

Test of Confusion - Part 1

by David Wilkerson

David Wilkerson addresses the confusion in hearing God's voice and the importance of trusting in Him rather than our own understanding.

Duration: 32:13

Scripture: Genesis 18:12, Numbers 14:28-29, Deuteronomy 7:9, 1 Kings 18:36-37, Malachi 3:10, 1 Corinthians 2:9

Topics: "Addiction Recovery", "Divine Deliverance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a personal testimony of a man who was struggling with addiction to crack cocaine. The man had a vision of his own funeral, which confirmed his fear that death was imminent. Desperate for deliverance, he cried out to God for help. God answered his prayer by sending a young lady who recognized his need for change and shared her own desire to be free from her miserable lifestyle. They both found salvation and eventually got married. The sermon emphasizes the power of God to deliver and transform lives, even in the midst of overwhelming circumstances.

Transcript

It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing World Challenge, Post Office Box 260, Lindale, Texas, 75771 or by calling 903-963-8626. None of these messages are copyrighted, and you are welcome to make copies for free distribution to friends.

Father, I thank you for the unction. The anointing of the Holy Spirit that is ours by faith. Lord, you put something in my heart, and I bring it to this people tonight.

And I humble myself before you, and I acknowledge my need, Holy Spirit, for your endowment and your power. Lord, I ask you to open the ears and the understanding of all this people, and I pray that you touch me in a special way. Let the light of the word of God go forth.

Sanctify me that I will be a vessel honorable and clean and pure. Clean hands and a pure heart, blood sprinkled and ready to proclaim the word of God. I thank you, Jesus, for the truth.

Lord, we're not going to lean on our own understanding. We're going to turn to you in all of our ways. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Now, ever since I was a child, I've known what it is to hear the voice of the Lord. His voice led me out of the hills of Pennsylvania years ago to found Teen Challenge, and now it's a mission that's gone around the world. And that same voice of God led me around the world in crusades to multitudes of the lost.

That same voice that I heard brought me back to New York City and said, build a church in Times Square. God kept His word. That was all through the voice of God.

I've learned His voice. I've known His voice for years, since I was eight years old. But I also have known what it's like to become confused about His voice.

And many of you sitting here tonight, confused. I've known what it is to go so long, so many times, hearing clearly, the word came to pass, and I rested in it. But there have been times, even lately, that I would hear a voice and nothing would pan out.

It wouldn't come out. There were confusing voices that rose up in my heart, walking circumspectly before God, not living in sin, but a voice inside that sounded so sweet, a voice that was so clear, and yet it didn't happen. And I began to question.

In fact, I went to God in prayer not too many weeks ago, and I said, Lord, I wonder if I even recognize Your voice anymore. After preaching about it, after walking all these years, being so convinced that I was hearing and it was clear, everything You said, Lord, came to pass. And then I went into a test, a great test about the voice of God.

And so much so that I went to God in confusion, despair, and I had it out with Him. We had a confrontation in my secret closet. I said, God, I don't understand this.

All these years, You speak so clearly. Now, folks, I want you to know before I start, I'm not living in confusion. I know I have His anointing.

I'm walking in His Spirit. But there was a test. He tests us concerning His voice.

He tests us about all of His ways. I said, Lord, I was so sure of Your voice, but anymore, what's happening? I don't think I know it anymore. I don't think I know Your voice.

I knew He was with me. He never forsakes me. He said He'd never leave us nor forsake us.

I've never believed God would ever forsake me. Never believed that I was on my own. But those little voices.

Paul said there are many voices in the world and none of them were that significant. There's significance to all of them. There's a meaning to all of them.

The Holy Ghost graciously answered me. I asked Him clearly. I said, God, what's wrong? I think I even talked to Brother Phillips about it one time.

I said, Bob, sometimes I hear so many wonderful things, but I wonder if I even know His voice sometimes. Now, am I the only one like that sitting here tonight? A couple honest people saying amen. Here's what the Holy Ghost answered.

David, I do speak to you when you seek Me intimately and when you give Me quality time and wait, when you're convinced that you're ready to do My will. I've always spoken to you, but what you have done is allowed your own personal human understanding to take a voice. You are trying to reason things out.

You've walked with Me so long in trust and now in your 60s you're trying to figure it all out. You're trying to give human reasoning to everything and I tell you something and rather than you just relaxing in it and resting in it and believing it, you've got to figure it all out. And then you add all of these human understandings and this human understanding takes a voice and presents to be the voice of God.

Proverbs 3, 5, Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge the Lord and He will direct thy path. That means don't rely on it.

Don't trust in your own understanding. Listen, our own understanding is corrupt. I don't care if you've been born again.

I don't care that the blood's been applied to your heart. Our human understanding is corrupt. It's untrustworthy.

It's suspicious. It's full of fear and many times that human understanding rises up in such fear, such suspicion pretends to be the still small voice of the Holy Ghost and begins to lead us astray. Scripture says, God said, My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts. I want to share with you some of the dangers of leaning in your own understanding and allowing your understanding to surface as the voice of God. First of all, I believe that almost all confusion about hearing the voice of God comes from trusting in our own understanding, our own reasoning, looking at circumstances, our present circumstances and judging everything by those present circumstances.

You've heard me tell of that first year that God sent me to New York City and this was burning in my heart and God said, Raise up a church. We had very little money, hardly any money at all and I said, Well, God, where do we get a theater? Where do we get any place? And we had been meeting in Town Hall, if you recall. Some of you remember that.

And I found out that the Biltmore Theater was for sale on 47th Street between 8th and Broadway and I went over and looked at it. Now, remember God had told us that he was going to give us a theater that would take our breath away and it didn't take my breath away. It was run down.

Seat 750. But you see, God said, I'm going to give you a theater that will take your breath away. But then my human reasoning came in and I remember praying over here at the hotel right next door here.

That's where we were staying and about one o'clock in the morning I'm praying and I'm thinking, Biltmore, Biltmore, Biltmore. It's two and a half million. I don't have any money.

If we're going to have a miracle, that's a big miracle. Two and a half million dollars. That's a big miracle.

We don't have any people. 750, that's a lot of people as far as I'm concerned. And a little boy said, That's God.

The Biltmore Theater is all yours. Go claim it. I get up one o'clock in the morning.

I'm standing out there like a fool in front of the Biltmore. And I hear a voice. Claim it.

And I'll fill it. 750 people. What a miracle.

Two and a half million dollars. What a miracle. How much more do you want? I said, That's enough, Lord.

750 people. Two and a half million dollars. We're on Broadway.

We went on Broadway. That's way over here almost near 8th Avenue. But you see what had happened.

God had said, I'm going to give you a theater that will take your breath away. And this is that breathtaking theater by the way. I don't know how many days and nights I walked back and forth in front of that Biltmore claiming it.

And that little nagging voice said, This is God's sweet, quiet, lovely, angelic voice. I'm giving you the Biltmore. Well, God didn't give us the Biltmore.

And then I said, Lord, where did that voice come from? This urging voice. Look what I'm doing for you. It was human reasoning.

And human reasoning, human understanding, always limits God. Always limits God. So I thank God that I'm not trusting in my own understanding because this is what He gave us.

This was God's plan all along. I didn't have the faith to believe it. There's so much confusion in the church today concerning the voice of God.

Everywhere you go, I hear, The Lord told me. You ever hear that? The Lord told me. I've had people come up and shoo me out and say, The Lord told me.

Very little of it has come from God at all. You know, I'm astounded by Christians who believe every voice they hear is God. You know what they do? They're meditators.

They don't want to pay the price of intimacy with Jesus Christ. They don't want to spend the time, the hours along with Him getting to know Him. He said, My sheep know Me, and that's why they know My voice, according to the Scripture.

You know His voice by knowing Him intimately, and they don't want to pay that price. They don't want to spend those hours siding with God with quality time and getting rid of all of their own ambitions and emptying their spirits of self. And they sit there and they meditate and say, God, I've got to have an absinthe.

I need it now. And so they meditate and they put their mind in neutral and become passive. And a passive mind is a fertile ground for the enemy to come in with flesh, sin and the devil, and whisper anything.

And we have people running around believing everything they hear is the voice of God. They don't testify the Word of God. They're not siding with God.

They just, whatever pops in their head, that's God. Macaroni for dinner, that's God. The human understanding comes as an angel of light.

It speaks clearly. It speaks fluently. But it's flesh.

You know, in 2 Kings 7, the Word of the Lord came to Elisha. Now remember, Samaria was famine stricken. There was no bread.

There was no grain. There was no water. Mothers were becoming cannibals.

They had just slain two babies. Remember, the mother said, we ate ours and she said we could eat hers. And now that we ate mine, she won't share her baby and I want to eat half her baby.

And everything that the prophet had prophesied had come to pass. And they were in total famine. Prophet Elijah stands up before the king and all the people and says, tomorrow at this time, well I'll read it, tomorrow about this time a measure of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel here in the gate of Samaria.

Now that was the voice of God. That was the Word of God. But the Bible says very clearly that the royal officer who was the keeper of the gate could believe it.

What God said to Elijah was so incredible. He said, now behold, and he's mocking, if the Lord should make windows in heaven, maybe such a thing could be. In other words, what God is showing you is so impossible, I can't believe it.

He said, the only way your prophecy can be fulfilled is that God really opens up the heavens and rains grain and barley and wheat on us. How else could this happen? Elijah said, you'll know tomorrow when they trample you to death. Now this is exactly the point I'm trying to make.

God speaks to us and often what He tells us is so wonderful, it's so incredible, so unbelievable, so life-changing, we can't take it all in. And it's simply, rather than just trusting what He said and going about your business and waiting His time and letting Him do it, we say, how can it be? That's too miraculous. It's humanly impossible.

The human understanding, human reasoning rises up and takes a voice and limits God and it cries out in the soul. It's impossible. Couldn't have been God who spoke to you.

Just look at your present circumstances. There's not a single evidence of that happening. Now folks, we find it very easy to believe all of the woes and judgments in this book.

Be sure your sin will find you out. You believe that. You believe that if I regard it equally in my heart, the Lord won't hear me.

You believe all of the Scriptures about judgment and wrath, and we should. But then when God comes to you and tells you something so marvelous, it just sweeps you away. He tells you something about your life, about your future.

And folks, you may not believe it, but God loves to surprise His children. He loves to make promises. He loves to turn things out for good to His glory.

He loves to bless His children who walk righteously before Him. Some of us have such a small God. We have created this tiny little God, and when God speaks, it's so incredible.

I know God said something to some of you that are sitting here right now. God spoke to you. I don't know when He did.

You were in prayer and the Lord spoke to your heart and it was glorious how He was going to use you perhaps, things He was going to do, doors He was going to open. And here you sit now, and you really don't believe what He said, because there's no evidence of it happening. It seems so impossible.

And then human reasoning rises up inside and takes over and tries to figure out how can God do it? And we begin to limit. We build parameters and we hedge God in on all sides. And I am here to tell you that God has spoken to my heart that some of you have got to come back to believing what God told you and not lose that voice of God, not lose that thing that He said to you and spoke life into your heart.

God's bigger than the promise He made you. God's more able than anything you've ever heard yet. The flesh always rises up.

I'll tell you what, I believe God's in the business of opening the windows of heaven, by the way. I believe He opens the windows of heaven. Prove me herewith.

See if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and I'll pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. How many have had blessings that you can't even contain yet? What you got was a little taste. He said, listen, if you had the windows of heaven opened on you, He said, I'm going to open the windows of heaven and I'm going to pour you out a blessing you can't even hold it.

Who am I preaching to tonight? Where are you? I'm telling you, God wants to open the windows of heaven for you and pour you out a blessing that there be no room to contain it. God told the elderly Sarah, you're going to be a mother. And she looks at her wrinkled 100-year-old body and her dead womb, she considers and she laughs.

You know why she's laughing? She's looking at Abraham. She said, he's been dead for years. I'm going to be the mother of nations? Now, you laugh at that, but how many times have you, in your spirit, laughed at things God told you? God made you a promise that seems almost impossible.

It's Sarah here and you're going to be a mother and you're going to give birth to a son and that son will be the forerunner of many, many nations. She laughed. Now, God didn't hold it back because she laughed.

And sometimes what God tells you seems laughable to you. But folks, I'm really convinced more and more that when God really speaks to you, it has to do with glory. It has to be with His greatness.

And I wish we could jettison and put aside this small concept of God and see that He does speak great and mighty things to our hearts. Folks, it was an impossible dream that God would raise up a church here in Times Square, that He would bring so many hundreds and hundreds of people together from all backgrounds and all ethnic groups and put us all one together and raise up a testimony to the world of what Jesus can do right in the seat of Babylon, right in the devil's top seat. Folks, if I had written out a scenario, all the things that we have seen God do already and there were only promises back there, I wouldn't have believed a third of it.

And folks, the best part is the half hadn't been told yet. God's been promising us we're going to see and hear things we've never seen or heard before of His glory. We're actually going to see this kind of glory before it's all over.

The house will be literally filled with His presence. All the promises I get from God have to do with Himself and His glory. Hallelujah.

Secondly, leaning on our own understanding is the cause of misjudging other Christians. I want to talk about misjudging. Paul said, We are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth.

It's according to truth. God judges by the heart, by the motive, but man judges by what he sees. There's a lot of misjudging of Christians in the church of Jesus Christ today and it's very damaging, it's hurtful, and it's totally unnecessary.

And I've been as guilty as anybody else. I've been terribly guilty of misjudging other children of God. I remember a few years ago, a young lady coming to my office, coming to her office for... I didn't know at the time what she wanted, but when she came into the office, she had dark, foreboding eyes, penetrating dark, and sadness on her face.

My first impression is, Uh-oh, there's a lesbian sitting across from me. Or she's into the occult, because you can't get that look. I've seen that book and I know that look.

She's a lesbian. She's into the occult. She's a witch, because those dark eyes are looking at me.

And I'm sitting there, I'm judging her. I'm saying I'm going to get her out of here as fast as I can. I'll say a little prayer, read a scripture, and out the door.

I don't feel like talking to a lesbian today. And I sure don't want to talk to a witch within five minutes. I was crying inside, because I had been reading her outward appearance.

Come to find out that that look in her eyes had to do with 25 years of suffering, incredible suffering. Here's a woman that was so married to Christ. Here was a woman who knew nothing of sensuality.

It just blew me away. And I felt so sad, I felt so hurt for myself that I would have so misjudged. It's like another sister in this church.

And I would see her on the streets, she had sunglasses on all the time. I said, oh boy, a cool cat, she's trying to be cool. Everywhere I went she got these glasses on.

And I went up one day and said, what's the glasses about? Because I'm thinking, cool. She said, Pastor, I'm sorry if they offend you. I don't like to wear them.

It's a doctor's order. I have a condition that dust and sunlight bothers my eyes. I said, oh boy, there I go again, judging by outward appearance.

Come on, you've been doing it, you do it every day just like I do it. Like the girl said, he's been staring at me every time I come to church. He's been staring at me three weeks now.

He looked a hole in me. The man was blind. Last week I had a young man sit in my office, tell me an incredible story of how God delivered him from crack addiction.

His business was failing because he was so wrapped up in crack, spending hundreds of dollars. Every time he could get money, he'd spend it on crack. He stayed in his room.

And after a while, he began to see visions, satanic occult visions. And he saw occult symbols being burned into the wall of his bedroom. And there's a picture of a man and a dog and the man's skin would melt off his face and become a skeleton.

And he'd see other faces, and his parents and others, and their skin would just come off their bodies and they'd be standing there as skeletons. He would go into the next room and fall on his face and cry out to God. There's a young lady in this church that had been witnessing to him, calling him up and praying for him, ministering to him through prayer and counseling.

It just went from bad to worse. One day, it just overcame him because he was in a dream and his father and his mother and his relatives were looking down at him and he realized in this dream he's dead. He's gone.

And he realized that God was telling him death was at the door. And shortly after that, the young lady who's here tonight called him and said, I had a word from the Lord that you have about two weeks to live. And confirmed this fear that he had, this vision of being at his own funeral.

But he couldn't get free of crack. Went into the room, the living room area, and fell on his face and piled to the floor and said, God, I can't keep from this crack. It's overwhelming me.

It's become my God. Lord, if you're real, you've got to reveal yourself to me. If what she says is true, you've got to show me.

God, are you there? This is overpowering me. And suddenly the room filled with light. He said for a minute or two, the whole room was just flooded with light and he knew it was supernatural.

And God began to speak to his heart. And when the light left, he knew he had to go back to that bedroom and he thought, I don't want to see those occult symbols being burnt into my walls anymore. And he decided to get some pictures from this room and go over and hang them where those occult symbols were being burnt in the wall.

And he went to his box and he got some nails and a hammer. He put the hammer down and took two nails. And one fell in this hand and one here.

There are two nails and he's there with those two nails in his hands. And Jesus spoke to him and said, My nail-scarred hands give you power over your drugs. Trust me, you can be free.

No more desire. His desire for a crack was taken immediately, totally immediately from him. But then he just about lost me, what he said next.

In fact, he came to this church two years ago and Danny and I prayed for him backstage and the Lord strengthened him mightily. He almost lost me. Next thing he said, You know, and this is a number of months ago, he said, I was going down the street and I was passing a topless bar and something in me urged me to go into that topless bar.

And I'm thinking to myself, Oh boy, he's losing me now. He's losing me now. And he said, Dave, I sat in that topless bar thinking, God, this can't be you.

Why am I here? He was not ogling. He was not lusting. He was just sitting there saying, God, why this urge to go in here? And a young performer came, a young lady sat beside him and said, You look different.

Now, words to this effect, I don't remember it clearly. I don't remember it in every detail, but this young lady recognized him as being something different. They struck up a conversation and were able to meet after

outside and take a walk.

And he told her about his deliverance, told her about what Jesus had done for him, setting him free from cracks. And she said, Well, I am miserable in what I'm doing. I was penniless.

This is the only thing I could get. And I don't belong here. I don't belong in this crowd.

And there was something in her heart reaching out to God. And, of course, the story is that she got saved. I think they're both here tonight.

And they got married. And the whole time he's talking, I'm sitting there saying, Oh, no. How can that be? And I'm judging it.

I'm judging it from all the scriptures that I have learned and preached and everything. And then another scripture came to me about the prophet Hosea. And the Lord said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of harlotry.

Go love a woman beloved of her friend, but an adulteress. Go pick a harlot out and marry her. Well, there went my whole judgment.

I was ready to say, I don't believe it. God said, My ways are above your ways and my thoughts are above your thoughts. I'm about to give up trying to figure God out anymore.

You see, I don't want to stand before the judgment seat of Christ and see some people stand there and their works are not burning and they're being tried and they're coming out as gold before Jesus and He's embracing them. And I'm backing off and say, Uh-oh. That's the person I said, I can't stand.

There's something about their spirit I don't like. It doesn't witness with me. And I've been judging and I've been using so-called discernment.

Now, God gives certain people discernment. Those who are intimate with Jesus come out of that intimacy with a keen sense of truth, Holy Ghost, discernment. And they can tell when they're near people where there's evil present.

It's there. It registers in their spiritual mind. But what God made clear to me, to my own spirit, and I want you to hear it, we can judge righteous judgment.

We have to do that. We stand by the word of the living God. Broadcast to other people.

These are things you ponder in your own heart. Because if you tell other people or you broadcast it, you're more guilty than the person you're discerning. And I'll tell you, I have a sense that a lot of people that I backed away from and said, My spirit doesn't witness.

You see, my human understanding, I see something in their appearance that I don't like. I'll tell you what, 15 years ago, if you put me with a bunch of long-haired Christians, I'd have discerned them all as going to hell. But you see, I don't want to stand before the judgment seat of Christ and see people that Jesus saw as pure and holy, and I judged by outward appearance.

And I really did them damage. I don't want that. I hope that's registering.

Jesus was completely misjudged by the scribes and Pharisees. They called him a wine guzzler, a party lover, who was in league with the devil. Now, how can you misjudge any bigger than that? And yet, that's the way we are.

Jesus said, Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. Romans 14.10. But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you reduce your brother to nothing? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, so that every one of us shall give account of himself to God. We will give an account of ourselves.

I don't have to give an account for you or anybody else. I give an account for myself. And folks, that's a big enough job.

You've got a big enough job. Quit worrying about everybody else. Brother Bob, I've heard it said...

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