

Equip
Session 6

Hearing the
Voice of God

Updated: June, 2013

HEARING THE VOICE OF GOD

Vital communication is a two-way street

* We can have audience with the King of Kings, and it's not just to "dump" on Him or bombard Him with requests; He may have a few things to say to us too!!

Some believers are not used to considering that we can hear from God; if it's all in the scriptures then we have no need to hear, they say.

* This position, however, is not substantiated biblically or by experience

*We need to learn the "can" and the "how" of hearing God's voice

Herman Riffel - 3 Valid Sources of Knowledge (See page 119 student book)

(1) the five senses - which we share with the animals

(2) the ability to reason – which sets us apart from the animals

(3) the spiritual realm – a whole spiritual world of reality

Disciples of the Greek philosopher, Aristotle, insisted that he had effectively done away with the nonsense about a spiritual realm of reality

They insisted that only that which men could contact with their senses or with their reason were true sources of knowledge available to us

Today's Western world view is based on Aristotelian thought; however, Jesus dwelt in and dealt with a whole additional world of spiritual reality

Jesus was often in personal interaction with God, with angels, with Satan and with demons

We say that we have founded our faith on the Bible, and yet some church groups count great portions of the Bible as irrelevant for today

We need to break the bondage of our Western training and let God show us from His Word that there is also spiritual knowledge and spiritual reality which we can and should be in touch with that originates from outside of our mind and our senses

HEARING THE VOICE OF GOD

There are three valid sources of knowledge
 —the five senses
 —the ability to reason
 —the spiritual realm

I. LEARNING TO LISTEN FOR THE VOICE OF GOD

1. “Thus says the Lord,” God spoke in times past through prophets, dreams and visions, angels, personal appearances and Paul was even lifted up to heaven.

2. How Does God Speak Today?

The same as He always has. He uses the various methods reflected in the Scriptures and all kinds of other circumstances. God does not speak to all of us in the same way, but He does speak. We must expect that He will reveal Himself, so that we can learn to hear and recognize His voice, and give the proper response of obedience.

— Scripture _____

We get general direction from the Scriptures wherein are revealed the broad principles of God’s will. But, if we want specific directions, we must have the Holy Spirit make the general principles specific to our own life circumstances.

Illustrations: Elijah and Hannah

Deuteronomy 11:16-17 and I Kings 17:1 — Elijah

“Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turned aside and serve other gods and worship them, lest the Lord’s anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the Lord is giving you.” (specific application: I Kings 17:1)

God communicates directly - the Bible is permeated with supernatural communication of knowledge by God to man. How many times does “Thus Saith the Lord” occur?

The following are just a few of the many instances where God communicated directly with His people:

Illustration: Abraham: God promised that “through him”...(Genesis 12:1-3)

- * But Abraham didn't even have a son. Then there came a dream (15:1)
- * God came and spoke in a vision (15:12-21)
- * God appeared as a man (Chapter 17 - 18)

Illustration: Jesus' birth (angels, dreams and visions, words of knowledge)

- * angels appeared to Joseph, the shepherds, Zacharius, and Mary
- * dreams were given to Joseph and the Wise Men
- * words of knowledge were given to Anna and Simeon
- * Holy Spirit came upon Elizabeth and Simeon

Illustration: Pentecost

- * Peter describes what was happening at Pentecost as the fulfillment of Joel's prophesy that there will be dreams, visions, signs and wonders - all kinds of supernatural occurrences, and these occurrences will increase in the last days

Illustration: St. Paul lifted up into the third heaven

The volume of Biblical content involving dreams, visions and direct supernatural contact from God to men would be almost as much as the whole content of the New Testament (1//3 of the bible)

- * Many of these episodes are treated by some church leaders just like fairy tales because they are closed to the idea that God may wish to communicate directly and supernaturally with us today.

In Western culture we have been robbed, stripped, beaten and left half dead as the man in Jesus parable by materialistic philosophy - Herman Riffel

HEARING THE VOICE OF GOD

There are three valid sources of knowledge

- the five senses
- the ability to reason
- the spiritual realm

I. LEARNING TO LISTEN FOR THE VOICE OF GOD

1. “Thus says the Lord,” God spoke in times past through prophets, dreams and visions, angels, personal appearances and Paul was even lifted up to heaven.

2. How Does God Speak Today?

The same as He always has. He uses the various methods reflected in the Scriptures and all kinds of other circumstances. God does not speak to all of us in the same way, but He does speak. We must expect that He will reveal Himself, so that we can learn to hear and recognize His voice, and give the proper response of obedience.

— Scripture _____

We get general direction from the Scriptures wherein are revealed the broad principles of God’s will. But, if we want specific directions, we must have the Holy Spirit make the general principles specific to our own life circumstances.

Illustrations: Elijah and Hannah

Deuteronomy 11:16-17 and I Kings 17:1 — Elijah

“Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turned aside and serve other gods and worship them, lest the Lord’s anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the Lord is giving you.” (specific application: I Kings 17:1)

2. How Does God Speak Today? He speaks the same today as He always has

- * God is speaking constantly but often we are not tuned in
- * It is important that we recognize His voice and learn to obey

God speaks through **Scripture**

- * The Holy Spirit will never communicate to us anything that is contrary in principle or in spirit to what has already been revealed to us by the Word of God
- * Scripture is the final authority; everything else that we receive must be corroborated by it
- * But the principles which Scripture reveal to us are in most cases general, not detailed; more often than not, God has to tell us the specific application as we go along

Illustration: Deuteronomy 11 and I Kings 17 - After hundreds of years God finally said, “Okay, now is the time” when the principle will be experienced

Illustration: I Samuel 1 - Hannah could have had her son sooner if had heard and responded to God sooner

Beware of the “Name It and Claim It” heresy abroad today

- * These people fasten upon the general declarations of the Word without getting guidance for their specific applications.
- * They put their finger on a verse and declare it has to happen; God has to produce
- * Their claiming of it right now may not be in the timing or according to the circumstances when God is ready to fulfill this word in their particular situation
- * Only God knows the “when” and the “how”

So if we are to claim a promise from the Word for our own particular situation, we need to hear from Him clearly. In addition, we would be wise to ask Him for several other confirmations so that we can be assured that this truly is what God is communicating to us for this time in our life.

HEARING THE VOICE OF GOD

There are three valid sources of knowledge

- the five senses
- the ability to reason
- the spiritual realm

I. LEARNING TO LISTEN FOR THE VOICE OF GOD

1. “Thus says the Lord,” God spoke in times past through prophets, dreams and visions, angels, personal appearances and Paul was even lifted up to heaven.

2. How Does God Speak Today?

The same as He always has. He uses the various methods reflected in the Scriptures and all kinds of other circumstances. God does not speak to all of us in the same way, but He does speak. We must expect that He will reveal Himself, so that we can learn to hear and recognize His voice, and give the proper response of obedience.

— Scripture

We get general direction from the Scriptures wherein are revealed the broad principles of God’s will. But, if we want specific directions, we must have the Holy Spirit make the general principles specific to our own life circumstances.

Illustrations: Elijah and Hannah

Deuteronomy 11:16-17 and I Kings 17:1 — Elijah

“Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turned aside and serve other gods and worship them, lest the Lord’s anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the Lord is giving you.” (specific application: I Kings 17:1)

God speaks through **dreams and visions** - Daniel 2:30 “God sent the dream”

- * We would be so impoverished without this dimension of God’s voice
- * Dreams are the elementary language
 - dreams speak about “you” and the conditions of our heart and life in symbols and pictures
 - 95% of the persons, events, activities are not that what they appear to be in the dream
 - dreams are not predictive, but rather they speak to you in symbols which God is using to reveal yourself to you
- * We need to ask:
 - what does that this mean to me?
 - what does that person stand for?
 - how am I like that person?

Illustration: If you dream of a Policeman or a Pastor, then you need to give attention. They are authority figures and thus could represent what God is saying directly to you

Illustration: burning woods
you’re running, trapped - and a quiet, easy-going person comes to your rescue. It isn’t that person and it isn’t the woods on fire – they are just symbols. The meaning? You are burning yourself out and it’s the quiet, easy part of you that needs to come and rescue you. See how dreams speak?

- * Pay attention to your dreams
 - Begin to record them; have a pen and paper by your bed
 - Pray for understanding
- * It will take a long time for you to be proficient, but work at it!
- * Avoid interpreting for others; a little knowledge can be dangerous
 - take care not to have an exalted opinion of your ability to interpret dreams; you can really confuse people
 - after you have had an extended amount of experience, maybe you can help someone with their interpretation.

— **Dreams and Visions** —

Almost every major event in Scripture is related to a dream or vision. Dreams and visions are the elementary language by which God speaks to all men. Christian and non-Christian alike. Dreams reveal our inner life. We would be greatly impoverished without this dimension of God's voice.

Daniel 2:28-30

Your dream and the visions of your head upon your bed, were...that you

— **The Inner Voice** —

Frequently God speaks through the "small inner voice." We must test this inner voice and come to recognize it. Often He speaks and we are just not tuned into it.

—God also speaks through—

Angels
Impressions
Mind Pictures

Prophetic Utterances
Circumstances
Godly Counsel

3. Three Dangers We Must Avoid

- (1) That we will not hear **anything** unless it comes in the prescribed way we are used to.
- (2) That we think **everything** we receive is from Him once we realize the Lord does speak directly to us.
- (3) **The fear** that we will make a mistake.

Illustrations: A child learning to walk
Nathan and David

Jeremiah 32:8 (vs. 6-12)

Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord

Psalm 37:23-24

The steps of good men are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in His way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord uphold him with His hand.

God speaks through **the Inner Voice**

We need to learn the “imprint” of our Father’s voice

- * a baby picks up on the parent’s voice before he/she can even see
- * God speaks in a special way to each of us; it won’t be like everyone else
- * As we learn to hear from God, our spiritual consciousness will learn to recognize the imprint of that voice as a baby does
 - Then we need to learn to obey and follow that voice
 - Peace will serve as the “umpire; it will help indicate to us what is of God and what is not

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts” Colossians 3:15

Other ways God speaks:

- * angels
 - Illustration: “The Fourth Man”
- * prophetic utterances
- * impressions
- * circumstances
- * mind pictures
- * Godly counsel

Redeemer Church would have been greatly impoverished if we did not have an openness to hear the voice of God.

Illustration:

Jamie Buckingham (hear CD for the full story) “when the cloud moves you have to go with it no matter how much you have invested or what it will cost you.”

- the preached Word
- confirmed by supernatural manifestations (tongue and interpretation)
- confirmed by vision (Gary Wilson)

From that time on, as we sought to move on with the Lord, the whole atmosphere was different in the church; it was a turning point. We had confidence now, no hesitating, much more freedom

Where would we be if we had been closed to the supernatural breaking through to speak guidance to our confused hearts and minds?

— **Dreams and Visions** —

Almost every major event in Scripture is related to a dream or vision. Dreams and visions are the elementary language by which God speaks to all men. Christian and non-Christian alike. Dreams reveal our inner life. We would be greatly impoverished without this dimension of God’s voice.

Daniel 2:28-30

Your dream and the visions of your head upon your bed, were...that you may know the thoughts of your heart.

— **The Inner Voice** —

Frequently God speaks through the “small inner voice.” We must test this inner voice and come to recognize it. Often He speaks and we are just not tuned into it.

—God also speaks through—

Angels
Impressions

Prophetic Utterances
Circumstances

3. Three Dangers We Must Avoid

- (1) That we will not hear **anything** unless it comes in the prescribed way we are used to.
- (2) That we think **everything** we receive is from Him once we realize the Lord does speak directly to us.
- (3) **The fear** that we will make a mistake.

Illustrations: A child learning to walk
Nathan and David

Jeremiah 32:8 (vs. 6-12)

Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord

Psalm 37:23-24

The steps of good men are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in His way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord uphold him with His hand.

Three Dangers We Must Avoid

- 1) **Anything** - this is the way it happened last time, that's the way it always will be
- 2) **Everything** - many things come, but not all are from God, some are our own thoughts or desires
- 3) **The Fear** – this immobilizes some people; they don't want to displease the Lord, to say something He isn't saying, so they had better keep quiet.

- by doing so, they effectively throttle what the Lord wants to communicate

Illustration: a child learning to walk

- parents encourage, not reprimand, when the child falls
- sometimes we learn more from falling down than we do by standing up (Psalm 37:23-24)

Illustration: Nathan and David (Nathan had got it all wrong)

- the Lord corrected Nathan and it was graciously received by David

Learning any language is slow. We have to be willing to make mistakes as we learn and trust that the Lord is going to guard us during the process.

If we get some of our own thoughts mixed in, put them out there

The Lord will show what is of Him. Just let the rest drop by the wayside.

Illustration: Jeremiah 32:6-12 (v.9)

- the prophets didn't always know for sure if God was speaking either
- at times they were only sure when it came to pass

Pray that you may be free enough for God to speak any way He desires

— **Dreams and Visions** —

Almost every major event in Scripture is related to a dream or vision. Dreams and visions are the elementary language by which God speaks to all men, Christian and non-Christian alike. Dreams reveal our inner life. We would be greatly impoverished without this dimension of God's voice.

Daniel 2:28-30

Your dream and the visions of your head upon your bed, were...that you may know the thoughts of your heart.

— **The Inner Voice** —

Frequently God speaks through the "small inner voice." We must test this inner voice and come to recognize it. Often He speaks and we are just not tuned into it.

—God also speaks through—

Angels
Impressions
Mind Pictures

Prophetic Utterances
Circumstances
Godly Counsel

3. **Three Dangers We Must Avoid**

- (1) That we will not hear **anything** unless it comes in the prescribed way we are used to.
- (2) That we think **everything** we receive is from Him once we realize the Lord does speak directly to us.
- (3) **The fear** that we will make a mistake.

Illustrations: A child learning to walk
Nathan and David

Jeremiah 32:8 (vs. 6-12)

Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord

Psalms 37:23-24

The steps of good men are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in His way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord uphold him

The Process of Testing and Confirming.

* Claim the **Holy Spirit's protection**

* **Listen lightly**

- Some of us take things too seriously - including ourselves
- Be free to share and discover together what God may be saying

Illustration:

Lynn had a real burden for someone outside the group with a major decision to make. She told her group "I'm not going to tell you what it is all about, but let's just ask the Lord to show us." They waited on the Lord and listened for a while. "O.K., let's share anything that came to us," Lynn said. All felt insecure as they shared: "I'm not sure this is from the Lord; this probably just came out of my head, etc."

Lynn's eyes grew wider and wider. Everything was fitting into a pattern and absolutely confirming the direction of the Lord. When she finally shared what it was, everyone was amazed. It seemed the Lord couldn't speak in such a simple way as this and yet He had very clearly done so.

* Listening is best accomplished **in groups**

- Often the group can sift what comes, pray over it, confirm it, or let it fall aside

Illustration: Decision to Go to One Adult Sunday School Class

On one occasion in our church, three Sunday School teachers had to be replaced. The church leaders asked, "Lord, what's our plan to be for finding leaders for these classes?" They began to share what had come to them. It seemed the Lord was showing them that they should have just one large class with only one anointed teacher. I immediately thought "this is not the way we should go."

The next night a smaller and more spiritually mature group met. I asked them to listen about the same subject. The results were exactly the same! I said "O.K. Lord, I give up." We moved to one Sunday School class for several years. It was a great blessing.

This came in the midst of a group who were willing to submit and share and test.

4. The Process of Testing and Confirming

Listening involves being free enough so that God can come and speak to us in any way He desires. How can I recognize and distinguish His voice from the voice of my own desires, public opinion, the enemy, pride, temptation, presumption, etc.?

- (1) We must claim the Holy Spirit's protection, guarding us from the deceitful word Satan would slip in.
- (2) Listening lightly—not taking everything that comes as a definite word, but being free to share it and to discover together what is of God as we submit it to the group with whom we are praying or the spiritual leadership of the church.
- (3) Listening is best accomplished in groups who are of one mind to seek the Lord for His Word. As we listen this way, we must be free to share all that comes so that the group may sift and pray over, confirm
- (4) We must test what comes as we listen. Let it be sifted. Believe that God will confirm to us that which is from Him. What is not definitely confirmed may be mixed with our own thoughts and desires so we need to just let that fall aside. Accept and act upon only that portion in which there is a firm witness to your own heart by the Spirit and/or which is confirmed by the group.
- (5) There will always be things we do not understand. Freely lay those aside until they become clearer later on.

When Jesus prayed, He expected a “yes” answer because He knew what God’s will was before He asked. What a difference there is between struggling away in prayer and finding out what the Lord is really saying to us and then giving ourselves to it.

Illustration: Pilot riding the jet stream

* We must **test** what comes as we listen.

- Always seek to have the Lord confirm the “word” that you receive in at least three different ways; if He doesn’t confirm it, don’t move on it
- When seeking direction as a body of believers, don’t move forward unless there is a firm and united witness - even if it takes several years

Illustration: Don Sherman gave a word to the other elders about our church building. Two years later as we did move to build we realized that we were following step by step exactly what Don had shared. But at the time he gave the word there was no unity of agreement among the elders. It wasn’t the Lord’s timing. It was only when the Lord brought a confirmation to everyone’s heart that we could move forward on Don’s word.

- When prophetic words come *two or three prophets should speak and the others should weigh carefully what is said*

I Cor. 14:29

The “my word” Problem

* Don’t take ownership of “words” which you may have given to others

* Just submit the word; God is big enough to take it from there

- When the “word” is discerned, some of it may be “mixed” with your own thoughts and desires; be willing to let what is of “you” fall aside
- When a “personal word” is shared:

for the one sharing: Never present it as “God said.” Be careful not to arrogate unto yourself the words of God. You may be taking the Lord’s name in vain. Instead, present the “word” as, “I seem to be impressed” or “this may or may not be from God” or “test this and see how it sets in your spirit.”

for the one receiving: Always test the “word.” Seek God to clarify it to you. Submit it to others. Only accept what has a firm witness to your own heart.

* The biggest struggle for prophetic people is not to hear from God, but knowing what God wants them to do with the word He has given to them once it has been received

* Sharing it isn’t always what God has in mind

4. The Process of Testing and Confirming

Listening involves being free enough so that God can come and speak to us in any way He desires. How can I recognize and distinguish His voice from the voice of my own desires, public opinion, the enemy, pride, temptation, presumption, etc.?

- (1) We must claim the **Holy Spirit's protection**,
guarding us from the deceitful word Satan would slip in.
- (2) **Listening lightly**—not taking everything that comes as a definite word, but being free to share it and to discover together what is of God as we submit it to the group with whom we are praying or the spiritual leadership of the church.
- (3) Listening is best accomplished **in groups** who are of one mind to seek the Lord for His Word. As we listen this way, we must be free to share all that comes so that the group may sift and pray over, confirm or lay aside.

- (4) We must **test** what comes as we listen.
Let it be sifted. Believe that God will confirm to us that which is from Him. What is not definitely confirmed may be mixed with our own thoughts and desires so we need to just let that fall aside. Accept and act upon only that portion in which there is a firm witness to your own heart by the Spirit and/or which is confirmed by the group.

- (5) There will always be things we **do not understand**.
Freely lay those aside until they become clearer later on.

When Jesus prayed, He expected a “yes” answer because He knew what God’s will was before He asked. What a difference there is between struggling away in prayer and finding out what the Lord is really saying to us and then giving ourselves to it.

Illustration: Pilot riding the jet stream

* Things we **do not understand**

Herman Riffel says that the next step is to take the things that have been received and pray over them further. The Lord will narrow them down, refine them and often help us to end up with a specific word.

Even then there will be things we still don't understand, so lay them aside until they become clearer later on (months or even years later).

Take what you can now and act upon it – leave the rest for later clarification

Conclusion

- * Jesus always got a “yes” response because He knew how to hear what God was saying and wanting to do
- * When you've heard the voice of God, it's like an airplane that gets up into the jet stream and arrives at its destination both easily and early

ALL OF THIS NEEDS TO BE CAPPED OFF BY A SPECIAL
DISCIPLINE THAT I HOPE YOU WILL INITIATE THIS WEEK

4. The Process of Testing and Confirming

Listening involves being free enough so that God can come and speak to us in any way He desires. How can I recognize and distinguish His voice from the voice of my own desires, public opinion, the enemy, pride, temptation, presumption, etc.?

- (1) We must claim the Holy Spirit's protection, guarding us from the deceitful word Satan would slip in.
- (2) Listening lightly—not taking everything that comes as a definite word, but being free to share it and to discover together what is of God as we submit it to the group with whom we are praying or the spiritual leadership of the church.
- (3) Listening is best accomplished in groups who are of one mind to seek the Lord for His Word. As we listen this way, we must be free to share all that comes so that the group may sift and pray over, confirm or lay aside.
- (4) We must test what comes as we listen. Let it be sifted. Believe that God will confirm to us that which is from Him. What is not definitely confirmed may be mixed with our own thoughts and desires so we need to just let that fall aside. Accept and act upon only that portion in which there is a firm witness to your own heart by the Spirit and/or which is confirmed by the group.

- (5) There will always be things we do not understand. Freely lay those aside until they become clearer later on.

When Jesus prayed, He expected a “yes” answer because He knew what God’s will was before He asked. What a difference there is between struggling away in prayer and finding out what the Lord is really saying to us and then giving ourselves to it.

Illustration: Pilot riding the jet stream

MY SPIRITUAL JOURNAL

All the good things God shares with you (guidance, direction, admonition, etc.) will drop out of sight and be lost if you don't have a consistent way of writing it down and keeping it.

Get a notebook - an 8 1/2 by 11 spiral bound notebook works well

The general rule - write frequently enough so that nothing significant is unrecorded

- some people will write 15 min. a day; they really get into it
- other people may wait for significant events, or until they have worked the problem through and the insight that comes is worth recording

What Should Be Included

1. **The fruit of your meditation**

- Write down things that are specifically directed at your life or are helping you to gain a personal knowledge of God.

As you meditate on Scripture:

- picture: use your imagination (how looked, acted, felt)
- ponder: ask "what are you saying to me through this;" often thoughts will come and be crystalized as you wait
- pray: ask God to help you do as revealed or thank Him for new insights

2. From your times of **prayer and listening**

- Write down those messages and impressions you have received

3. Record your **feelings and reactions**

- Since this is not a diary but a spiritual journal, don't just record facts or happenings, but feelings and reactions

4. Write in your journal a summary of some of your prayers – a record of the things you have been saying to the Lord in your heart

5. Record what you perceive to be God's **goals** and **priorities** for you; this will help you to keep level in the hectic pace of life

II. DEVELOPING OUR OWN SPIRITUAL JOURNAL

A journal is a powerful tool for spiritual growth. It is a place to record daily thoughts and happenings as they relate to our spiritual pilgrimage; a place to generate and capture ideas and to preserve those messages we receive from the Lord through Scriptural meditation and listening for His voice.

PROVIDE A NOTEBOOK

A notebook substantial enough to provide a record for sometime to come.

A GENERAL RULE

Write frequently enough so that nothing significant is lost but only write as much as you feel you want to write.

WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED:

1. Record the fruit of your meditation on the Word of God. Picture it, ponder it, and pray over it until you experience its truths at the deepest levels of your being.
2. From your times of prayer and listening write down those messages and impressions you have received.
3. Record your feelings and reactions to any significant conversations and events. As you write always seek to answer the question—”What does the Lord want me to learn from this?”
4. Often your reflection on these conversations and events will turn to prayer. Record portions of these prayers in your journal.
5. Record what you perceive to be God’s goals and priorities for this day or for this period of your life as they are revealed to you. It is so easy for us to forget what is important and give in to what is urgent.

6. Copy especially **meaningful quotations**

- Catherine Koob jotted thoughts on envelopes during her Iran hostage ordeal; it helped her keep perspective and keep sane
- Later she wrote:

My journal helped me to remember my reactions and some of the things I had read. It also reminded me of the things I wanted to think about more deeply and helped crystalize my thinking.

Additional Thoughts

(2) By all means, be honest in your writing, even if it may be embarrassing

- When you see what God does as you struggle through, you will be so encouraged; it will be most valuable to you

(3) Some people really get into writing and get carried away

- Your journal is only to gather the fruit of what is coming out of the other aspects of your walk with God

Journal Assignment - Give it a try

Start the beginning steps of making a journal. It may be easy, it may be hard. You may even have to start several times.

The important thing is that you give God an opportunity to keep before you - as the years go by - the things He's saying and doing in your spiritual pilgrimage.

It will be a rich treasure for you and also for your heritage later on.

Bring your journal with you to the next session!

6. Copy especially **meaningful quotations** from books you read or sermons you hear.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS:

1. Your way of keeping your journal is right for you.
 - Be yourself, don't copy someone else.
 - Don't strain for some sort of perfection.
2. Be Honest.
 - Don't hide your questions, doubts or struggles
 - Don't pretend you're something you are not
3. Use your journal but don't make it an idol.
 - Never substitute working in your journal for meditating on God's Word or for fellowship in the body of Christ.
4. Enjoy keeping a journal.
 - Don't let it be a task master, but rather let it add to your relaxed and energized time in the presence of the Lord.

Group Leader Suggestions

FIRST—Hand in

- Get reports on their “eating” of Romans 8:33-32
- Collect sheets. Give them back last week’s sheets.
- Let several who did not get to share last week describe their spiritual pilgrimage up to now as they show their chart or graph

THEN

- Ask the group to list as many important turning points in God’s dealing with man as they can remember from the Scripture which were associated with dreams or visions. Let the group help you make a list on the blackboard or a poster.
- Discuss any questions the group may have in the area of hearing the voice of God.
- Discuss the benefits that might well result in your group members’ lives from keeping a spiritual journal. Group facilitators could share any of their own personal experiences at this point or even excerpts from their own journals.

AS TIME REMAINS:

Experiment with a “listening” session. Encourage someone in the group who has a problem or a need of which they are aware to allow the group to “listen” for what God may have say about the matter.

The specifics of the need should not be shared, but a few background comments could be made to give some orientation. Ask for the Lord’s help and protection. Begin to listen. And encourage all who receive any impression at all to share it.

If helpful direction is received, let it be confirmed by the one you are praying with. If not, just ask the Lord to meet the need in His own time and way.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEXT TIME

1. “Eat” Romans 8:1-17.
2. Try to make at least one entry this week in what will become their “Spiritual Journal.” Have them bring it along with them **to the next session.**
3. Read any remaining chapters in Herman Riffel’s book.

JOURNALING WORKSHEET

JOURNALING WORKSHEET