



## Hearing From God (Part 2)

By Dr. Gregory Wiens

I can remember the first time I had someone tell me they knew what God wanted for me. I had only been a believer a short time and I was placed on the Church Council. At this particular meeting we were discussing several equally good options and this older gentleman stood up and said “God wants us to do...” His statement ended the discussion! I remember thinking I wish I could so confidently know what God wanted us to do.

However, as I watched over the next few months, I began to suspect this guy’s pipeline to God. It seemed that whenever he said such, it was always to support his position; which ironically was turning the church inward. Finally I asked him how he knew that God wanted us to do such and such...he didn’t take the question kindly. This was my first exposure to what a friend of mine called “Wackoids”; that is, those who use God to get their own (often selfish) way.

Last week, I stated that we couldn’t lead God’s church or live a life pleasing to God without hearing from God. Our God is not silent. But to some he can simply become a tool to justify getting what they want.

The Old Testament is filled with examples of false prophets who said they were speaking for God and yet were not (See Isaiah 44.25, Jeremiah 14.14 & 23.16, Lamentations 2.14, Ezekiel 13.9 & 22.28 and Micah 2.6). Clearly from these and many other examples, there were those who professed to know God’s desire for his people and yet they were wrong or simply evil. In the New Testament John tells us, “*Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*” (1 John 4.1) There were also those in the New Testament who proclaimed to know the mind of God, yet were not to be listened to.

Clearly this is true today as well. I have had my share of people tell me that they know God’s will for my life because he told them. I am always a little taken back when this happens, because I am spending time with my Lord every day, so I wonder why didn’t he tell me? Over my life, I have found most of the people who have told me such really want me to do what they want, however there are instances when I found out they really were speaking for God. So how do we tell? Or how do we tell what we hear is from God?

It seems to me from the scriptures there are three affirmations that we need to adhere to:

1. The written Word
2. The body of Christ

### 3. Their lives of those who speak

God's clearly revealed and written word is our scriptures. If we truly believe it is "God breathed" and inspired, then this is the first affirmation of a spoken word (2 Timothy 3.16,17). So when people espouse beliefs and practices in contrast to God's written word we should be suspicious.

There are some in Christianity who proof text to justify their hearing from God in light of this. Again this is not new to the church; this was obviously what Peter was dealing with when he wrote, *"Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction."* (2 Peter 3.15 &16)

This brings us to the Body of Christ. As you read through Paul's letters to churches, he clearly practiced that the Church as expressed in the local believers had the responsibility of confirming gifts. Gifts (and therefore the members who possessed these gifts) are to be used for the building up of the body and not for the building up of themselves (see 1 Corinthians 12.12-26). Does the body of Christ affirm what members are saying?

In 1 John, John proceeds to tell us that one way to test the saliency of a message that is purported to be from God is to see if the lives of those who speak such reflect Christ as Lord. Are they living Godly lives, which bring honor to him in all ways? If so, then I believe we should not be too quick to dismiss them.

These principles are practiced in my life through our Elders and my mentors. They are those who clearly know me, the Word and have godly lifestyles. I listen to each of them and my life has been radically impacted through them accordingly. I am involved in ministry in a totally different way as a result of God clearly speaking to me and through others to me.

I do not suggest that this quick treatment is sufficient to deal with this topic. It is simply a primer. But, my fear is that our movement has lost movement because what breaks the heart of God, no longer breaks our hearts. We know that his heart is broken from those who are far from him and hurting. If we would listen for God, I sincerely believe he would direct us to individuals and situations that need His grace. We are his ambassadors, we best hear from our Sovereign in a way that is clear and uncluttered.