

Calling and Confusion

Calling and Confusion:

1: General Call of God

Matthew 4:19 "Come, follow me,"

The Ten Commandments

Exodus 20

1 And God spoke all these words:

2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

3 "You shall have no other gods before [1] me.

4 "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand {generations} of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7 "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

8 "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

12 "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

13 "You shall not murder.

14 "You shall not commit adultery.

15 "You shall not steal.

16 "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

The Widow, the Poor and the Alien

Zechariah 7

9 "This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. 10 Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. In your hearts do not think evil of each other.'

Worship and service:

Deuteronomy 30:19

This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live

Joshua 24:15

But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD ."

Health

Numbers 19

10 The man who gathers up the ashes of the heifer must also wash his clothes, and he too will be unclean till evening. This will be a lasting ordinance both for the Israelites and for the aliens living among them.

11 "Whoever touches the dead body of anyone will be unclean for seven days. 12 He must purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; then he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third and seventh days, he will not be clean.

Numbers 19:18

Then a man who is ceremonially clean is to take some hyssop, dip it in the water and sprinkle the tent and all the furnishings and the people who were there. He must also sprinkle anyone who has touched a human bone or a grave or someone who has been killed or someone who has died a natural death.

Evangelism

Matthew 28

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in [1] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Love (Romans 13) Communication (Most of Proverbs) General Behavior (All the Epistles)...

Loving God and your neighbor

Deut 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. [1] 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Mark 12

30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. [1] 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' [2] There is no commandment greater than these."

Focus area: *Loving our neighbor*

Leviticus 18:20

" 'Do not have sexual relations with your neighbor's wife and defile yourself with her.

Leviticus 19:18

" 'Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD .

Proverbs 6:3

then do this, my son, to free yourself, since you have fallen into your neighbor's hands: Go and humble yourself; press your plea with your neighbor!

Exodus 22:7

"If a man gives his neighbor silver or goods for safekeeping and they are stolen from the neighbor's house, the thief, if he is caught, must pay back double.

Exodus 22:14

"If a man borrows an animal from his neighbor and it is injured or dies while the owner is not present, he must make restitution.

Deuteronomy 4:42

to which anyone who had killed a person could flee if he had unintentionally killed his neighbor without malice aforethought. He could flee into one of these cities and save his life.

Deuteronomy 19:14

Do not move your neighbor's boundary stone set up by your predecessors in the inheritance you receive in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess.

Deuteronomy 23

23 Whatever your lips utter you must be sure to do, because you made your vow freely to the LORD your God with your own mouth.

24 If you enter your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat all the grapes you want, but do not put any in your basket. 25 If you enter your neighbor's grainfield, you may pick kernels with your hands, but you must not put a sickle to his standing grain.

Deuteronomy 24

9 Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam along the way after you came out of Egypt.

10 When you make a loan of any kind to your neighbor, do not go into his house to get what he is offering as a pledge. 11 Stay outside and let the man to whom you are making the loan bring the pledge out to you.

Psalms 12:2

Everyone lies to his neighbor; their flattering lips speak with deception.

Psalm 101:5

Whoever slanders his neighbor in secret, him will I put to silence; whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, him will I not endure.

Proverbs 3:28

Do not say to your neighbor, "Come back later; I'll give it tomorrow"- when you now have it with you.

Proverbs 14:21

He who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy.

Proverbs 24:28

Do not testify against your neighbor without cause, or use your lips to deceive.

Proverbs 25

9 If you argue your case with a neighbor, do not betray another man's confidence, 10 or he who hears it may shame you and you will never lose your bad reputation.

Proverbs 27:10

Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father, and do not go to your brother's house when disaster strikes you- better a neighbor nearby than a brother far away.

Proverbs 27:14

If a man loudly blesses his neighbor early in the morning, it will be taken as a curse.

Luke 14

11For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

12Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. 13But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,

Romans 13:10

Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Romans 15:2

Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

Ephesians 4:25

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

James 4:12

There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you, who are you to judge your neighbor?

Note: All of the general call of God scriptures do not give specific application in terms of things like, where you live, what Job you take, who you marry...

2. The Specific (individual) Call of God - God does not micromanage us.

Matt 25:13 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

The Parable of the Talents

14 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. 15 To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16 The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. 17 So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. 18 But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

19 "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'

21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

22 "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.'

23 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

24 "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

26 "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.'

28 " 'Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. 29 For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. 30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The Sheep and the goats story follows. Is there a correlation between not applying ourselves and ending up as a goat?

Genesis 1:

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him;

male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

...

31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning-the sixth day.

2:19 Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.

Psalm 139

13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,

Psalm 37

3 Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.

4 Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.

5 Commit your way to the LORD ; trust in him and he will do this:

6 He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.

23 If the LORD delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm;

24 though he stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand.

II Thes:1:11

With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. 12We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ

Sloth, the enemy of calling. Calling, the cure for Sloth.

From the Pocket Catholic Catechism:

Sloth is the desire for ease, even at the expense of doing the known will of God.

Whatever we do in life requires effort. Everything we do is to be a means of salvation. The slothful person is unwilling to do what God wants because of the effort it takes to do it. Sloth becomes a sin when it slows down and even brings to a halt the energy we must expend in using the means to salvation.

Medieval theologian Thomas Aquinas said Sloth is "sluggishness of the mind which neglects to begin good... [it] is evil in its effect, if it so oppresses man as to draw him away entirely from good deeds." (2,35, ad 1)

noun sloth, which is simply the Middle English noun-form of the adjective slow (formed in the same way as true→truth). In modern usage, however, it means "lazy, inactive, idle, indolent, sluggish, and slow"; these qualities make Sloth one of the Seven deadly sins.

Why are the Seven Deadly Sins considered "deadly"?

They are called "deadly" because they wound love, and therefore do great harm to our relationship with God and others. Eventually, they can kill the soul, in a sense. And they aren't much fun to live with, either.

Vocation: Definition:

\Vo*ca"tion\, n. [L. vocatio a bidding, invitation, fr. vocare to call, fr. vox, vocis, voice: cf. F. vocation. See

1. A call; a summons; a citation; especially, a designation or appointment to a particular state, business, or profession.

3. The Extraordinary Call of God:

Abraham

Genesis 12

1 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.

2 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

4 So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. 5 He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

Moses

Exodus 3

1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3 So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight-why the bush does not burn up."

4 When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

And Moses said, "Here I am."

5 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." 6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the

God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

7 The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. 8 So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 9 And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. 10 So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

Jeremiah

Jeremiah 1:4 The word of the LORD came to me, saying,

5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew [1] you,
before you were born I set you apart;

I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

6 "Ah, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child."

7 But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. 8 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD .

9 Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth. 10 See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."

Hosea

Hosea 1

1 The word of the LORD that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel:

2 When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD ." 3 So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

Jesus

John 18

37 "You are a king, then!" said Pilate.

Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

Paul

Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God-- 2the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures

Acts 16:9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Does God have a 'PLAN' for our lives?

Ps 33:11 - NAS

The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The **plans** of His heart from generation to generation

33:11 - Young's Literal Translation

The counsel of Jehovah to the age standeth, The thoughts of His heart to all generations.

Pr 16:1 - NAS

The **plans** of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD

Pr 16:1 YLT

Of man [are] arrangements of the heart, And from Jehovah an answer of the tongue.

Pr 16:3 - NAS

Commit your works to the LORD And your **plans** will be established

Pr 16:3 YLT

Roll unto Jehovah thy works, And established are thy purposes,

Pr 16:9 - NAS

The mind of man **plans** his way, But the LORD directs his steps

Pr 16:9 YLT

The heart of man deviseth his way, And Jehovah establisheth his step.

Pr 19:21 - NAS

Many **plans** are in a man's heart, But the counsel of the LORD will stand

19:21 - YLT

Many [are] the purposes in a man's heart, And the counsel of Jehovah it stand

Pr 21:5 - NAS

The **plans** of the diligent {lead} surely to advantage, But everyone who is hasty {comes} surely to poverty

Pr 21:5 YLT

The purposes of the diligent [are] only to advantage, And of every hasty one, only to want.

Jer 29:11 - NAS

'For I know the **plans** that I have for you,' declares the LORD, '**plans** for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope

Jer 29:11 YLT

For I have known the thoughts that I am thinking towards you -- an affirmation of Jehovah; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give to you posterity and hope.

Ps 31:3

For You are my rock and my fortress; For Your name's sake You will lead me and **guide** me.

Ps 31:1 YLT

To the Overseer. -- A Psalm of David. In Thee, O Jehovah, I have trusted, Let me not be ashamed to the age, In Thy righteousness deliver me. **2** Incline unto me Thine ear hastily, deliver me, Be to me for a strong rock, For a house of bulwarks to save me. **3** For my rock and my bulwark [art] Thou, For Thy name's sake lead me and tend me. **4** Bring me out from the net that they hid for me, For Thou [art] my strength. **5** Into Thy hand I commit my spirit, Thou hast redeemed me, Jehovah God of truth

Ps 48:14 - NAS

For such is God, Our God forever and ever; He will **guide** us until death

Ps 48:14 YLT

That this God [is] our God -- To the age and for ever, He -- he doth lead us over death!

Can we plan for the future?

James 4:13 Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." **14** Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. **15** Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." **16** As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. **17** Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

Young's Literal Translation:

13 Go, now, ye who are saying, 'To-day and to-morrow we will go on to such a city, and will pass there one year, and traffic, and make gain;'

14 who do not know the thing of the morrow; for what is your life? for it is a vapour that is appearing for a little, and then is vanishing;

15 instead of your saying, 'If the Lord may will, we shall live, and do this or that;'

16 and now ye glory in your pride; all such glorying is evil;

17 to him, then, knowing to do good, and not doing, sin it is to him.

Waiting on God or for God?

General:

Psalm 38:15 I wait for you, O LORD ; you will answer, O Lord my God.
16 For I said, "Do not let them gloat or exalt themselves over me when my foot slips."

Isaiah 30:18

Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!

Isaiah 64

3 For when you did awesome things that we did not expect, you came down, and the mountains trembled before you.

4 Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.

5 You come to the help of those who gladly do right, who remember your ways.

Why?

Special Wisdom:

Numbers 9:7 and said to Moses, "We have become unclean because of a dead body, but why should we be kept from presenting the LORD's offering with the other Israelites at the appointed time?"

8 Moses answered them, "Wait until I find out what the LORD commands concerning you."

Desperate need:

Psalm 5

2 Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for to you I pray.

3 In the morning, O LORD , you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.

Protection and ultimate justice:

Psalm 27:12 Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, breathing out violence.

13 I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

14 Wait for the LORD ; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD .

Psalm 33:20

We wait in hope for the LORD ; he is our help and our shield.

Psalm 37:7

Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.

Psalm 37:34

Wait for the LORD and keep his way. He will exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you will see it.

Psalm 38:14 I have become like a man who does not hear, whose mouth can offer no reply.

15 I wait for you, O LORD ; you will answer, O Lord my God.

16 For I said, "Do not let them gloat or exalt themselves over me when my foot slips."

Psalm 59:3

See how they lie in wait for me! Fierce men conspire against me for no offense or sin of mine, O LORD .

Proverbs 20:21 An inheritance quickly gained at the beginning will not be blessed at the end.

22 Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!" Wait for the LORD , and he will deliver you.

Isaiah 30:18 Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!

19 O people of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you.

For the things we cannot have or see here:**1 Corinthians 4:5**

Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

Philippians 3:20

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,

James 5:7

Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains.

Jude 1:21

Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

Summary: Waiting is for what only God can do, not what we must do.

Group assessment

The simplicity of hearing God

My story starts on a hill...

- The voice of God sounds like Him
 - He whispers more than shouts
 - The voice of your father and mother: Inflection, intonation and other common attributes
 - The nature and character of God defines this voice
 - See "Names of God"
- He longs to speak with us
 - Directly
 - Written word
 - Creation
 - Prophets when we don't listen
- We are wired to hear Him
 - Our conscience
 - Our spirit
 - our mind

So what's our problem?

- Not of God (John 8:47)
- Looking for the gifts not the giver
- Asking the wrong questions
- Fear

How to hear this simple and pure voice?

- Learn to listen more than you ask
 - Get to know this simple voice
 - The word, history, creation
 - waiting on him
 - Psalms 27:14 Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.
 - Psalms 38:15 I wait for you, O LORD; you will answer, O Lord my God.
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 - Psalms 130:5-6 I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.
 - Proverbs 20:22 Do not say, I'll pay you back for this wrong! Wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.
 - Isaiah 8:17 I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob. I will put my trust in him

- Isaiah 30:18 . . . Blessed are all who wait for him!
- Isaiah 64:4 Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.
- Lamentations 3:26 it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.
- Hosea 12:6 But you must return to your God; maintain love and justice, and wait for your God always.
- Build the relationship
 - Seek the giver, not the gifts
 - Son/daughter, not a clone, not a slave
- Align your questions to this relationship
 - The process of growth, not direction for protection
 - Don't ask "what should I do" ask "what are you doing in me and in the world around me"
 - Don't ask "is he or she THE ONE" ask "am I the one, how can I be more loving"...
 - Don't ask "should I take this or that opportunity" ask "who am I in You, my family and community and myself" learn to live from the inside out.

Listening to the Voice of God

•6 distinguishing marks of divine discourse

- by Roger Barrier*
- Judges 6:7-10; John 10:1-5**
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- "Over the years," writes pastor Roger Barrier, "I have developed a checklist to help me distinguish when God is speaking to me. It is not complete or foolproof. No one point, of course, is sufficient in itself to prove or disprove the voice of God. But these principles have helped me discern more accurately the voice of God."
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- God tends to speak gently.*** Remember how God spoke to Elijah? God was not in the whirlwind, earthquake, or the fire. "And after the fire came a gentle whisper," and God spoke in the whisper. Whenever the voice within me drives and demands like a pushy, used-car salesman, God is not speaking. God is never pushy; he seldom urges sudden action without giving us time to reason through the issues.

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- **God's voice produces freedom.** In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus says, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." Satan loves to put people into bondage; God loves to set us free.
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- **God tends to speak while we are consciously seeking him.** I remember shaving one morning when I heard this voice tell me that the way to expand our church was to buy neighboring houses, bulldoze them, and use the land for parking. I followed that "voice," but what a disaster! Later, while listening for God's Spirit, I sensed his leading in another building matter. This time I followed the promptings, and God opened several doors for us to purchase and pay off many acres of land.
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- **God speaks with truth.** I often say in moments of despair, "I'm no good" or "Nobody loves me" or "I can't do anything right." These are half-truths that come from either self or Satan, but not God. God will never (and cannot) contradict his Word.
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- **God convicts of specific sins.** John 16:8 teaches that the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. When God convicts us of sin, the sin is usually specific: "Yesterday at 4:00 p.m. you did such and such." Self or Satan, on the other hand, brings a haunting guilt not tied to specific sins. I've often felt accused or had a nagging feeling of guilt. These feelings are not from God's Spirit. Often they are from the Accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10).
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- **God does not confuse.** When the trumpet of God sounds, it does not play confusing melodies. Satan, not God, is the author of confusion.