefore we learn to discern the promptings and the leadings and the words of the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit is never going to contradict himself. He's never going to contradict his own Word.

Now, if you just keep reading in the book of Hebrews, you see how the Spirit of God takes the Word of God and makes it a now Word, not just the then Word. Listen to what it says, in fact in Hebrews chapter number 3: "So, (the writer says) as the Holy Spirit says: (Does he say as the Holy Spirit said, past tense? Is this past or present tense? Present tense.) "So, as the Holy Spirit says 'Today if you hear His voice, don't harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness, where

your ancestors tested and tried me, though for forty years they saw what I did."

Do you know what He's doing? He's quoting Psalm 95. Listen to this, quoting Psalm 95 which at the time of the writing in the book of Hebrews, Psalm 95 is over one thousand years old. And here's what the writer says: As the Holy Spirit says, not said. He's taking what was inspired by the Spirit from over a thousand years ago, and not saying this is just a past tense speaking of the Holy Spirit, even though it is that. He's saying, I'm taking the old Word and I am making it a now Word. The old Word is the now Word. I have people from time to time that want to offer me a new Word. The old Word is the new Word. Some of you are trying to figure out, you're going okay, I'm uncomfortable, I don't know what's happening right now.

The old Word is the new Word, because the Word is what the Spirit of God takes and speaks and says. Nothing that we are going to get that will be new will ever contradict what the Spirit of God has already revealed. So we have to remember that, because all through the book of Hebrews we see that play out. The Holy Spirit says, talking something a thousand years old and making it a today Word. That's why I continue to say to us, we have to remember the power of the Word with the Spirit.

In fact, if you keep reading in the book of Hebrews in chapter number 4 listen to what it says: "For the Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; and it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the

heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

See, there's a reason, ladies and gentlemen, that the Scripture is called the sword of the Spirit. Because the Spirit takes that and speaks to us and makes what seemed to be historically ancient words a now word in our lives. It doesn't mean that we can read it any way we want to and just you know, kind of open it up and "oh, man, I saw the word Judas in here, that must be my husband's name". Well, good luck with that, right? I mean not that that'd be the name you'd want to pick out necessarily, right? I mean, it's like if a man's reading it going oh, this is great, like Jezebel. You probably don't want to do that, right? It's just a bad way of reading the Scripture, it's just not ideal. I don't know too many people that name their daughters Jezebel, thankfully.

So let me say it this way. If you want to stay tuned in to the Spirit, you'd better be tuned in to the Scripture. Here's why. Because the Scripture is the frequency of the Spirit's voice. The Scripture is the frequency of the Spirit's voice. Because this is the book that He has authored by His inspiration to reveal God, particularly God's Son to us all.

Now, how then can we learn to listen to the voice of the Spirit today? How can we do that? Let's talk really practically here for a few moments. We've seen some things in the book of Acts, we've seen what the promise is of how God will speak to us through His Son by the Scripture. But how can we hear the voice of God? You know, I don't meet too many people that when I

say to them if God were speaking to you would you want to hear it? I don't have too many people go naah, I've got an iPhone. You know, I don't hear that very often. Like people are interested in that, so this will be a part where you should pay really close attention.

So let me ask you this, okay? We'll begin this way. What or how can I hear the Spirit's voice today? Number one, you're going to be shocked. Read or listen to the Scripture. Thank you professor, I'll be here all day. Read or listen to the Scripture. I know some of you are more audio learners, and maybe you listen and you can do that. They've got it on MP3's or CD's or whatever you need, right? But you need to be Scripture saturated and Scripture soaked or you will not learn to discern the voice of the Spirit. You won't have a boundary to determine that. Because the Scripture is the primary means that God is using to speak to our hearts.

This happens all the time. In my ministry of multiple decades now, I have been able to hear this phrase asked of me over and over again. Well I just. I'm trying to figure out what God wants me to do. Or I just want to know what God's will for my life is. All good questions. We all come to those questions. We all ask those questions. Those are good questions to ask. But when I follow-up that question by asking this. Well tell me about where you've been spending time in the Word? And I get a blank stare. How in the world do you think you're going to hear God's voice if you don't pay attention to the voice that spoke the Word into existence for us to read? How are you going to do that?

Now it's the only way for us to discern really well the promptings and the leadings of the Spirit, when we are Scripture saturated and Scripture soaked people. This is how we do that. Because the Spirit of God is not going to contradict himself.

Now, in 2001, when I was a young man, 31 or ish. I'm still a young man, let's just keep that in mind alright. 47 now. But when I was 31, and I was in Florida. And I was a senior associate pastor to a church there in Florida. And loved the place, loved the people, loved what God is, you know, doing among us. And in my regular routine every day reading in this Bible. This is the one that I had. It has duct tape on the sides. It was my ordination Bible. So it's the Bible they gave me when I was ordained to the ministry, right? There it is. September 10th 1995. When I was ordained to the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is the Bible they gave me.

Some people take those and make them shelves. They just put them on a shelf, right? I'm like I'm using it. What's good is a Bible on a shelf? Right? It needs to be opened and used. And so. Because there's people in the world that don't have them! I'm not just going to, you know, I mean I'm going to use them! So I used my ordination Bible, and it's all worn out right? It was coming apart. I had literally I'm from the south right? Black duct tape on the side of this thing, right? That's how we do everything. We duct tape everything, like food, whatever, it doesn't matter.

And so, I was just reading in my normal time in the Word, right? Just my disciplined normal time. And God began over the course of months and months and months to speak very clearly to my heart about preaching the

gospel, and about what he was preparing me to do. Now I knew God had called me that from the time that he called me. I knew God had called me to preach the gospel and to lead and to do those things. I knew that already. But I wasn't in a hurry. I was just doing what God wanted me to do when he wanted me to do it.

And in fact, in the back of this Bible, I actually have chronicled out the passages of Scripture that God was arresting my attention. I'm not holding it there for long so that you guys don't go look them all up and try and make it yours. Because this is my life. This is how God was speaking to me through these passages. He's not trying to make my life your life. And so, I chronicled these things. Because I was wondering, God I'm just going to start writing these things down, because I hear your voice. I'm sensing your voice. And I'm not in a rush. I'm just listening to what you have to say. Because I was spending time in the Scripture. And you need to have a plan to spend time in the Word! Because that's where you're going to run into the voice of God.

Here's the thing. If you'll spend time daily in the Word every day of your life, you're not going to every day of your life feel like the heavens open and God went Joni. Here's what I'm saying to you. You're not going to feel like that everyday. But here's the thing. You are posturing yourself to be in position to hear the voice of God. And he wants to speak to you more than you want to hear him. He does. And so I postured myself in that way, and was listening to the voice of God as I spent time in the Scripture, saturating myself with it.

There's a second thing that you have to do. Here it is. You've got to start praying consistent with the Scripture. You see, we hear the voice of God in the Scripture itself as the Spirit of God takes his own sword and begins to speak to our lives. But then we begin to pray consistent with the Scripture that God is revealing to us and speaking to us in. We can respond to God in prayer, based upon what he's saying to us in his Word.

You see, too often I think we begin kind of praying, you know, along our own lines. We just you know, maybe we don't even spend any time in the Word. And we just pray, and we pray prayers like this. You know, God make my day really good. Make everything good. Just like everything, like parking spaces, boss giving me a raise, just like it needs to be a good day today, God. I just want you to make me happy. Make me happy and good looking and strong and have good breath. Just all of that today, God. Like it's just so it's so focused on like just those kinds of things that we forget about what it means to actually pray God's Word back to him, because that's how he speaks to us.

And sometimes when we're praying we act as if, we'd never say it, but we act as if God is some divine concierge service. Like hey God, I'm going to need you to cover these few things, and then I'll drop a buck-50 in the offering and you know here's a tip for you, you know. Get on with it. Right? Now it's not true. Some of you don't drop anything in. but I'm just saying I'm just messing with you. I'm just messing with you. Just messing with you. You know I love you. I'm glad you guys can laugh. Like there's four people in the room not laughing. That outta tell you something. Buck fifty.

It's a joke. I'm only kidding right? I'm not doing any of that stuff. I'm just being funny.

So listen, we treat God that way sometimes don't we. Like hey God here's a tip, do some stuff for me, and we move on. Instead of, God speak. God speak in the way that you have spoken. And as I hear your voice, then I can start to pray your words back to him. What do you think is better? God hearing his own words echoed back from the children that he loves, or us just making up stuff about how we need, you know some Botox, or whatever right? I shouldn't make stuff up like on the spot right. I should think about things. A buck fifty and Botox are going to follow me to my grave now.

So what I started doing in 2001 is, because God was speaking to me through the Scripture, I started now basing my praying on this. As God was revealing to me what he was revealing to me and speaking to my heart, I then began to pray along the lines of the Scripture that God is speaking to me in. Because now I'm saying God, you've gotten my attention through this. Now I want to align my life with it. Because if we pray anything according to his will, he hears us. And how do we know we're praying according to his will? When we're praying according to his word, we know we're praying according to his will. So it changes the way that we pray when we hear the voice of the Spirit of God.

Let me give you a third thing. You got to eliminate the distractions. See, if you want to hear the voice of the Spirit in your life, you've got to eliminate the distractions. You see, sometimes we are so encumbered with so much,

there is so much noise in our lives, that we can't hear the voice of the Spirit.

Imagine this. Imagine taking a hearing test at a concert. Like they're trying to get you to hear very specific frequencies, and you're at a concert. And you know, they're going can you hear this? And all you can hear right is Rihanna or Florida Georgia Line, or The Chainsmokers or whoever you listen to. Whatever right? You're going dude, you're a pastor and you know these things. I had no idea how hip you were. I didn't say I liked any of them. I just said I know who they are. So then just imagine, you hear all of these things in your ear, and you can't discern the frequency, because you're trying to take a hearing test at a concert.

In the same way, ladies and gentlemen, the Holy Spirit is not going to shout over every voice you allow into your lives. Sometimes there's so much noise that we can't hear the one whose voice matters the most. And sometimes that's because we over consume with media, and we drown out the voice of God. Or we over consume in our relationships with our friends. By the way, some of the friends that we have that are speaking into our lives don't even walk with Jesus and don't hear the voice of the Spirit, yet we're somehow allowing them to speak into our lives. Just a word of wisdom here. If they know more about the Kardashians than they do about the gospel, I wouldn't pay attention to anything that they're trying to tell you. We have to eliminate the distractions.

I found myself in 2001 in this particular timeframe. And again, I'm just using one timeframe in my life to be consistent kind of with a story here.

But as God began to reveal himself to me in His Word, and I began to pray God's Word back to him along these lines, I found myself wanting to eliminate the distractions more and more. I was finding time early in the morning or finding time at a lunch break or finding time later in the day where I could just get alone and hear his voice, and unplug. Some of us are so plugged in that we literally cannot hear the voice of God. We've created no margin in our lives. We have to be careful and eliminate some of the distractions. Let me give you a couple more.

We also have to live in community and under authority. We have to live in community and under authority. You see listen. If sometimes we are trying to discern the voice of the Spirit, and we try and do that all by ourselves, sometimes we get into we get into weirdville, right? Because really listen, God has given us brothers and sisters in Christ to be able to help us process. I'm talking about godly, mature people who listen to the Lord to help us walk through these kinds of things.

You see, what happens is if we get all alone. I've had people do that you know. Yeah, Jerry, the Lord has told me this. And I'm like really, because that has nothing to do with the Bible, and it's kind of contradictory to what the Scripture is saying. And I don't even know what you're talking about, but I know it's not Jesus, because he's not going to contradict himself. You see, people that live on an island for too long, they start talking to volleyballs, right? Wilson. You know what I mean? Like, that's what happens if you live on an island for too long. You're meant to be... You've seen that movie? You're meant to live in community, right? Where you can together be able to...

So for instance this happens. Sometimes people just show up and announce we're moving. We're moving! And by the way, that maybe they're even in a small group and they just show up one day and just go man we're moving we're moving to Buffalo. Or we're moving to Texas. Or we're doing whatever right? We're just moving. I would imagine that the people in that group might be going well why didn't you just get us in on this from the very outset. And we could have been praying with you. We could have been offering wisdom with you. We could have prayed for you. We could have sought the Lord alongside of you as you began to seek Him. By the way, did you sense the Lord's leading in this? Tell me about what that looked like. Nah, we're just moving. You know.

We sometimes we have to discern the voice of the Lord within community sometimes and under authority. In other words, if we're doing things outside of the boundaries of kind of what God has put in our lives in terms of spiritual leading, which he's established in the Word of God, that's not a healthy thing to do.

So for instance in 2001, after I've spent time in the Word and I'm praying God's Word back to him, and I'm trying to eliminate distractions. You know what I did? I brought godly people into my world. Of course my wife was in on this. I brought former pastor, former pastors actually in my life in on this, and my senior pastor, who I worked for. This was a unique setting right? Because I'm the senior associate pastor. I'm bringing him in. In fact, this thing in the back of my Bible that I have right here. It was actually a copy that I made for him, and I wrote a note on it to him that said these are some of the verses that God's been speaking to me through. I'm all ears if

you have any insight or wisdom to share with me. I'm submitting myself to that person under whose authority I'm existing, and saying, I'm listening for your wisdom in this as well, because God's placed me within this context. And I want to hear your wisdom on this. And so we have to be able to discern the voice of the Spirit ourselves, but we need to be able to have that affirmed in community, right?

Sometimes we come up with something, and then everybody around us is going hmm. And then other times, people that walk with God are going yes, that's the Lord. That is the Lord. That is you. And you that is affirming right? Now it doesn't mean that they always get it right. You have to understand all of that right? But there's no lone ranger Christianity. We are meant to be a body, even in the way that we listen to the voice of God.

So let me give you a last thing here. We've got to act on the Spirit's instructions and leading. So let me say this to you. If you're at a place where you get to saying you know what, I'm hearing the voice of the Lord. Wonderful. But if you hear the voice of the Lord and you don't obey it, that is the worst form of self-deception. That is the worst form of self-deception. It's like a person who looks in a mirror and forgets what they look like. That's what James says. So we have to actually act on it.

So 2001, I finally come to this place. My pastor, my wife, other pastors, godly people are in on this. God's speaking. I'm eliminating distractions. I'm praying his Word back to him. And then I knew God was preparing me. And I wasn't looking to leave anywhere. I hadn't sent resumes out. Nothing! I'm just minding my own business in Southwest Florida, in

Northport Florida! Hardly anyone even knew where we were! I'm just minding my own business. But God knows our address. He knows where we are. When he's speaking, he knows what he's doing.

And so, before you know it, literally everybody's in play. I've got godly council. Everybody knows what God speaking in my heart. And I'm just minding my own business, just still serving Jesus, because I know he knows what he's going to do. Very shortly thereafter I've got five opportunities on my desk to pastor churches. Five. And I was looking at them, going what? So now I'm praying and I'm working through each of these to say okay, God. I want to follow your lead. Now it's about what what it is you want me to do. And I walked through all five of them and none of them are what God was leading me to do! And Edie and I are going, is this some kind of joke? Like I mean this is weird. Like you've been preparing this had been months and months and months and months and months and months and months in the making, and now all these opportunities and God said no to all of them.

And then a couple of weeks later, The Chapel finds me. And then, then I pray, and I say okay God, is this what you want? And it took six months in conversation and in prayer with this congregation and with myself before we all came to the conclusion that this was what the Lord was leading, because the congregation had to affirm it, and I had to affirm it. And we finally all came to the Spirit's leadership in that decision.

Now, I tell you all of this to tell you that it is imperative that we spend time Scripture soaked, because God will speak to us through it. Now here's what

I want us to do. I'm going to take a moment and I want to pray for you. And I know we're close to being done like right now. And some of you're going okay you know shut it down. Just relax. Your the second service. You get a little more. You're welcome. You're welcome. Here's what I want to do. I want to pray for you. And then upon finishing a prayer, I want to sing an abbreviated response, abbreviated, that we want to remind ourselves of something, and then I want to say a couple things to you as you're standing and before you make your way out. Can we do that? Let me pray for us.

So Father, I pray for everyone under the sound of my voice, and I pray for me, that we would be a people that would learn what it means to be soaked by the Scripture, because we know that you Holy Spirit speak to us through that vehicle. You have promised God to reveal to us your voice through your Son, and that the Spirit of God actually speaks to us by revealing the Son through the Word. Would you help us to eliminate the distractions so that we get to a place where we can hear your voice. And may you give us a desire, God, me and us, a desire to want to hear your voice be louder than any voice in the room. Be louder than any voice in our lives. And whatever it takes to get to that place, because we want to listen and we want to obey and we want to hear and we want to live and pray consistent with the words, Holy Spirit, that you have revealed. So help us to do that. I pray now in Jesus name. Amen. Why don't you stand to your feet. Let's respond for a moment. And then I'll finish us up in just a second.

So let me ask you this. Do you have a plan to daily soak yourself in the Scripture, so that you can hear his Word? If you don't, that would be a step of obedience for you today. A step toward his voice, not away from it. A

step toward tuning into the frequency of the Spirit, not away from it. You got that in the bulletin that you got, you've got opportunities to read Scripture through the week if that helps you. You can go to our website and you can find ways to read through the Scripture if you want to do that. But just do it. And then, are you willing to pray prayers based upon the Scripture that you're reading? To pray consistent lives of obedience from the very Word of God. Are you willing to eliminate the distractions that are causing you not to be able to hear the voice of God? What will that look like for you? What do you need to do to be able to hear the voice of God in your life? What priority will you give it?

Are you in community? Are you in a small group, somewhere where you're authentically engaged with other people, where they're in your life, and you're in their lives. And you can together talk about the things that are going on in your world and in your life. Whether that's one on one, or one on two, or if it's a number of couples that are getting together, a bunch of single adults that are getting together. Whatever it looks like. Are you in that? You can't be a lone ranger in this.

And then lastly, are you are you ready to obey Him with whatever he's speaking to you in whatever area of your life? Because if you want to find the frequency of the Spirit, then you need to tune in to the Scripture, because the Holy Spirit calls attention to Jesus by speaking through the Scripture.

Now if you've never come to faith in Jesus, please come by the Fireside Room. We'd love to talk to you about what it means to begin a relationship with him.

And Father, for the remainder of us, I pray that you'd help us to be people who learn to discern your voice through your Word. That we would grow wise. That we would in humility submit ourselves to you and let you speak to us, and that we would respond in obedience. Thank you that you speak, that you have spoken, and that you still speak. The old Word is the new Word to us. We thank you, Holy Spirit, that you make your Word a now Word for our lives. That when we rightly understood what was said to the people then, we can rightly understand what's being said to us in the now. Help us to be people who live in obedience to your word. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Hey, I love you. Thanks for the extra couple of minutes of patience. God bless you.