

PART 3: SECRET WEAPON

READ THIS OVERVIEW

NOW GOD HAS REVEALED THESE THINGS TO US BY THE SPIRIT, SINCE THE SPIRIT SEARCHES EVERYTHING, EVEN THE DEPTHS OF GOD. 11 FOR WHO KNOWS A PERSON'S THOUGHTS EXCEPT HIS SPIRIT WITHIN HIM? IN THE SAME WAY, NO ONE KNOWS THE THOUGHTS OF GOD EXCEPT THE SPIRIT OF GOD.12 NOW WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD, BUT THE SPIRIT WHO COMES FROM GOD, SO THAT WE MAY UNDERSTAND WHAT HAS BEEN FREELY GIVEN TO US BY GOD. 1 CORINTHIANS 2:10-12

In this passage, Paul is telling the church of Corinth that when they shared the mystery of the gospel with them, it did not come from their own wisdom and power but in the power of the Holy Spirit. He wanted them to make no mistake about where their power and wisdom came from. He knew they could do nothing on their own but only through their secret weapon – The Holy Spirit.

Paul says that God used His Holy Spirit to reveal these things to the apostles. That word “reveal” means “to take the lid off.” So what Paul is saying is that God used His spirit “to take the lid off” of His mysteries so that they could understand them. That’s what He did for the apostles when He took the lid off of the mysteries of God so they could write these words that we study today in our bibles, so that they could start the church, and so that they could begin to operate with different eyes and be forever changed by what they had seen. He took the lid off so they could see into the things of God, and He wants to do the same thing for us.

And that’s what the Holy Spirit is assigned to do. He’ll take the lid off so that we can see into the things of God, but oftentimes, we don’t know how to pay attention to what we are seeing in front of us. Friends, make no mistake, God wants to speak to us. In fact, I believe He is always speaking. Whether through His word, nature, conversations with other believers, prayer, or otherwise. He has truths He longs to reveal to His people, and He has given us the Holy Spirit, whose job is to help us see into those truths so that it can transform us just like it did the apostles.

And yet so many of us struggle to do just that. We struggle to slow down long enough, be attentive long enough, and withdraw from the world long enough to see what the Holy Spirit wants to show us. On top of that, I think many of us struggle to believe that He will speak to us anyway. So let me ask you a question. Do you expect the Holy Spirit to speak to you?

It's a question we all have to ask ourselves because if you are expecting someone to speak to you, what do you do? You listen for them. You direct your attention that way, and you wait. But that is hard for us because it requires faith, and we don't like that. But isn't that what our Christian faith is all about? I think a lot of us secretly want a faith that requires none. So we rationalize ourselves out of hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit because it is more comfortable than leaning into it. But what if we chose to live differently? To lean into the leading of the Holy Spirit and not play the cynic with it. I honestly believe it would change our lives. God has given us His Spirit so that the lid can be taken off and we can see into His mysteries. We just need to practice slowing down and paying attention long enough so that we can discern His leading.

So how do we actually discern that leading? Well, let's talk about some practical steps we can take this week!

PREPARE WITH SOLITUDE, SILENCE, AND PRAYER

5-10 MINS

To prepare our hearts for what the Holy Spirit wants to do in us during this time, we'll need to be intentional about 3 postures that we'll revisit each week throughout this series. Solitude, silence, and restful prayer. Let's unpack that really quick.

Henry Nouwen says, "Solitude is the furnace of transformation. Without solitude, we remain victims of our society and continue to be entangled in the illusions of the false self." So the idea here is that the spiritual life can't grow without normalizing "aloneness." So each week, set apart a time and a place, away from people and things, to be with the Holy Spirit and Him alone.

Next is silence as a posture. Nouwen says that silence completes and intensifies solitude. Why? Because we live in a busy, noisy world, under a non-stop assault of words. In order for our spiritual lives to emerge in the midst of the chaos, we need to normalize "listening." So each week, insert a 3-5 minute pause before you move to the next step, and normalize stillness in your solitude. "Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few." Ecclesiastes 5:2

Lastly, rest as a prayer posture. The literal translation of Paul's command to "pray always" is "come to rest". The Greek word behind this term carries the idea of someone resting in God amid a very intense daily struggle. So the prayer of rest, in the context of solitude and silence, is about bringing our heart's activity to a complete stop so it can simply receive whatever the Spirit wants to surface.

Here's a simple prayer that you can recite 2-3 times to tie all these together before you engage in this week's practice. Spirit of the living God, I am here before You, I am listening to You, and I am resting in You.

ENGAGE THE PRACTICE

15-20 MINS

Ok, so we've given you a posture of the heart, now we'll provide you with a practice to guide your discerning. Oftentimes we may think that we hear something from God but then become afraid to move forward with what we heard. At one point or another, all of us have asked questions like, what if I heard wrong? Or what if I make the wrong move? Welcome to the community!

Priscilla Shirer, a profound author and bible teacher, has a practice that she uses, and it has helped thousands of people! It's called the 5 M's of Hearing God's voice. This week we invite you to identify an area where you've been trying to hear God and get in a good amount of reps with this practice. Remember, it's not a one and done. It's a process.

5 M'S FOR DISCERNING GOD'S VOICE

1. Look for the Message of the Spirit.

This is the step where we begin to perceive or try to recognize what we feel like the Holy Spirit might be saying. It's helpful to keep a journal nearby and try to write down what we're sensing, even if it all doesn't make sense. Just get into a practice of writing down words or phrases.

2. Live in the Mode of Prayer.

Sometimes we feel a prompting from the Holy Spirit, but we dismiss it away or act too quickly. This step is a reminder to pray, pray, and pray. Keep bringing that thing before God, and keep listening for any more clarity or direction.

3. Search out a Model of Scripture.

What does the Bible say about it? Spend some time in the bible, exploring about a character that had to walk in faith like He may be asking you to do. Or studying scriptures to better understand God's heart towards the subject.

4. Seek out the Ministry of Eli.

In 1 Samuel 3, we learn the story of a little boy named Samuel who was lying down but kept hearing his name be called. He kept getting up to see if Eli (an older mentor in his life) was calling him, but he hadn't. After a few times, Eli told Samuel that it must be the LORD calling him and instructed him to go lay back down, and when he heard his name again to say, "Speak LORD for your servant is listening". We all need to have an Eli in our lives. Someone who has been walking with God longer than we have and discerning His voice longer than we have to get wisdom and discernment from them in our decision process.

5. Expect the Mercy of confirmation.

Simply put, ask the Holy Spirit to confirm His word. We don't believe God wants to hide His will from His children. And there is no shame in asking God to confirm what you believe He has told you. Ask Him to confirm and then look for and expect confirmation. It may come through a verse He leads you to, a conversation He guides you in, or just a life circumstance that comes your way.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

5 MINS

Wrap up your time by writing a prayer of discernment. In this type of prayer, we seek God and acknowledge our need for Him. "Teach me good discernment and knowledge, For I believe in Your commandments." Psalm 119:66. So what do you need to say to God about the process this week? What's on your heart? Is there frustration, hope, apathy, or inspiration regarding the direction you need? Lift up your prayer to God.