

# Recognizing the Voice of God

by Henry Blackaby

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*Recognizing and responding to the voice of God is essential for experiencing eternal life and a deep and personal relationship with Him.*

**Duration:** 1:02:05

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 30:11, Psalm 23:1-3, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 30:21, Matthew 18:12-14, Luke 15:4-7, John 10:3-4

**Topics:** "Voice Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the importance of recognizing the voice of God. He starts by referencing John 10:3-4, where Jesus describes himself as the shepherd and his followers as the sheep who know his voice. The speaker emphasizes the intimate familiarity that the sheep have with the shepherd and how they follow him wherever he goes. He then shares a story about a lost sheep and how the shepherd diligently searches for it, demonstrating the love and care of God for his wandering children. The speaker concludes by encouraging pastors, Sunday school teachers, deacons, and leaders to help those who have wandered away from God and may be hesitant to return due to fear of judgment.

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## Transcript

You may have heard the expression, surprised by joy. Well, I had that experience today. I always anticipate those very special moments, especially when Jesus said, how you receive the one I send you, you are receiving me, and how you receive me, you're receiving my father who sent me.

And you've heard me say that experiencing God has been translated into a number of different languages. Well, I met a dear brother from Kenya here. And I then asked him, I said, have you been able to get a hold of my experiencing God in Swahili? And he looked at me and said, I was the one that translated it into Swahili.

Now, where is that brother? Somewhere in here. A very ordinary person with extraordinary assignment from the Lord. I never expected that I would ever meet the one who translated experiencing God into Swahili.

But he's here. And so, I have been surprised by joy. And of course, I had an opportunity to have my picture taken with him.

And I hope I get a copy of it and I'll put it carefully. But isn't that a joyful moment? It has been certainly for me and for my wife. Here you are either actively counseling others, or in the process, or you're teamed with others who are counseling.

And that expression by Jesus is very, very crucial. How you receive the one I send you. You are receiving me, and you're receiving my Father who sent me.

And when you are brought face to face with people in the midst of their trauma and their sorrow, I hope that you will see it as God bringing to your life an individual in whose life he's working. And somehow he's taking that moment to trust you with the activity of the Father in another person's life. Sometimes I have the impression that some pastors, when they come to a situation, they say, now that I've come, God has come.

Well, long before you got there, God was there. And God was working. And that's true with every life that you may have the opportunity to counsel with.

Long before you began a counseling relationship, God was at work in their life. And your first assignment is to understand what God has been doing before you came into their life. And you can ask the right questions to get that.

I've done a lot of marriage counseling. And the question that I nearly always ask myself as I'm sitting with a couple or one of them is, what truth is it about God that they do not know that if they did know, they'd not be in the problem they're in? And so I know that truth can set them free. So if they're in any form of bondage, there must be some truth that they do not know or understand that if they did, they would be in freedom in their marriage.

Also, there's a traumatic time when there's death in the family, whether the first death in California as a pastor that I confronted was a three-month-old child. And that was the only child for this couple and the only grandchild of the parents. And they were hurting.

As a matter of fact, in the first five years of pastoring in California, I conducted over 300 funerals. And they were some of the saddest moments. And I've even had some who, in the trauma of the moment, jumped into the grave and tried to relieve the pain and the sorrow of their loss.

And so I found myself counseling or becoming a friend in the time of death. I've often thought about Jesus and Lazarus and the moments when he comforted. And you and I can bring to those experiencing sorrow great comfort.

And the scripture talks about that, that you can comfort those when you have been comforted. And so I admire your heart that is open to make a difference in the life of other people. I have noticed that one of the things that some seem to struggle with is the role of Satan in all of this.

I mentioned last night the scripture, greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. Or Jesus saying, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me, so I want you to go and I'll go with you. Was Jesus able to handle the enemy? Will he be able to handle the enemy when he lives out his life in you? I have never feared the enemy.

I'm serious. Though I face many, many serious moments, I have never feared the enemy. For I have developed an intimate relationship with the Lord.

And I cannot imagine someone standing in the presence of Almighty God and fearing the enemy. Can you, Mark? No, when you stand in the presence of Almighty God, everything else finds its place. And so many scriptures can come to mind.

And so if the enemy sees that you're afraid of him, he'll work you over. And he'll run you around the block. But if you stand firm in your relationship to the living Lord, the one who has all authority over everything, then he will flee.

What did James say? And if you remember what he says about the enemy? Resist the devil and he'll just stick around for a little while. Is that what it says? No, resist the devil and he will flee from you. And draw near unto God and he will draw near unto you.

I guess my heart is often grieved when I know the truth that's in God's word and watching God's people either ignore it or not develop a relationship with God where they can walk in absolute victory. You remember Paul when he said, Thanks be unto God who always causes us to triumph in Christ. Or another way of putting it, Thanks be unto God who always gives us the victory in Christ.

How many moments is included in always? You know, those words are not minor words. They're very, very powerful words. And so I take those truths that God has revealed and seek to live them out in my life.

And I have to ask the Holy Spirit to be my guide and to enable me both to understand what God is saying and then to have the power to live out the truth of God or to put my life in a relationship to God where I can experience the victory. I want to talk to you for these moments. And by the way, I've been given to 2.30 to quit.

Not really, my plane leaves at 2 something, 2.30. But it has been a joy to be with you. And have you looked around to see how many are here on a Saturday morning? Not many get up and go to a conference like this on a Saturday morning. And this says a lot about the conference itself, about its leaders, even though at least one of them wants me to have a clear mind.

You know, there are some people that create the opportunity to develop your prayer life. That's right, his spiritual gift is creating an opportunity for other people's prayer life. But I want to take a moment and talk to you about recognizing the voice of God.

And you'll notice in your notebook all the outline that I put there. I don't know whether I was supposed to or not, but I notice all the others faithfully did. And I want to leave it blank so that the Lord can guide me.

Sometimes an outline creates the occasion for you to follow it. My wife constantly has the occasion to say, now Henry, just stay on the topic. And she thinks there are times I chase rabbits.

And I said, well, some of those rabbits look more like kangaroos. Oh, me. But in this matter of hearing and recognizing the voice of God, there are some wonderful scriptures that can help us.

And the first of these, of course, will be in John chapter 10. So knowing you have your Bible with you, turn to John 10. And there are some phrases here, some truth expressed by Jesus about the disciples' relationship to their Lord.

And the first verse from this chapter is verse 4. Well, look at verse 3. By him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice. And he calls his sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his

own sheep, he goes before them.

And the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. The sheep have an intimate familiarity with the shepherd. And the sheep listen carefully to the voice of the shepherd.

And wherever the shepherd goes, there goes the sheep. But he goes before them. Aren't you grateful that your Lord goes before you? But you need to recognize his voice.

Now I want you to take that very, very seriously. And I'll mention how God has provided for us to know his voice. But in this chapter, he's describing his role as the shepherd of the sheep.

Of course, another passage, but we'll continue in this one, is Psalm 23. The Lord is my shepherd. I will never want any good thing.

He leads me beside still waters. He leads me in green pastures. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

And even though I'm walking through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. For you are with me, and your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Isn't it interesting how the scripture likens your life and mine to a sheep? I don't want to use the term one of the dumbest animals, but they are so utterly dependent, aren't they? They are in many ways so helpless.

And they desperately need the shepherd. And I have been aware that the shepherd in the east and the shepherd in the west function very differently with the sheep. And this helped me greatly as a pastor.

The shepherd in the east leads and guides the sheep. The shepherd in the west drives the sheep. Is there a difference? Which shepherd would you like to have? If you're a pastor, don't drive the sheep.

Lead them. And if they have become familiar with your voice, and the intimacy of having heard you guide them before, and knowing that whenever you speak as the shepherd, you're leading them into the finest experiences of life. If their sheep are going through a tough time, and they hear your voice, you have a track record with them, that they're always safe when they hear you and follow you.

You remember one of those descriptions in the scripture, which described a sheep that has gone astray. What does the Bible say the shepherd does, the good shepherd? He pens up the ninety and nine, and then at the risk of his own life and the tearing of his clothes, he goes out until he finds it. And it may be over a cliff and cannot make its way back.

All it can do is just bleat a little. And the shepherd, who knows them by name and knows their little call, keeps looking until he hears that little bleating of a helpless sheep. And with his rod, he reaches down and pulls that little sheep out, and puts it on his shoulders, and brings it back home.

And one of the few times in the Bible where it mentions that all heaven breaks out into rejoicing over one of his own that comes home. I've taken that one very seriously as a pastor. Are there times when one of your sheep wanders away, gets out there and does not know how to come back, and quite often if they've gotten into sin, they certainly do not know how they will be received.

And that testimony we have had last night was very appropriate, wasn't it? When I go into deep sin, I wonder how I'll be received by the church family. If you're a pastor or you're a Sunday school teacher or a deacon or a leader, you can help prepare your church to receive those who have been lost and then come

home for the first time. It is a traumatic moment, but I always rejoice knowing that if I were to rescue one who has gone astray and bring them back home into the fold with the other sheep, all heaven breaks out into incredible rejoicing over one of God's own who comes home.

And so you could not have a greater shepherd's heart than when you realize one who used to be a part of the flock is not there anymore and your heart is grieved that you don't see them anymore and you make a commitment in your shepherd's heart that you will seek after them until you find them and you'll sit with them, put your arm around them, weep with them, and then bring them back home. You are more like the Savior when you do that. And they need to hear the kind and quality of your voice when you find them.

You don't criticize them. You don't try to make them feel guilty that they have wandered. You put your arm around them and carry them back home.

So here you have Jesus saying that he knows the sheep. He goes before them. The sheep follow him because they know his voice.

But then go down to verse 27 through 30. My sheep hear my voice. So, of course, the most significant question to ask is are you clearly, unmistakably hearing the voice of God? Would you know how to identify his voice when he was speaking to you? Let's read on.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. What is the purpose of hearing the voice of the shepherd? To follow him. Not just to have a good testimony that you heard the voice of God.

But everyone knows that you've heard the voice of God because you're following him. And your life is not the same. And I give to them eternal life.

Let me stop there and digress a moment. When you hear him say, I give to them eternal life, what comes to your mind? Going to heaven when you die? No, that's a byproduct of eternal life, but that's not eternal life. Yeah, where's the verse that says that? John 17 3. Jesus said, Father, this is eternal life.

That they may know you, the only true God, and your son whom you sent. Now what's the most important word in that definition? To know. It's not just head knowledge.

One thing about the Greek language, it's very precise. Very precise. And the word used here is the word to experientially come to experience deeply and personally.

It's not just a head knowledge. It is an experiential knowledge. You know by experiencing him.

And so eternal life is a very deep and personal and intimate relationship with God and with his son. That's what eternal life is. So here he says, my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

And I give them eternal life, and they shall sometimes perish. Is that what it says? You know some people really struggle with that radical security in our salvation. They struggle with it.

I don't know where they get their problem from. But this one says, I give to them eternal life, and they shall never perish. Neither shall anyone snatch them out of my hand.

My father who is greater, my father who has given them to me, is greater than all. And no one is able to snatch them out of my father's hand. I and my father are one.

Is that not pretty plain? Don't try to explain it away and say, well sometimes I might be able to snatch myself out of my father's hand. He said no one. That includes you.

Once he gives you eternal life, you are secure in his hand. And it's not that now you hold on to him. It's that now he holds on to you.

And that is a total difference. And aren't you grateful that when he speaks and the sheep hear his voice, and they know that voice and they follow him, and in following him who is their life, they will never perish. And God's eternal purpose is to bond you to his son.

And his son has been given the responsibility of keeping you eternally safe. And so that's God's strategy for your eternal salvation. He gives you to his son.

Now, if he gives you into a union with his son, and probably the apostle Paul's favorite expression of his salvation is the phrase, in Christ, which means in union with Christ. And you will never perish when you are in union with him. But is it not critically important after the father places you in union with his son that you hear his voice? You know, to be eternally secure is only the beginning.

Eternal life, then, is a way of life 24-7. Where the one who now has you in his hand is going to dispense into your life everything that is at God's disposal. In Ephesians 1, Paul says that we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm.

Now, I don't know about you. I don't want to miss out on any of it. I don't want to have a relationship to my living Lord and then miss what he's purposing to do, where he's purposing to guide me.

Many of you have so very graciously said, I thank you for coming. Well, I feel that God gave me the thrill and the opportunity to come and meet you, to be here, to hear what God's doing in this part of his kingdom. It was a gift of God.

If I was not a Christian, would I be standing here? You know why I'm standing here? God linked me with his son. And this is part of the gift that God has granted to me. And would I be able to hear this testimony from this dear brother from Kenya? I don't know about you, but I never tire of experiencing the gifts of God's grace and love that has come to me when he put me in a relationship with his son.

But I need to hear his voice. I need to know that it's him. And I need to then immediately follow him completely.

The joy of the voice of God is that when you hear him speak, you respond immediately. Don't tell God, well, I'll think about it. And maybe by the end of next week, I'll come to a conclusion as to whether I want to follow what you're saying or not.

I have made it a habit in my life, the moment I know that God is speaking, that I respond immediately. And as totally as I know how. And it is constantly bringing me into the fullness of joy.

Did not Jesus say to the Father, I want them to experience the fullness of my joy? Well, that's your heritage. Well, there's another passage of scripture that I think would be helpful. And that is from Deuteronomy chapter 30.

And you may have heard me say before that I have people come to me, and you will too, who will say, I really want to begin to study the scripture. But I don't know where to begin. Where should I begin? And

most of the time, I hear leaders say, well, begin in the gospel of John.

My response when people say, I don't know where to begin, is to say, why don't you begin with the two books that Jesus quoted most? Would the two books that Jesus quoted most be a good place to begin if you're going to study? And then do it, by the way. And I'm amazed that many people don't know what a center reference Bible is. You see this center reference down here? Those are cross references.

Matter of fact, a center reference Bible is a chain reference Bible. So that when you come to a verse, and in that verse, there's a word. And by that word, there's a little letter.

We'll look in the margin at that verse and that letter, and it'll refer you to other verses in the Bible. Matter of fact, quite often, it'll refer you to an Old Testament passage. And when you go there, you get the same truth.

And then that one will start a chain study all the way through the Bible. So a center reference Bible is really a chain reference Bible. And if you're serious about your study of the Word of God, you'll want to trace a truth or a word or a phrase all the way through the Bible.

And by the time you've gone through the Bible, you're overwhelmed at the incredible truth of God. Well, Deuteronomy is a book that'll do that. Since Jesus quoted a lot from Deuteronomy, when you're reading the verses in Deuteronomy, you'll see a cross reference to the Gospels.

You know what would be helpful? For you to check and see how many times Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy. But I want to read with you from Deuteronomy chapter 30, beginning at verse 11. This commandment, I'll give you a chance to look for it.

This commandment, does your Bible say which I suggest? God never gives suggestions. He gives commands. And when God gives a commandment, you ought to pay intimate attention to what He's commanding.

It is your life, and you'll see that in this passage here. He says, this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it afar off. It's not in heaven that you should say, who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it.

Nor is it in Atlanta, no, nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it. But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it. See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil.

In that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments. That you may live and multiply. And the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.

But, if your heart turns away, so that you do not hear. If you are not hearing the voice of God, your heart has shifted. Your problem is not hearing, your problem is your heart.

And so He says, if your heart turns away, and you do not hear. And this is my expanded version. And if you are not hearing the voice of God, you are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them.

I announce to you today, that you shall surely perish. Now if you look at each of those phrases, what he is saying is, if a child of God is not hearing the voice of God, you are in the process of perishing. Now I don't

think he is entirely meaning your eternal salvation.

I think he is just saying, the wages of sin is death. You will find that your marriage seems to perish. Your relationship to your children seems to perish.

Your co-workers in the workplace. Your life in the life of the church. If you are not hearing from God, it is your very life.

Now we can say, well I want to hear from God, but we don't connect it like we need to. It is your very life to hear from God. One word from God, and it directs you in the way that you should go.

You remember that passage in 1 Kings, when God was talking to Elijah. And he put him up in a cleft of a rock, and it says very clearly, from 1 Kings 19. I might, if I got it marked here.

He says, chapter 19, verse 11. He said, Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord. And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountain, and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord.

But the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind, an earthquake. But the Lord was not in the earthquake.

After the earthquake, a fire. But the Lord was not in the fire. And after that, after the fire, a still, small voice.

And then Elijah received a clear word. You're to go and anoint a king, and you're to go and anoint Elisha, who shall take your place. And he did.

And Elijah was taken up into heaven in a chariot of fire, but he had already anointed Elisha. And Elisha did incredible miracles when he took his place. But that direction for Elijah came in a still, small voice.

Have you taken that one seriously for your own life? Do you want a huge cataclysmic moment when God shouts at you or speaks to you? And somehow in your mind it's not exciting enough to have a still, small voice. You've got to have something much more dramatic than that. And there are believers who feel that if the God of the universe speaks to me, it'll be a dramatic moment.

But it may be in a still, small voice. So, in this passage, he says, I command you to love the Lord your God, to walk in his ways, to keep his commandments, his statutes and judgments, that you may live and multiply. And the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you go in to possess.

But if your heart departs so that you do not hear, and you're drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely perish. You shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over this Jordan to go in and possess it. I call heaven and earth as witness today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing.

Therefore, choose life, that both you and your descendants may live, that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey his voice, and that you may cling to him, for he is your life and the length of your days, and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them. Do you notice how crucial it is to hear when God is speaking? For he is your life. One word from God can direct you toward an activity, toward your children.

It can guide you. One word from God can help you to know how to make that crucial decision. But you have to know when God is speaking.

And let me just add that as I look into the scriptures, God has several means by which he speaks to us. First of all, God has chosen to speak through the Holy Spirit. He is the one that God has assigned to make sure you don't miss his voice or misunderstand what he's saying.

And I read that scripture, which I think it would be helpful to read again, from John chapter 16, where Jesus makes this statement, John 16, 12, and 13. I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when he, the spirit of truth, has come, he will guide you into all truth.

For he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears, he will speak. And he will tell you things to come, and he will glorify me, for he will take of what is mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are mine.

Therefore I said that he will take of mine and declare it to you. The Holy Spirit is God's assigned messenger to make sure you do not miss what God has in mind. Now, you know that the scripture says, The sword, Hebrews 4, the sword which the spirit wields is the word of God.

And so you can hear the voice of God as the spirit of God uses the word of God to bring you dead center into the will of God. So does that mean that it is important that you spend time in God's word? Now take a spiritual inventory. How much time every day are you spending in God's word? Do you do just a little devotional time? Don't do that.

I mean, let me put it another way. Do that, but don't just do that. Don't sort of say to God, well I spent at least ten minutes today in your word.

And God was saying, what did I say to you? Well, I didn't expect you to say anything. I just spent time in your word. But know that God has assigned the Holy Spirit to use the word of God like a sword.

And he can bring a scripture alive to you. And you've heard it said and you said it. You know, I've read this passage many, many times.

But it has never come as clear as it has today. What's happening? You stop and say, well, I'm getting smarter. Or do you say, my ignorance is being blessed by God's spirit who is taking the passage that I've read many times.

But now the spirit of God knows there's a truth here that's in the heart of God toward my life that he doesn't want me to miss. And so suddenly that passage of scripture comes alive and you sit there and you wait there. And you meditate and you study.

If a scripture comes deeply clear to you that had not before, please understand that is an encounter with Almighty God. The spirit of God has just been doing a work in you to bring you into the center of the will of God. So don't just say, well, that's amazing that I, well, I need to use a commentary.

No, no, no, no, no. You know who the best commentary is? The Holy Spirit. He can bring all the scriptures together and impact you with what's on the heart of God.

But please understand, when the spirit of God uses the word of God to bring you into the will of God, you're dead center hearing the voice of God. Now, second, he can use your time of prayer. And you know

Romans 8, 26 and following.

And there's where you meditate as well. He says, the one great weakness we have is that we don't know what to pray as we ought. In other words, we don't know how to express the mind and heart of God when we pray.

We don't even know what's in the mind of God. So how can we pray accurately? How can we plead with God when we do not know what to say? Have you found yourself at moments not knowing what to pray? And it disturbs you, and rightly so. But at that moment, the spirit of God comes alongside of you.

And he enters into your prayer life. And he does his work uniquely. And he knows what you need to intercede with the Father about.

So he, while you pray, makes intercession before God on your behalf. When I was in university, and believe it or not, I really did go through and graduate. But I had what I would call an old maid missionary.

One who had been on the field all her life, and now she was home. But she felt it was her responsibility to guide college students into a more intimate walk with God. And she made a statement to me that I had to work through and work out of.

She said, now, you will have your time in God's word. And that will be very special. But then set that aside and take time in prayer.

Well, I found that while I was praying, scripture came to mind. And she would say, oh, no, no, no, no. You've had your time in scripture.

Sort of set that aside. And it did make sense to me, because I believe that the Holy Spirit not only helped me to pray, but used the word of God like a sword during my prayer time. And so as I was earnestly praying for a particular matter, scripture would come to mind.

And I learned to then stop my praying, go to that scripture, believing that the Holy Spirit has an important truth for me to understand about what I'm praying. And without exception, when I went to the scripture and then applied it to what I was praying, I had a clear indication of what I ought to be praying. And so the Holy Spirit not only guides you in scripture, but he guides you when you're praying.

Would it be important for you to know the will of God when you pray? God has provided for you the wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit, but you need to have a relationship with the Holy Spirit, and you need to know how he works. There's a third thing that I believe the Spirit of God does, and that is he works through circumstances. So you may come up against some unexpected or even unusual circumstances.

And in the midst of those, the Spirit of God will be guiding you to understand why this is here. And even several of you have mentioned to me while I've been here that you've gone through some traumatic pain and sorrow. And in the midst of that, you have then concluded, God is trying to do something significant in my character by letting me go through this moment.

Well, that's true. The deeper the experiences in life, the circumstances that seem to come to you, the greater opportunity the Holy Spirit has to say, let me tell you why the Father lets you go through this. You can't read the Apostle Paul without being aware that he knew that God was developing his character through the circumstances.

So he makes that statement. He has a huge desire to know God and the power of the resurrection and then what follows, and the fellowship of his suffering being conformed into the image of his Son. And the Apostle Paul saw negative circumstances as an opportunity for the Spirit of God to bring his life more closely into the will of God.

But there's another, there's a fourth means that I believe that the Spirit of God uses. And that is the church. God brings you into the midst of a living body.

And the Spirit of God is the life of that body. And I have found this to be so true. My question to myself is where did God place me in the body? Now I'm not talking about a universal church.

I don't use that term. I don't think the scripture does either. We confuse a concept of a universal church with the kingdom of God.

It is in the kingdom that I'm related to all the rest. But the church is a local body of believers that God puts together as it pleases him. And he places members in the body as it pleases him.

And for instance, he places a person to be an eye. And then he equips that person to function as an eye in the midst of the local body of believers. And so you are intimately related to one another.

And the eye knows where the hand needs to reach. And the eye knows where the foot needs to walk. And when the eye is functioning where God placed them, the whole body begins to function as a living presence of the living Lord.

And so the head speaks to every part of the body, but every part of the body is intimately related to one another. And so the Holy Spirit who is the life of the local church can speak to you clearly through the life of the other members of the body. And for instance, the eye may see something, but it doesn't quite understand what it sees.

But the ear hears something and lets the eye know. It's like a time when I decided to take my children out into nature. We were in the city and I took my children out into nature so they would not be afraid of the sounds.

And as we were walking along, I noticed by my hearing that the leaves were sort of making a bit of a noise. And my boys wanted to reach down and see. And I said, don't do it.

There was a snake down there. And I could hear, but my eyes couldn't quite understand what they saw. They saw the leaves moving, but the ear began to tell a different story.

So you have to put together all the parts of the body. And the Father places them in the body where it pleases him. And they interact with one another.

But the Holy Spirit can speak so clearly to you from other members of the body. So listen carefully and don't just say, well, that's an interesting concept. Say, I wonder if the Spirit of God is bringing a whole new understanding of my relationship to God through this dear sister in the body.

So the Holy Spirit works through the Scripture, through prayer, through circumstances, through the church. And I gave one more statement because my time has been up. The Holy Spirit is seeking to bring you to an understanding of the nature of God, the ways of God, and the purposes of God.

And so when God speaks to you, he's revealing himself. He's revealing his ways. As a matter of fact, I've written a whole book on the ways of God.

And I wrote that with an outstanding believer from LifeWay. And some of you may know the older man, Counselor Henry Brandt, sort of the founder of pastoral counseling. He and I wrote a book together called Hearing... No.

The Power... The Power of... That's called It's Time to Quit. That book is called The Power of the Call. It is an excellent book.

And in every chapter, Henry Brandt, the old counselor, wrote the first half of that chapter as a layman looking at the ways of God. The Power of the Call. Your call, your message, your ministry.

That's the only book that I wrote a chapter on, taking a spiritual inventory. And so he would write the first half of the chapter. Then as a pastor, I would write the second half of the chapter.

I think it's a book worth getting. Now, I've written a whole lot of books. And I think any one of them could be of help in the arena where you're serving.

The man God uses is still on the table. I think there's a couple of copies. Called and Accountable.

There's another. Spiritual Leadership. Experiencing the Cross.

Experiencing the Resurrection. Experiencing the Spirit. I lost my microphone.

Is there anything else you'd like to say? I'm so grateful for how the Lord brings people into my life. It's been a delight just being with you. And I'll let... Are you going to come up next? Well, I'll let the Grand Poopah bring this to a close.

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