

Series: **EQUIPPED TO PRAY**

Title: **CALLED TO HEAR: RECOGNITION**

Text: **John 10:2-5, 27**

INTRODUCTION

John 10:2-5, 27

² But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.

²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

Recognition of His voice takes no time, and it takes a lifetime.

- To visit or to live with
- Constant companion or call center
- My how you have changed! ... Didn't notice, been there every day.

Sometimes the message can get fuzzy and our self can get in the way.

So how are we to know His voice from others?

- My thoughts, or...
- His thoughts, or...
- The enemy's thoughts, or...
- Bad pizza

How do we test it?

John 7:17-18

¹⁷ Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. ¹⁸ Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him.

We must have a filter of thoughts.

SEVEN TESTS OF IMPRESSIONS

1. Does it agree with the Bible?

- God's will does not counter God's Word.
- God isn't moody, fickle, or wanting us to ignore or disobey the Word.

Lk 21:33 NIV

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

- Truth is truth whether you believe it or not.
 - "Earth is flat."
- Examples
 - What does Scripture say? Pay your taxes.
 - Proverbs: I bless businesses that operate by integrity.
 - Sex is not dirty it is holy – the glue in marriage.
 - You may not like that, but God said it.
- The Bible brings clarification.
 - People of the Word
 - Obedient to the Word
- Even if some angel shows up...
 - This is the "newly revised..."
 - This is the "additional goods."
- Let's God's curse fall on anyone who preaches any other message.

Gal. 1:8

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse!

Rev. 22:18

If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll.

2. Does this make me more like Christ?

- Jesus is the Standard
 - You are to be like Jesus.
- Life is hard because everything is broken.
 - There is no perfect anything because of sin.
 - Heaven is perfect.
 - God is interested in your character more than your comfort.

Phil 2:5 NIV - *In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: ...*

2 Cor. 10:5 NIV - *We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

- What would Jesus do? What is Jesus like?
 - God gives us lists about Jesus.

James 3:14-17

¹⁴ *But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth.* ¹⁵ *Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.* ¹⁶ *For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.* ¹⁷ *But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.*

- If motivated by bitterness – not of God.
- If motivated by envy – not of God.
- Motivated by self-ambition – not of God.
 - You are not on earth to live for yourself.
- Motivated by purity – impure: not of God.
- Peace loving – harmony, not division or conflict.
 - Peace makers are children of God.
 - Bridge builder or wall builder
 - All gossip is satanic – he is the accuser – the condemner.
- Considerate – would this harm someone else?
- Submissive – humble, teachable, willing to have idea checked by others.
 - If you have an idea but don’t want to tell spouse – it isn’t of God.
 - This stands against pride and self-righteousness.
- Full of mercy – God has forgiven me; I must forgive others.
 - God has been gracious to me; I will be gracious to others.
 - It is easy to criticize – but it takes maturity to see beauty and the good in all situations.
- Impartial and sincere – 2 Greek words
 - Impartial - ἀδιάκριτος, ον – adiakritos / ad-ee-ak'-ree-tos
 - Sincere - νυπόκριτος, ον – anupokritos / an-oo-pok'-ree-tos
 - No manipulation – same form and root for the word hypocrite
 - Greek – hypocrite – you’re a fake – you’re not authentic.

3. Does my church family agree?

Eph. 3:10 NIV

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ...

- a. The wisdom of the righteous can save you.
 - i. Through the church
 - ii. If God has spoken to you, others in the church will affirm it.
 - iii. If you have a resistance to tell others, that's a sign.
 - iv. If mature believers question it, you should too.
 - v. Save you a lot of things, time, reputation, life,

Prov. 11:9 NIV

With their mouths the godless destroy their neighbors, but through knowledge the righteous escape.

- b. We all need a small group.
 - i. People in life to bounce things off.
 - ii. We need godly voices.
 - iii. We need feedback.

Prov. 11:14 NIV

For lack of guidance a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisers.

4. Is it consistent with how God shaped me?

It might meet the first three tests, but you have been shaped for a particular test.

SHAPE

- Spiritual Gifts
- Heart
- Abilities
- Personality
- Experiences

Eph. 2:10 NIV

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

- Form follows function, function follows form, and the way God formed you points to what your function should be.
 - i. Workmanship – His POEM; His work of ART

Rom 12:6 NIV

We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.

- ii. If you are good at something, you should be doing it.
- Just because you love to do it... does not mean you should do it.
 - i. You cannot be anything you want to be.

5. Does it concern my responsibility?

- a. If it isn't your responsibility, why would God speak to you?
- b. Stop trying to get God's word for someone else.
- c. God can speak to them - every believer has direct access.
- d. Jesus looks at Peter and says, one day you will be in chains and you will die for me.
 - i. Peter isn't happy and immediately looks at John and says, what about him?
 - ii. Jesus says – that's none of your business.

John21:22 NIV

Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me."

- iii. **WITTY principle – what is that to you?**
- iv. Trying to be the HS for someone else
 - 1. God is talking to you.
 - 2. Not what I want to say to you about them.
 - 3. Stop being so judgmental and get your act together.
- e. When I need to hear God speak, I need to listen FOR ME.
- f. Who are you to judges others?

Rom 14:4 NIV

Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

- g. We have heard this phrase – God told me to tell you....
 - i. Lots of damage done in that
 - ii. Why didn't God tell me?
- h. It can discredit the Lord's work when well-meaning people assume God's role.

- i. You are not the HIS.
- i. Does God ever speak to you through others.
- j. To others through you
- k. But must be very careful.

Three guidelines if God has given you a word for another.

- Be Patient and Pray.
- God will use you to confirm what he has already said.
- God usually uses you without your being conscious of it.

i. Be patient and pray.

1. Give God a chance to speak to others ... he may intend to tell you what he is going to tell them, but you are to pray that they can receive HIS words.

ii. God will use you to CONFIRM what he has already said.

1. They will say, yes... God has been speaking to me about that.
2. Happens often.

iii. God usually uses you without your being conscious of it.

1. In a small group, someone makes a comment to the whole group, and the words hit you right in the heart. That person doesn't even know.
2. Happens all the time
3. People say that to me all the time – "that was for me."

Rom 14:10,13 Phillips

Why, then, criticize your brother's actions, why try to make him look small? We shall all be judged one day, not by each other's standards or even our own, but by the standard of Christ. Let us therefore stop turning critical eyes on one another. If we must be critical, let us be critical of our own conduct and see that we do nothing to make a brother stumble or fall.

6. Is it convicting rather than condemning?

- a. Conviction v condemnation:
 - i. Conviction
 1. Comes from God
 2. Given to correct.
 3. Develops character.
 4. Something needs to change.
 - ii. Condemnation
 1. Criticize
 2. Feelings of worthlessness

3. From Satan
4. Cloud of guilt and feeling bad – condemnation.

Rom. 8:1 NIV

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ...

- iii. God never attacks your value
 1. You are His child whom He loves

Rev. 3:19 Amplified

Those whom I [dearly and tenderly] love, I rebuke and discipline [showing them their faults and instructing them]; so be enthusiastic and repent [change your inner self—your old way of thinking, your sinful behavior—seek God’s will].

2. He is like a pinpoint of light not a cloud of guilt.
- iv. Condemnation is vague and does not go away.
- v. Conviction is clear and disappears when you respond to it.
- b. Illustration of the court
 - i. Earth courts
 1. Trial
 2. Judgment
 3. Sentencing - Condemned
 - ii. God’s courts
 1. Trial
 2. Judgement
 3. Intervention – Christ
 4. Acquittal – set free.
- c. How long should conviction last?
 - i. Only as long for me to repent.
 - ii. So many times, we confuse our low self-esteem for God’s voice.
 - iii. Bible says this about Satan –
 1. Rev 12:10 – “accuser”
 2. Before you sin – he minimizes it.
 3. After you sin – he maximizes it.
 - a. “How could you do that and call yourself a Christian?”

7. Do I sense God’s Peace about it?

- a. If you feel pressures, overwhelmed, confused one of the reasons is that you are caught into yourself and not into God.

1 Cor. 14:33 – NIV

For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord’s people.

- i. Parents- do you want your kids to feel confused.
 - ii. Pressure is legit when God says it and we say no.
 - iii. Satan wants to drive you compulsively; God wants to drive you compassionately.
 - 1. We all have a bit of OCD in us and Satan plays on that
- b. Peter Lord – 95% from God is encouragement.

Phil 4:6-7 NIV

⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- i. If you do this... you will have God’s peace

Prov22:17 Living

Listen to this wise advice; follow it closely, for it will do you good, and you can pass it on to others: Trust in the Lord.

- ii. Listen to it.
 - iii. Follow it.
 - iv. Share it.
- c. Why do we make it so complicated?
- i. Listen as a child.

What’s the problem when I am having problems hearing?

Our lines are messed up.

- You have allowed sin to come between you and God.
- It may be a relationship.
- It may be a habit.
- It may be a hurt you have held onto.

What if I have never heard God or felt Him?

- You need to know Jesus.
- You can have ‘churchianity’ and not Christianity.

- You can have religiosity without relationship.
- You can know about God but ...

John 8:47 NIV

Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

- You have never given yourself with God, and today is the day to do it.