

God Speaks Through People

People need other people. People need to converse. When we talk with others and we participate in the back and forth of speaking and listening, it stimulates our soul in ways that we can't accomplish otherwise.

What happened about a year ago when everyone was put on "lockdown" and we couldn't see people outside our household for a couple of weeks...most of us felt like we were going crazy! We couldn't wait to be able to be around people even if just for a moment.

We can only handle isolation for a little while. We need to hear other voices (besides the ones in our heads) because when other voices speak into our lives, with our ears we may be hearing the voice of a friend, but with our spirit we may be hearing the voice of God!

God speaks through people and He does it in many different ways!

Encouragement - compliment, admiration, lift your soul

Correction - help you see the truth, get you back on track

Comfort - help you find peace, rest

Agreement - confirmation

Disagreement - another point of view

Wisdom - advice, counsel

We have people in our lives because God uses our relational encounters to get us where He wants us to go!

Mark Batterson describes it like a human pinball. You bump into different anointings, different giftings, different ideas...all to get to where you need to go.

So what does this look like? How do you know when it's God speaking or just a man?

1 Corinthians 14:1-3 (NKJV)

Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. 2 For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries. 3 But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.

Pursue love...how many of you have pursued love in your life? How many have failed? Found it very difficult? Thought about giving up?

Can I make this simple, and biblical for you this morning? To pursue is to chase after...when you are speeding and you see the red and blue lights flashing behind you...guess what that officer of the law is going to do if you keep driving? He's going to pursue you...

He's going to chase after you...but for how long? How far? Until he catches you...that's pursuit!

Pursue love...What is love? Well this love is agape, it's affection, good will, kindness, compassion, generosity, brotherly love...

1 John 4:8 (NKJV)

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

God is agape. Chase after agape. This is where God speaking through people starts.

You guys know that God spoke through a donkey once, right? I mean He literally spoke through a donkey to Balaam (Numbers 22). But can I tell you that He doesn't USUALLY speak through donkeys?

I just want to throw that out there so we realize that we can hear the voice of God through anyone...even a donkey man. Someone unexpected. Even someone that doesn't know Jesus... but I wouldn't say it's how He's USUALLY going to speak.

First if God is going to speak even somewhat regularly there's got to be a connection, an openness, a willingness to hear from God. This comes from pursuing love. And there's a really important reason why...you have to deliver a word from God in love.

1 Corinthians 13:1 (NKJV)

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

Church...chase after Jesus...and chase after Him until you catch Him. Every day. Every season. On the mountain. In the valley. Pursue love! Otherwise everything else...in life...is pointless.

THEN...desire spiritual gifts...but especially that you may prophesy.

DESIRE...to burn for, to envy prophecy...to speak divine inspirations, to declare divine revelation

The closer we get to Jesus (pursue love) the more we should burn for Him to speak through us.

See if we are pursuing Him, then He's speaking TO us...but what He really wants is to speak through you...and I can prove it!

With the Gifts for the Spirit...

1 Corinthians 12:7-10 (NKJV)

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

What do all of these gifts have in common? They are given to men by the Holy Spirit. But what else...they are all for you to share with someone else...and they are all to show the greatness of Jesus and give Him glory.

Word of wisdom, word of knowledge, prophecy, these are all God speaking through one person to another! And if you want to get down to it...they all involve God speaking through man to a degree.

The gifts work THROUGH you, they aren't FOR you. You know which gifts are for you? The ones that the Spirit is speaking through someone else!

Christianity is not a me first faith. It's a serving faith. People tend to pursue what they need instead of pursuing what they can give. I bet when we started this series you thought it would be all the ways God will speak to YOU....and it has been...but now it's time for God to speak THROUGH you!

Let's look at some great examples of God speaking through people:

Jethro - wisdom

Jethro was Moses' father-in-law. He comes to visit Moses and Moses gets up in the morning and works from morning to evening judging the people. Every person came to Moses with every issue that they wanted to hear from God about.

First this shows us that Moses had pursued love...he hears from God...so the people want to hear from him...but he's doing too much. It's wearing him out, consuming his time, probably causing some family issues.

Jethro gave wisdom to Moses...MOSES, the man who hears from God...needed to hear God through someone else...He told Moses to teach the statutes and laws to a handful of men who fear God, men of truth, who hated covetousness, and let them field the small matters and only direct the big things to you!

Moses heeded the voice of Jethro...which was wisdom from God...and it worked!

Nathan - rebuke

Nathan was a prophet that God sent to King David after David committed adultery with Bathsheba, got her pregnant, had her husband killed off, and took her as his own.

Nathan comes to David and shares this story about a rich man, poor man and lambs. Which was really just David's story but he didn't realize it. David said the man should die!

Nathan rebuked King David and said "YOU are the man!" It brings David to a place of repentance "I have sinned against the Lord." And David was restored but there were still consequences of his sin

Mordecai - exhort/advice

Mordecai was the uncle of Queen Esther, a Jewish wife of the Persian king. The king orders the annihilation of all the Jews throughout the empire. Mordecai tells her to go to the king and ask him to retract the order.

What you may not know is that no one could approach the king...even his wives...without him calling them forward...anyone that did so risked death!

Mordecai exhorts Esther..."who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" She is the one that is there to deliver her people. This is why her crazy story of ending up Queen even happened in the first place...But she needed that word...and she followed through and the people were saved.

Paul - encouragement

Paul writes his second letter to his spiritual son Timothy. Timothy is a young leader in the church that Paul planted. We don't ever see specifically that Timothy was discouraged or depressed or wanted to quit...but we do see Paul encourage Timothy to keep going strong.

2 Timothy 1:1-7 (NKJV)

I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, 4 greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, 5 when I call to remembrance the **genuine faith that is in you**, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. 6 Therefore I remind you to **stir up the gift of God** which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

You have great faith Timothy...the same as your mother, and grandmother....stir up that gift of God that is in you! You can do this!

You don't have a spirit of fear...that's not what God gives you! You have a spirit of power...love...a sound mind! (self-control)

Timothy received this encouragement from Paul. He was martyred in his 80s when he took a stand against a crowd of pagans and their idolatrous celebrations! (Not a spirit of fear, huh)

Church...the Holy Spirit wants to speak through you...pursue love...desire the gifts...especially that you would prophesy!

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 (NKJV)

Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies. 21 Test all things; hold fast what is good. 22 Abstain from every form of evil.

I believe we quench the Spirit most often when He's trying to speak through us, not to us.

Giving a word

So how do we know if it's really God speaking through us?

How do we have the boldness to come up here and share a word that God has laid on our heart?

How do we know if someone really needs encouragement?

Or just share something we believe God wants us to share with an individual (good or bad)?

1. Are you pursuing love? Because I'll tell you that if you are pursuing love...the word will come forth in love, even if it's a difficult one!
2. Is this word something that will draw them closer to Jesus?

A prophetic word is strengthening, encouraging, and comforting. That doesn't mean it can't be confrontational, but it's always redemptive. And it should be delivered with a gentle spirit.

If God gives you a word for someone, speak it! You don't have to pronounce "thus saith the Lord" but it's your responsibility to love the people in your life and that means speaking the truth in love.

Luke 10:16 (NKJV)

He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me."

Most of the time when God speaks through other people...it's going to be in normal conversation. In fact unless you are "sure, sure" that God directly spoke something to you to share, just bring it up in conversation. Walls are down in conversation.

Receiving a word

God speaks through people but those people are as imperfect as we are.

Carefully weigh what was said.

1. Does it pass the scripture test?
2. Does it confirm anything you believe God is already doing or speaking?
3. Consider the character of the person giving the word....not that this discounts the word (God can speak through a donkey) but it can affect how much weight you give the word.

You will only receive a word from someone you allow to speak into your life...

Prayer

- Break off the spirit of fear - " For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."
- Receive the gifts
- Ears to hear
- Discernment