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Is God Speaking Directly to You Today?

by Gardner Hall

Have you heard this type of language from disciples you know?

- “I took it as a sign that God wanted us to be here.”
- “I think that God was trying to tell me something by allowing this to happen.”
- “I felt a providential nudge to do it.”

Our evangelical friends have used this type of language for decades, and now it is exploding in popularity, not just among them but also among brethren we know! After all, we read their material and listen to their media. Postmodern thought with its emphasis on trusting feelings with a corresponding distrust of language and the written word has overwhelmed the religious world. The concept that God speaks directly to us through our feelings, hunches and events in our lives is “in,” but it is dangerous for several reasons:

1. Even during those rare intervals in history of direct revelation, God didn’t speak to millions of followers through their premonitions, leadings, and inner illumination, but rather precisely to a few prophets through words (Acts 11:14). On rare occasions he confirmed those words with signs (Gideon, Hezekiah, Zechariah), but the original message always involved language, words.
2. With our prejudices and inner biases, we have enough trouble being honest with God’s objective written word. Throw our “gut feelings” and other subjective impressions into the mix of what we feel to be God’s revelation and the waters become hopelessly muddled.
3. The lack of trust in the sufficiency of the written words of God’s inspired apostles and prophets has always been a prime mover behind apostasy. When some say longingly, “But don’t we need more than what we have in the scriptures?” they are frankly showing a lack of faith and a great disrespect for God’s chosen method of communicating with us.

Careful with “the language of Ashdod,” the jargon of those who look for God’s leading apart from inspired scripture! Scriptural principles are sufficient to reveal God’s will to us and to confirm our path before him (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). In inspired scripture we have the faith that was once for all time delivered to the saints (Jude 3). We don’t need more!

“The Devil’s Most Useful Tool”

By Kyle Campbell

It was once announced that the Devil was going out of business and would offer all his tools for sale to whoever would pay his price. On the night of the sale, they were all attractively displayed. Malice, hatred, lust, envy, and all the other implements of evil were spread out, each marked with its price. Apart from the rest lay a harmless looking wedge-shaped tool, extremely worn and higher in price than any of the others.

Someone asked the Devil what it was. “That is discouragement,” he replied. “Why do you have it priced so high?” “Because,” the Devil said, “It’s the most useful tool I own. With it, I can pry open and get inside a man’s conscience when I couldn’t get near him with any of the others. Once inside, I can use him in whatever way suits me best. It’s so worn

because I use it with nearly everyone. Very few people know that it belongs to me.”

The Devil’s price for discouragement was so high that it was never sold. He still owns it and uses it to this day. But here’s three people who teach us three ways of dealing with the struggles of discouragement.

First, from Moses we learn that we should tell God our feelings in prayer (Numbers 11:11-15). Moses poured out his feelings to God. God’s answer to Moses’ prayer was to give him 70 elders to assist him in managing the affairs of the camp. Moses was a great leader and a spiritual giant, but even he could do only so much.

Second, from Job we learn that when everything seems to be going wrong, we can remember that God never loses control, that God has reasons for what He allows, and that God can change circumstances when the right time comes (Job 1:12; 2:6; 42:10-17).

Third, from Elijah we learn that we often make despondency worse by dwelling on the negative and imagining that events in our lives are worse than they are. His repeated complaint to God seems to be all he was thinking about (1 Kings 19:10, 14). He forgot that life can seem worse than it really is. He said, “I only am left.” This dejected attitude has been called “The Elijah Complex.” He also forgot that good can be happening that he didn’t know about (1 Kings 19:18; cp. Psalm 18:21; Isaiah 38:3).

Satan does incredible damage to the hearts of Christians with discouragement. But the Bible is “true to life” and is as relevant to our modern problems as it was for people who lived long ago. This is one way God helps us through the Scriptures: by not only picturing the triumphant moments in lives of great men and women, but also how people of faith endure dark times of despondency.

The help God reserves for those going through discouraging times is for those who have turned to Him, not for those who have turned their backs against Him. Although becoming a Christian doesn’t mean you won’t have problems — it does mean God’s there to help you through life (Psalm 46:1), and save you when your life is finished (2 Timothy 1:12).

At this moment, if your life is on the upswing, then show compassion and help the Christians close to you who struggle (Romans 12:15; 1 Peter 3:8).