

The Holy Spirit . Fellowship

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Who He is and What We Mean to Him

Ofentimes when we come in prayer to our Lord, we have a list of things we want and desire that involve circumstances or provisions. However prayer and hearing from God actually has a much deeper root in our psyche than you might think, in your spirit and in God's Spirit as well. He doesn't just want to hear a list of things you need and want in the circumstances you find yourself in. I know I've been there but God wants to **fellowship** with us. As I was thinking about hearing from God, it can be compared to a ship coming into port; you need to line up three harbor lights (Copenhagen harbor) to avoid all hidden obstacles in order to make it safely in. If you only have two lined up, you can get lost. If only one, you will definitely get lost. But with three, you will not get lost. The three harbor lights is first hearing God, the subjective aspect of this is the Holy Spirit within you, the spiritual and emotional, knowing what God wants. The second is objective and has nothing to do with your emotions, it is the written Word of God. Things have to line up with the Word of God. If it doesn't line up with the Word it isn't God! And thirdly, the circumstances have to fit. Everything can be lining up but it may not be the right timing of the Lord.

Fellowship

Having said that, let's go back to what we were saying in previous weeks about fellowship. It occurred to me that in the Garden of Eden, Adam had it made. What a crazy guy. How could it be any better? He had a job to do and he knew what his job was, naming the animals, plants, etc. When you are naming things, you actually learn something about them. In the Old Testament naming something meant describing what it was. So we can see that Adam just didn't name things but he *described* the creation of God. For a biologist like myself that is definitely cool.

However, God was after something more than that. It says that in the cool of the evening He would come and *fellowship*, walk with Adam. Think about that for a minute. There is nobody else around but yourself and God. As yet, Eve hadn't arrived on the scene, just you and God. He comes down and walks and talks with you. You have fellowship with Him. Now, God went on with creation. Adam and Eve were together in the Garden and God came and talked with both of them. What could be better than that? Do you think they had a list for Him? "*By the way, God, I looked at this butterfly the other day and I have no clue what You were thinking when You created this one.*" Or, "*I saw this or that creature and I would like to ask You a few questions about them.*"

Well, I imagine it was much deeper conversation than that. There was strong fellowship at the root of it. God wanted to fellowship with His creation,

especially man whom He had created in His own image! He made man so He could have fellowship, not to hear a list of desires or circumstances he might be in. It was so He could have *fellowship* with you. So we can see, hearing from God primarily has to do with that, fellowship. How different that is from the way we normally think about “hearing from God.” When I’ve heard about that in the past, it is always, *“I want to hear from God. I want to know if this girl is the right person I should marry. Is this job the right job for me? Which way should I go in the circumstance? I want to hear from God. I want to hear from God.”* Number one, you actually have to *want* to hear from God. In today’s perverse and wicked generation, not too many people actually want to hear from God. They would much rather rely upon their own understanding, logic, education, science, whatever, than to hear from God. However, that’s NOT what it is about! It is about fellowshiping with God and then, in that context we hear from Him.

What causes Dull Hearing?

Interestingly, when I thought about this, how did Adam fall? Why did he make a mistake? How could he not know the voice of the Father versus the voice of Satan? How could He know the voice of his almighty God versus something else in which he made his final decision to not follow the voice of God? God said, *“Don’t eat from that tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for the day you do that you should surely die.”* That’s pretty straight forward. Not too much confusion in that statement. And yet, Adam chose to disobey! He fell! Why? I really don’t know what kind of fellowship Adam had with the Father and whether it was fulfilling him in the way it should have. All I really know is that he failed on his side of the relationship with his Father. Didn’t he? One could say there was something definitely wrong. In Hebrews chapter ten verse nineteen, it says that we have the boldness to enter the Holy of Holies. What do you do when you are in the Holy of Holies? You fellowship with God! In a place where nobody else can go, a forbidden place, we have the boldness to enter through the blood of Christ. It says here, *“... by a new and living way.”* So therefore the old way didn’t work! It was almost like God designed his relationship with Adam to fail, because it did not have the blood of Christ. It did not have the power of the Holy Spirit behind it, the person of the Holy Spirit. I make this subjective observation: It seems to me that when it talks about a new and living way, it is talking about how it is now with us in the Church. That is exactly why Christ died.

Hebrews 8 ¹⁰ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.

How does one “know” something? By fellowshiping with them. How do you know your spouse? By fellowshiping with her. How do you know your

friends? By fellowshiping with them not by knowing their needs, not knowing a list of what they need or the circumstances they are in. But fellowshiping with them.

Koinonea

Cheryl, my wife, and I talked about this last night. We thought about this for a while. What kind of fellowship do you want? In all actuality you might have some friends you might not really want to hang out with, maybe the people at work. You may not want to hang out with people you know and even love! But when you have true koinonea in the Spirit, there is a desire to hang out, to be with that person, to be comfortable with that person even if sometimes there is an altercation. In fact, when doing marriage counseling, it is all about that. You have to learn how to deal with altercation when there is will-against-will. *"I don't think this is right."* *"Well, I think this is right."* I remember one couple after they were married about a year, I asked, *"So did you guys have any arguments yet?"* They answered, *"No."* I said to myself, they were in big trouble since when it happens, they won't know how to deal with it. Sure enough, when it finally did happen they had to come right back to us and ask what to do. They had never had an argument!

Beyond Conflict

True fellowship goes beyond just learning how to deal with altercations and conflict. It has to do with the love and desire to be with that person, just to be with them, to be around them, to hang out with them! Wouldn't you love to hang out with Jesus? Think about Him for a minute. Okay He says, *"I'm going to invite you to lunch."* Now would you give Him a list of things like, *"What is the latest stock for next year; what's the numbers on the lotto?"* Or, would you just like to hang out with Him? Remember what he said to the Samaritans, *"Oh I wish you would seek my face like these and not my hand."*

John 4 ⁴² Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

Fellowship is what God is after; hearing God is primarily about that. I can imagine what it was like in the Upper Room that morning of Pentecost. The rushing wind came and filled each one with the Spirit, flames of fire upon them. Finally! Think about it. This is the first time God is actually able to fellowship with His creatures in the way He wants and desires, in the fullness of Christ. Why wouldn't you come with a rushing wind and fire! This is too much . . . They didn't have glass windows and screens back then so the wind could just come right in.

Next time you are at the ocean stop and see the powerful waves coming in. Sometimes when a storm is still far off, when the waves are six to eight feet, a huge amount of mass and energy comes rushing at you and stops just before

your feet. The storms come and you seek shelter and say to yourself, “*How great is our God!*” Well He is an awesome God. He has moved continents to make mountains. He can do anything He wants to do. The circumstances and the lists you have are trivial. What He really wants, the eternal thing that He wants in you, is fellowship. Then, you will hear from God.

Different Ways to Hear God

1) The Holy Spirit (subjective)

I hear people say all the time, “*I never hear from God. He doesn’t answer my prayer. I pray and I don’t hear Him.*” Well here are the ways you do hear from Him. One we’ve already mentioned, the Holy Spirit. You might say, “*The Holy Spirit never talked to me. He never answered any of my prayers. I give Him requests asking to fellowship with Him. I might ask, ‘Where are you?’ He never answers me.*” But, He does want to speak to you very much in the Holy Spirit, very much so. But there are other ways to hear Him, like the Holy Spirit working through *other people*, through *prophecy*, a prophetic word over you. Why do people come for a prophetic word anyway? If a prophet is coming you wonder if he is going to have a word for you. People come from miles around because they want to hear God. In reality they want to know that God really loves them. They want to be able to walk with Him in the cool of the evening and ask, “*Could You leave the universe for a minute and just be with me?*” He can do that and still be with the universe at the same time. He is an awesome God.

2) Prophecy (subjective)

I don’t want to just give you information this morning. I want to breathe into you what God has breathed into me, the joy to be with Him. I love hanging out with the Lord. When I wake up in the night with a bad dream, I just have to hang out with Jesus for a while. He will bring peace and make it all come right. The prophetic word is another way of hearing from God.

1 Thessalonians 5¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise prophecies.

So when they happen in the Church it is for a purpose. Why do you think they come in here? It is because that out there by yourself, you are drifting. But when you come in here (God’s people, the Church) and you worship together with your brothers and sisters, there is a *koinonea* together with the Holy Spirit that can happen nowhere else, where the prophetic utterances come like that which was spoken of the other day, even in an unknown tongue. It can come in all kinds of ways. He can say something directly to your heart. You say inside of yourself, “*I think that was God.*”

1 Thessalonians 5 ²¹ But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good or correct.

If you say to yourself that something was from God for you, write it down. Let me read you one a prophet gave to me. *“His angels are singing over you. I can see them.”* Whoa! I wrote that one down. Hold onto them. They are good.

3) Prayer (subjective)

Prayer, and prophetic prayer especially, is an awesome way to hear God, not just a prayer that we say from a hymnal or prayer book. It isn't one that we have memorized, but prayer is conversation with God.

John 10 ²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

You, all of us, no one is exempt. It doesn't say those who are *really* walking with the Lord, those not doing so well and those doing well. No. My sheep means all of them. So you may not think you know Him but He already knows you.

Jeremiah 29 ¹² Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. . . .

He is NOT “not listening.” There is never a time you cannot get Him on the phone. He is always listening.

¹³ You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.

4) Circumstances, Timing

The Lord can speak to you through circumstances. You may be caught in a traffic jam. That's a good time for the Lord to speak to you. He might say, *“You're going the wrong way. Take a left turn immediately.”* Or, *“It is not about the traffic, Peter, but you've been going the wrong way in this situation for a long time. You need to turn around.”* It is prophetic. He will speak to you in the circumstances, all kinds of ways, timing. He could say, *“This isn't the right time and you know it.”*

5) Other People

He can speak to you through other people. They don't have to be spiritual giants, a prophetic conference, or someone who calls himself Pastor or Elder or Deacon, or someone you think is “spiritual.” In fact many times I hear the voice of the Lord through someone who is not even saved! I say, *“Lord, this girl is a heathen. I know. This person doesn't know You, nor anything about the bible, no understanding or wisdom at all.”* But the Lord says, *“No, she just spoke a word to you from Me.”* Whoa, such power in that! Awesome because you know when it's God, it is God. You *train* yourself to know the truth. It doesn't just come nat-

urally. Adam should have taken that lesson, to train himself to know the truth. He didn't do that. He thought he didn't have to.

Proverbs 16³ Commit your works to the Lord and your thoughts will be established.

Commit yourself to the Lord. That's a promise; your thoughts will be established. In another words as you give yourself to God, His promise to you is that your thought life will be established not on the things of this world, the latest news article or event, or people's opinions. But your thoughts are going to be the mind of the Lord. Wouldn't that be good! Refreshing in comparison, "The Mind of the Lord Radio Station."

6) The Word of God (objective)

2 Timothy 3¹⁷ All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

How do you discern the truth? The Word of God is the foundation stone for that to happen. Someone may say, "I don't need to read the bible anymore. I know everything that is in there. I just rely on the Holy Spirit." Be very careful when somebody says that; be very careful. You need discernment to teach yourself. After you've been down the wrong road, some people for 10, 20 or 40 years saying, "I couldn't have been wrong all those years." The answer from the Lord might be, "Yeah. The last 50 years, you were wrong." Imagine that. No wonder why people are weeping on the floor when they are "slain in the Spirit." Many times it is exactly that. No one had the strength or gumption to tell them the truth except the Holy Spirit. Then the Holy Spirit comes and says, "O ho, you were so off!" "What do I do now then, Lord?" Train yourself to know the truth by the Word of God.

7) Discernment.

John 10⁴ When He puts forth all His own, He goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow Him because they know His voice. A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.

Subjectively and objectively they know the voice of God. Therefore they can discern the voice of a stranger too. They will flee from him.

Hebrews 5¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature (full of age), who because of practice (of use, not disuse or desertion) have their senses trained (exercised) to discern good and evil (both good and evil).

So it is your responsibility to know and to be able to discern. It is not the elder's responsibility, nor the Churches. It is your responsibility to read the Word, be in prayer, discern the circumstances you are in, follow the leading of

the Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, the voice of the prophet in your midst. Wow, after heeding all of this, I will know what is good and what is bad.

Isaiah 30 ¹⁸ Therefore the Lord will wait, that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him.

We wait but the Lord knows how to wait too. There is grace and mercy. How is His grace manifested? Through Mercy. So I discern the Lord. I may know this instance is from God but I have to wait learning longsuffering, patience. I'm still learning patience. If you ask my grandson that question, Luke would answer, "Of course, Granddad."

¹⁹ For the people shall dwell at Zion at Jerusalem and you shall weep no more. For He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry. ²⁰ Though if the Lord gives you the bread of adversity, the water of affliction, yet your teachers will not be moved to the corner anymore but your eyes shall see your teachers.

What a glorious day that will be. When He hears our cry, He will answer. Another words you won't lose heart; someone will be there to give you the word of God. The teachers will not be hidden from you. They will be there. And who is The Teacher? The Holy Spirit. So if someday none of the elders show up at the Church building, the Holy Spirit is your Teacher.

²¹ Your ears shall hear a word behind you saying, "This is the way, walk in it! Wherever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left."

You will hear the voice of the Lord. It won't be hidden from you. Isn't that a great promise?!

Next month I will be going to UK for a vacation. If you have ever driven on the roads of the United Kingdom, England, they drive on the wrong side. The shift lever is on the wrong side. The mirror is on the wrong side. Everything is wrong and disoriented. And so, you tend to look for the oncoming traffic the wrong way. You don't want to do that more than once or at all. I always look for the traffic in the United States coming both ways so I form a good habit for both countries. It is going to be even more wonderful this time. Usually Jessica is with us and is a great navigator so she can mediate in any altercations between Cheryl and myself. But this time, we are just going to have to rely on the Holy Spirit!

8) Submit to the Church

Another way to hear and confirm a Word is from God is to submit it to the Church. You cannot say, "I don't need to go to Church." Yes you do; you need to submit to the Church.

Proverbs 11 ¹⁴ Where no counsel is the people fall. But in a multitude of counselors there is safety.

Matthew 18 ¹⁵ By the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed.

9) Motivation

Another thing about having fellowship with the Lord and hearing from God, is that our *motivation* needs to be correct. Not to spend too much time on this, but our motivation, our mindset must be as a servant to the Lord, a bond-servant to God, not one of just passing through and being a sheep in the fold, but someone who wants to do the will and the desires of God. Again in the midst of this perverse generation are there many hands coming up to serve? Not too many. So who has to put that desire in us, to be with God? Who has to put the desire to even want to fellowship with Him? It has to be the Holy Spirit, Himself. I cannot teach it to you; He has to breathe it into you. But He does want to! He knows how to do His work and He does it very well.

10) Confidence, having Authority

Next is confidence. Hearing and fellowshiping with the Lord gives you confidence, not a reticent posture but one of confidence and boldness. You will know where your next step is going. Remember the scripture, “. . . a light to your feet and a light to your path . . .” That means you can step forward with confidence knowing what you are doing is God and from God, born in God. You might say, “*But, Peter, I did that once and got very badly burnt. It didn’t work out so well.*” It might still have been valid. Sometimes you need to learn things, what is not right as well as things that are. As you learn to discern good and evil, and you learn to fellowship with God, and you learn His heart and His voice, you will have a greater confidence in what you do on your job, how you relate to other people. How do you relate to people? Are you afraid of people or circumstances?

I used to be afraid of going into an insane asylum. I didn’t know what “they” were going to do. There is, however, actually a pattern. You can tell by the posture, even by their hand language, what their prognosis or diagnosis is. So when the Lord put me in charge of three hospitals, Castle Point and Peekskill (an insane asylum for veterans who had major problems) and another hospital all merging, I was afraid to be with these patients. Every building was cut off from what was going on in the next; they were all locked off. People went to work and locked the doors. That was the last time an employee saw anyone until their shift was over. I would go into places like that and they wondered who I was? Was I one of the patients? We would go through and pretty soon I got used to seeing people that were not all together. Some people had serious wounds in their lives that they couldn’t deal with. Whether it happened on the battlefield or not, it didn’t make any difference; they were still suffering.

There was this one guy who had a habit of taking off his clothes. That would intimidate most people but after a while I saw him outside in the parade ground and said to him, “*Now George, you need to go back to your unit and put your clothes on. You are going to catch cold. Would you like me to take you back?*” “*No, no, Peter, I can find my way back.*” So it is amazing how we can not be afraid of people after being with them for a while. Maybe you are afraid of motorcycle gangs like I used to be. I used to be terrified but I just found out that our Vice President actually rides one! One time I gave a tract to a motorcycle guy and he ate it! Wow. After a while it was interesting that as soon as the motorcycle guys saw us coming, they were afraid of us. That wasn’t our intent but we gained a new confidence to not be afraid of people, people who know more than you like doctors, lawyers, etc., whomever. You do not have to be afraid of them. Don’t let them intimidate you. Common sense doesn’t come with education. Knowing good and evil doesn’t come from education. It comes by the Holy Spirit. Therefore we have one up on them all. Right.

Fear

Colossians 3 ¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, . . .

Where do we lose our peace? Fear! Fear is the major killer of peace. Therefore if you want the peace of God, get rid of the fear. It doesn’t belong to you and it is not yours. It is not your inheritance. Who comes with fear? Satan. Can you entertain it? Sure, if you want. Not me. If I have fear in a nightmare, I wake up in the middle of the night and stop. Wait a minute this does not belong to me. Get into the word, read scripture, read a proverb. When I had problems like that in the past with a series of dreams, there was a time when I actually wrote a scripture down so when I woke up I would read it over and let it become a song in my heart. There is something about a song, a psalm, that can overtake fear in a heartbeat, wonderful . . .

¹⁵ . . . let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called into one body and be thankful.

Confidence

Now the confidence we have in the Lord doesn’t stop with this life on earth. The confidence we have goes right to the grave. Great. Are you afraid to die? I had a diving instructor say to me the other day, “*I know why you go to Church. It’s your insurance policy to get to heaven.*” I said, “*George, no. You are not getting it. I am already in heaven.*” When you are fellowshiping with the Lord, you are partaking of the Kingdom of God here on earth in an eternal sense. Now are things going to get better? I sure hope so! There will come a time when there will be NO pain. He will be there to wipe away every tear and, by the way, Death will be no more. Things are going to get not just better, but hugely better.

Psalms 23 ¹ The Lord is my shepherd;. . .

A shepherd is one you want to hang out with, you feel comfortable with, you know where He is going because He knows where He is going.

1 . . . I shall not want. 2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. 3 He restores my soul; . . .

It doesn't say that He listens to my every wish and He is like a big Santa Claus. He restores my soul because of who He is.

3 . . . He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

So He is the One. The Holy Spirit is an awesome manifestation of God.

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death (any circumstance), I will fear no evil;

Evil's all around me; I'm not afraid. Confidence. Why? Because we have fellowship with our Lord God and the Holy Spirit. Why? Because we have other brothers and sisters to encourage us in that fellowship. Why? Because we hear Him in prayer, because we hear Him in the Word of God. We can hear Him in the circumstances. I will fear no evil for You are with me.

4 . . . For You . . .

You, Jesus. You, God the Father. You, the Holy Spirit. There is only one God, Jesus the exact representation of the Father, the Holy Spirit given to us, the mystery of the Godhead. It is no longer such a mystery when you know Him.

4 . . . are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

What is a rod and a staff represent? Instruments of authority or correction, etc. They are not something you would cringe from. "*Oh here comes the rod.*" But they are a comfort. Why are they a comfort to you? Because they have always brought forth good in your life and others.

5 . . . You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; . . .

You prepare provision not just in the circumstances but in the very presence of evil, He provides for us. That is so true today. Not only that. Your confidence is beyond that. He says, "*I have a job for you, from the servants point of view, I am going to anoint you.*"

5 . . . You anoint my head with oil; . . .

What is He anointing but the purposes of God in you, manifested in such a way that it blesses those all around you. They say, "*There is an anointed person of God.*" In fact it says the anointing is so much that . . .

5 . . . My cup runs over. . . .

I don't have enough station for it in my being; it is overwhelming. Because of all these things:

⁶ . . . Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; . . .

Not one will be missing, not one moment, not one event.

⁶ . . . And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.

Not when I die and go to heaven but I will live in the house of the Lord forever, now and forever. The house of the Lord starts here with the *fellowship of the Holy Spirit*.

This is a little different from what the main stream Church lives and teaches. But to this truth I am absolutely committed. Now I would wish, my impossible dream, that I could go back to the Garden of Eden and counsel Adam. I would say, *"My God, brother. There is something better coming!"* Jesus said, *"Yeah, that's right."* He is the firstborn among many brethren for that "better thing" coming, because Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit when He was walking upon the earth. It says the Holy Spirit came down upon Him. John the Baptist said that he would know Him because the Holy Spirit would come down and would remain upon Him. It never left Him. Therefore, no matter what we go through, we have confidence in the Lord. Amen.

Let me share one more story. In the days of the cruelty of Stalin, and other cruel men in the world (Evil is not new and what men can dream up is beyond me; there is so much evil in the world.) Stalin was persecuting Christians all over the place. Even though now Russia is a pretty safe place for Christians. Statistic say that there are 40% more Christians today in Russia than there were ten years ago. However in Stalin's day, you were killed! If they found out you were a Pentecostal, a bible believing, filled-with-the-Holy-Ghost that could hear from Jesus any time you wanted to, you were a dangerous thing and you would be killed. Christians would be hiding out in rooms and secret places. But when the KGB found them out, the people would not scream in terror and fear but rather rejoice for they knew their God. And if they were killed in a firing squad, they would know that God was still there, before, during and after. They would rejoice and the KGB guys could never figure it out since it was not just one or two; it was all of them who were martyred for Christ. They would be crying tears of joy, *"Finally, I don't have to hide any more. I can proclaim Jesus right to your face. Go ahead, kill me! You can only kill this body, not what is in it."* What an awesome testimony. And we are afraid? Not any more. Confidence. Amen.

Conclusion

So if you want to stand with me and fellowship with the Holy Spirit, why don't we stand together and we'll pray. I personally need the saints to stand with me in this concept because we need to be encouraged; we cannot stand alone. Nor do I intend to because it is by the word and the testimony and by the blood

of Christ that they overcame. The word of their testimony was a part of that process, that encouragement. I want to encourage you to encourage, don't stop. Let us hear His prophetic voice.

Let's pray: Father, we thank You Lord God for filling us with the Holy Spirit. You have not left us as orphans that someday You would come back and we would say, "Oh, there is my Father at last." But Lord we know You now. We have learned to discern Your voice and we want to discern it even more clearly, more accurately each day. We know that we fall and we know that we often follow the wrong path. But, Lord, we want to be on the right path of righteousness, one that would bring more joy upon the earth, not one of more tribulation but one of more joy, even in the midst of tribulation! That there would be the Kingdom of God established upon this earth. For indeed You did say that Your Kingdom would come even on this earth as it is in heaven. We pray that you would use us, individually and collectively as a body of believers. We also pray for the children that you would bless them in that way, that they too would be able to encourage and strengthen those around them, because they know the Holy Spirit. In Jesus name. Amen.