

Learn to Know the Voice of God

#0072

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—July 23, 1971

Just as I got off the plane and walking along the large corridor, I heard over the public address system, "Passenger Howard Worley, please come to the Braniff ticket office."

I wouldn't have paid any attention to it, but a man about six steps ahead of me, when he heard that he turned on his heel and started back. It was his name that had been called. Then I thought of a song that had asked Sister Thornton and Cassandra to sing for me tonight—"Hark, I Hear Him Call My Name." Hark, I hear Him call your name. Come and sing it for us.

[Song is sung]

I'm realizing, dear friends, that the great object of education is to learn to know the voice of God: to learn to recognize the leading of the Master. A person who knows how to get God's leading in his life is an educated person, whether he has a diploma or not. A person who does not know that still has something to learn in education. Doesn't he?

The wonderful thing is that no matter how much any of us have learned about it, there's something more to learn. Another precious thing is that no matter how little we know about it, we can get some help right where we are.

That ladder that Jacob saw reached where he was. Jesus is willing to guide you right where you are—right at the point in your experience where you are. He's willing to slow His pace to your steps.

In fact, sometimes He has to wait on us, doesn't He? Has He ever waited for you? Oh, yes. And friends, sometimes when we've kept Him waiting so long, aren't we glad that we don't have to run to catch up with Him? I'm afraid we wouldn't catch up. But He's so thankful when we reach the place where, like David, we say, "I will *run* the way of Thy commandments."

As He has slowed His pace to walk with us, let's quicken our pace to run with Him now. What do you say? The quicker we get over the road, the quicker everything of pain and trouble and sorrow and woe in this world can come to an end. That's what we want, isn't it?

We have studied the precious opportunity and privilege each one of us has in being guided by the Lord in matters of personal duty.

"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God" John 6:45.

That is, all taught *by* God; God is the teacher. Only the religion of Christ offers this priceless opportunity. Every one of God's children is to be individually taught of God. You are to know for yourself what God wants you to do. If the answer to your question is a Bible text, you should know what that Bible text is, and you should know that Bible text is the answer to your question.

If the problem is something that a Bible text does not answer, God has other avenues. He can impress your heart. By His providence, He can open doors and close doors. He has counsel available for you; advice from others who may know more about life or about your particular problem than you do. All of these are channels through which God may and does work.

My point is, you must know in your own heart that it is God who is leading and guiding you. I do not mean that any of us should claim infallibility. Infallibility is a big word that just means there's no mistake about it. There's a man over in Rome who says he's infallible, but you don't believe that, do you? And if you deny him the claim to infallibility, why should *you* try to be infallible.

Put it the other way around, if you think you've found a way to be infallible, why not the Pope too? Being taught of God and being led of God does not mean any of us claim to be infallible. We can make mistakes. We could misread our signals.

God may let us make decisions based on the amount of wisdom we have. This is a growth, you know. If, by becoming converted, we should all suddenly become as wise as the angels in Heaven, think of the precious opportunities for growth we might miss. We might become a wonder to some of our friends. We might even get a little proud.

This matter of being led and taught of God is not a matter of suddenly blossoming into infallibility. It just means that we should seek the Lord as each decision comes to us to be made. We should seek the Lord for light and wisdom to find out what He wants us to do. And we should do that which we think would please Him. That's the simple way and the happy way to live. This is the way to advance in our Christian experience.

Last Friday night, we noted the Jewish Passover as an example of the subject in which Paul said,

“Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind”
Romans 14:5.

In the early Christian church, as the Gentiles came into a church that was largely Jewish, there arose the problem of the attitude toward the ceremonial law. Paul, led by the Holy Spirit, tried to get the entire Christian church to leave some room for individual teaching of the Lord. He left the Jews free to keep the Passover if they wished to do it. It was not only a part of the ceremonial law but a memorial of their deliverance as a nation from Egypt. So they had reasons to keep it.

On the other hand, Paul made it very clear that the Jews were not to insist that the Gentiles keep it, and the Gentiles were not to feel guilt in their conscience if they didn't keep it.

“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind” Romans 14:5.

Could they have peace and unity in the church with some people keeping the Passover and some not? Paul thought so. The Holy Spirit thinks so. The most important point to the whole matter is that every decision you arrive at, whether it's a matter of morals or a matter of principle, or a matter of doing something to please God, He wants that experience to be something in which you and the Savior draw very close together in intimate fellowship, and nothing must rob you of that.

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” God must be first. He must be first in your personal experience. He's the first one you are to ask what He thinks. Before you ask your brother or sister, the elder or deacon or anyone else, ask God.

Ah, you say, “But I don't know what He wants. That's what I'm trying to find out.”

Well, if you want to find out what He wants, wouldn't it be a good thing to ask Him? Wouldn't it?

Someone says, “But I don't know how to get an answer from God.”

Well, you'd better find out, my dear friend. This is vital. How do you expect to go through life if you have no communication with Jesus?

Somebody says, “I have tried it, and I get all mixed up.” Well, did any of you ever study mathematics? Did you ever come to a problem that mixed you all up? What did you do? Did you throw down the book and say, “This isn't for me. From now on, anytime I want to know something about mathematics, I am going to have to ask someone else”?

You can all learn the multiplication tables. You can all learn that six and seven are thirteen, and three and five make eight, and so on. It's true that some people are better at mathematics than others, and some people are better than others in what I am studying with you.

But I don't have to be an Einstein to keep track of my income and spending. Do you? I don't have to be a major in mathematics in order to figure out how to lay out a garden, so the rows are even and the same distance apart. I don't have to be a wizard at figures in order to check a bill to see if the one who sent it has added it correctly, or whether he's made a mistake in his favor or my favor. I can do all that even though I'm not a master at mathematics. The simple principles of mathematics are for everyone.

So it is with this much more important matter of being led of the Lord. You may not know as much as Samuel or David or Peter or Paul, but you can know enough for *you*. You can know enough to get your answers in the things that you need help on. If you haven't learned it, you should make that the first business of your life.

The first thing I would do about it is go to God and say, "Dear Lord; here's a text I read in John 6, which says we shall all be taught of God. Lord, the first thing I want to be taught is how to be taught."

God will take you on as a student. He could impress your heart to go to someone who might give some suggestions about how they get guidance from the Lord. But if you find in doing that, the person begins to tell you all the answers instead of helping you find answers from God, I'd suggest you get a different helper. That's right.

A teacher in school who tells the children all the answers is not a good teacher. It's very important. The teacher may have an answer book in the desk that gives the answers to all the problems in the arithmetic book, but if when the student comes up with a problem and the teacher just turns and gives the answer, what good has been accomplished? Not very much. It could be worse than nothing.

The great purpose of the problem is not to get the answer; it's to get the experience of learning how to get the answer. So it is in life. This thing growing on me is a great desire to see hundreds of people become efficient and proficient in knowing the will of God.

"Everyone needs to have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will of God"
The Desire of Ages, page 363.

Everyone. You might be interested in knowing what comes just before that:

"In all who are under the training of God is to be revealed a life that is not in harmony with the world, its customs, or its practices" *Ibid*.

You and I are called to be out of step with the world. Not for the sake of being out of step with the world, but because the world is not in step with God. And since we are going to be out of step with the world if we follow God, we need to listen carefully to the voice which speaks from Heaven that we may *distinguish* it because there's a lot of noise in the world about us. Right?

Everyone needs to have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will of God. Why? Because there is to be revealed in you and me a life that is not in harmony with the world, its customs or its practices.

"We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait for Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct

the voice of God. He bids us, 'Be still, and know that I am God'" *Ibid.*

I think this is wonderful, friends. Don't you? We must be careful that we do not interfere with other people having this experience. If we are acting as spiritual helpers to people, whether they are young people, older ones, new converts, or people who haven't been converted yet, we need to be careful lest we *impose* our personal views upon them in such a way as to rob them from getting personal views of their own.

The great danger is not that they'll get the wrong answer. That could happen whether they listen to us or whether they don't. That isn't the great danger I am pointing out. The great danger is that they will come to look to us or some other human being instead of looking to Jesus. Do you see, friends? It's a real danger.

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" Romans 14:12.

I am going to have to give an account of myself to God. You are going to have to give an account of yourself to God. Everyone is. And when my name is called, can I say, "Well dear Lord, Elder so and so will answer for me. He's the one who has made my decisions"? Can I say that? No. I must give an account of myself for myself.

"In matters of conscience the soul must be left untrammelled. No one is to control another's mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty. God gives to every soul freedom to think, and to follow his own convictions" *The Desire of Ages*, page 550.

Somebody may say, "I wish people would let me." Well bless your heart; nobody can keep you from it. They might burn you at the stake, but that wouldn't keep you from it. And if knowing God's will and following it isn't worth being burned at the stake for, then it isn't worth anything. Don't worry about it if it isn't worth that much. But if it's worth being burned at the stake for, John Huss and Jerome and a million other martyrs thought it was worth it.

Millions of them went to the dungeon, the scaffold, the cross. They were thrown to the lions, strangled, drowned, tortured and killed in a hundred ways. What for? For conscience sake. And if they had been willing to let the religious leaders tell them what the Bible meant, and accept that, they wouldn't need to burn, they wouldn't need to suffer. Do you see what I am getting at, friends?

I feel so sorry for people who whine that people won't let them carry out their convictions. Brother, sister, friend, what's to keep you from carrying out your convictions? Three Hebrews were standing on the plain of Dura. The king of all the world said either get down there and kneel with the others or in the furnace you go.

What did Shadrach and Meshach and Abednego say? They said they were not worried about answering this. In effect they told the king he had to do what he had to do, but they would decide what they would do. They were not deciding whether they went into the furnace or not. That was the king's decision. They were deciding whether they bowed down to the image or not. That was *their* decision.

Somebody says, "Oh, but I'm scared to say something because somebody wouldn't like it." Well, if you're scared to do what you believe God wants you to do, you will have to learn the lesson that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego have already learned. I repeat, if your convictions before God are not worth suffering a bit of reproach or ridicule or interference, they're not worth much.

If you know what God wants you to do, then do it. But don't think you have to wait until everybody gets out of the way. Not a bit of it. You may have to walk out right out into the Red Sea because God says to go forward. And if that Red Sea is a sea of peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues, God can open the way through it just like He did that sea of water. Can't He? But if you wait until they all get out of the way, then you don't understand this subject.

"In matters of conscience the soul must be left untrammelled. No one is to control another's mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty. God gives to every soul freedom to think, and to follow his own convictions. 'Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.' No one has a right to merge his own individuality in that of another. In all matters where principle is involved, 'let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind'" *The Desire of Ages*, page 550.

There never was a coin made so thin but what it had two sides. I want you to look at the other side of this coin; for unless you do some of you will misunderstand and you'll be disappointed.

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" Romans 14:7.

What does that mean? It means that while you are to have convictions, you cannot get away from the fact that you are a part of the great web of humanity. If you think that having convictions of your own means that you can do anything without regard to other people, then you've missed the point. Very few decisions you make in life affect only you. Very few decisions you make in life should be made thinking only of yourself.

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" Romans 15:1-3.

Somebody says, "Brother Frazee, I thought you were telling us that we ought to follow our own convictions."

Yes, but the purpose of God leading you and teaching you in following your own convictions is not to please yourself. It's to do what? Notice the next verse:

"Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not Himself" Romans 15:2–3.

Let me give you a beautiful sentence on this point:

"In every gentle and submissive way, Jesus tried to please those with whom He came in contact" *The Desire of Ages*, page 85.

This is the other side of the coin. You're free, but what are you going to do with that freedom? If you listen to the suggestions of your selfish heart, you will abuse that freedom at the expense of others. You will say, "I know what I'm going to do, and I think God wants me to do it. Just get out of the way, please. If you don't, there may be a collision."

"In every gentle and submissive way, Jesus tried to please those with whom He came in contact" *Ibid*.

Notice the precise way it is worded: He *tried* to please those with whom He came in contact.

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" Romans 12:18.

What's the first word? If. Can you come to conclusions disregarding other people? No. You are to *consider* what influence your action will have. You are to consider whether it will *please* other people. You are to consider whether it pleases them for their good.

"Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification" Romans 15:2.

We don't give the baby scissors or matches even if the baby cries for them. Why not? You know why. And there are a lot of things that might please people, it might tickle their fancy, but if we love them we won't do it, because we're trying to please them for their own good—for their edification. I repeat, friends. There are two sides to this coin. We are to be individually taught of God, but the other side of this coin is we're to consider others. We're to consider others.

We're not to be disrespectful of others. This relates not only to our influence over others, but it also relates to our responsibilities to others.

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder"
1 Peter 5:5.

How can I be taught of God if I'm going to submit? If you are taught of God, He will teach you to submit. The reason people get rebellious is that they haven't spent enough time being taught of God.

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" 1 Peter 5:5.

If that's the program, then what's the use of my wasting my time trying to find out what God wants me to do? If I have to listen to other people, I had just as well do it in the first place and save time.

No, that's not the program. It pays to *take* time to deal with God directly, and it also pays to take time to check with those God has put us under. We need to get our signals together. Let me read you something interesting. Sister White wrote this to her son, James Edson, on New Year's Day, 1879. Edson was 29 years old and he was married.

"Many youth fail from want of due caution and foresight. Youth is a season of great ardor, great folly, and great mistakes. It takes years of disappointment and reverses for youth to learn the deceitfulness of the world so they will not be flattered with every prospect, and will engage in their various employment with the whole heart and strength.

"The earnestness of youth should be devoted to improvement. Improvement is the order of life's progress. This is the will of God, and He has wisely placed old men and young men in the world together that the young, with fresh zeal and earnestness may push onward the work of reformation while the aged shall guide and control it. While the youth go forward for improvement, they also make great mistakes. They rush ahead without due caution, heedless of consequences, and frequently meet with failures and defeat.

"These failures might be avoided if young men would heed the lesson Paul gave to Timothy, and would meditate upon those things which are so closely connected with their success in this life, and their happiness in the future life."

I think one of the most wonderful things in all God's leading is this uniting youth and age. I thank the Lord for the parents He gave me. I thank the Lord for the privilege I had as a young man in training with Elder Tindall and with others of more experience. I thank the Lord for the experience through the years, and the opportunities He has given me.

I just came from the Oklahoma camp meeting. Thirty-five years ago, it was my privilege to go to Oklahoma. I had some precious years in evangelism there. One of my greatest privileges was the opportunity of close association with the conference president, Elder J. J. Reiswig. He fell asleep a few months ago. I'm going to meet him in Heaven. He contributed much to my training. And so did others through the years.

Looking back over the years, I can honestly say I don't feel that being bound up close with leaders in God's program, first in the home and then in the school and then in the work of God, I don't feel has kept me from having an experience with God alone in finding out what God wants me to do. I think the two belong together. They're the two sides of the same coin. And if you've only seen one side of the coin, I suggest you just flip the coin and look at the other side; it's the same coin. God has ways of leading you personally, but that doesn't mean that you're to be out of gear with everything and everybody else in this world.

There are people who, for a time at least, have to learn it the hard way. They have to get out all by themselves and make all their own decisions, except those the government makes for them. That probably is better than being a slave. But why be either one? Why not know the *joy* of fellowship with God in each step of the pilgrim pathway, and at the same time, learn more and more how to gear in with those God wants us to gear in with. What do you say?

This is a science. It's the science of a lifetime. This is what we're going to be doing in Heaven all through eternity. We're going to be individually guided by God, and yet we're going to gear in with the people around us. There's not going to be *one* note that isn't harmonious. We will move in exact order. Won't it be wonderful? And let me tell you: it will be because we have learned it here in this world.

So, if you have the problem in getting along with people around you, don't make either one of these two mistakes: Don't, on the one hand, fail to have an experience with God in your individual duty simply because other people seem to be contrary minded. Go to God and plead with God. He'll give you an experience in knowing what He wants you to do.

But don't make the other mistake. Don't let that experience God gives you keep you from carrying out this other counsel. In *every* gentle and submissive way, Jesus tried to please those with whom He came in contact.

"And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them" Luke 2:51.

How old was He? Twelve years old. How long did that continue to be His program? All through His teens. All through His twenties. My, my; how could He stand it! He didn't stand it by crucifying His conscience. He didn't stand it by becoming merely a puppet. He thought. He prayed. He studied. *Every* day He found some time and some place in the 24 hours where He could be alone with His Father and pour out His heart to God for guidance.

Yet all the while in the home, at the shop, in the synagogue, and in the community, He was finding opportunities and duties that involved Him in fitting in with others. Do you see, friends?

Ah, someone says, "This is difficult."

Sure it is. This is what life is about. My plea is don't miss either one of these wonderful principles. Don't miss either side of the coin. Be *sure* you have a personal experience with God. Be *sure* that you are learning how to gear with those God wants you to gear with.

[Testimony service]

Copyright 2021 All rights reserved.

W. D. Frazee Sermons
435 Lifestyle Lane, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org