

The Dangerous Echo of One's Own Voice

*The danger of hearing only what pleases us
and calling it "God speaking to me"*

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There is a type of faith that appears mature but is fragile. It speaks often of "direction," "promise," and "confirmation," yet it harbors a silent problem: it only recognizes as the voice of God, things that align with its own desires. When this happens, spirituality ceases to be an encounter with the living God and becomes a mirror, a Christianity molded by personal taste, emotional convenience, and immediate relief.

In an age of information overload, algorithms that reinforce preferences, and a religious marketplace offering "tailor-made messages," an old risk grows in new clothing: preferring that which consoles over that which orients; that which pleases over that which is true; that which stirs the emotions over that which reveals.

When "God told me" becomes a shield

The phrase "God told me" should be accompanied by reverent awe. In practice, it often becomes a shield: a way to end a conversation, escape evaluation, avoid correction, and maintain decisions already made.

This is nothing new. The Bible records that the human heart has a frightening ability to spiritualize what it desires. *"The heart is deceitful above all things"* (Jer. 17:9). This doesn't mean God doesn't speak; it means we don't always listen well.

There are sincere, pious, and active church members who, without realizing it, develop a "selective radar": they enthusiastically catch everything that confirms their plans and ignore everything that confronts their motivations. The result is dangerous: the person does not follow God; they use God to legitimate their own path.

The phenomenon of the "pleasant voice"

Scripture describes this mechanism clearly: *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables"* (2 Tim. 4:3–4).

Notice the logic:

1. They cannot endure the truth that demands change.
2. They choose voices that fit what they want.
3. They build a spiritual bubble.
4. They call it faith.

It is possible to attend services, read the Bible, pray, and yet still search only for messages that comfort without correcting. But the voice of God, when it is truly from God, both consoles and confronts. It heals and it also prunes (John 15:2). It lifts the fallen and also casts down pride.

Signs you might be hearing only what pleases you

Without turning this into a "tribunal of conscience," it is worth observing some practical signs:

- **1) The message always confirms, never corrects.** If everything you call "God's direction" always favors you, your image, your comfort, your haste, or your interest, it deserves review. *"The Lord disciplines the one he loves"* (Heb. 12:6). Discipline does not align with a voice that only massages the ego.
- **2) You avoid mature counsel and accountability.** When someone godly suggests caution, you call it a "lack of faith." But Proverbs insists: *"In the multitude of counselors there is safety"* (Prov. 11:14). Spiritual isolation is fertile ground for self-deception.
- **3) You use "peace" as the only evidence.** Yes, God grants peace (Phil. 4:7). But not every "peace" is proof of approval; sometimes it is merely the relief of having done what you wanted. Jonah, fleeing from God, found a ship and a "convenient" journey (Jonah 1:3). Favorable circumstances are not a divine seal.
- **4) You select texts like you're picking from a menu.** A verse out of context can become a justification for any decision. The enemy tried to use Scripture to tempt Jesus (Matt. 4:6). The problem is not quoting the Bible; it is using the Bible to avoid obeying the Bible.

- **5) You reject any word that exposes sin, character, and holiness.** There is a great hunger for promises and little hunger for transformation. However, without holiness, no one will see the Lord (Heb. 12:14). The voice of God does not leave us comfortable in sin; it calls us to repentance (Acts 3:19).

The spiritual risk: Idolatry disguised as devotion

Hearing only what pleases us can be, at its core, a subtle form of idolatry: not the idolatry of a wooden image, but the idolatry of a "god" manufactured to our own measure. A god who always agrees, always hurries, always confirms, and always exempts.

Modern idolatry does not always kneel before an altar; it kneels before its own desire. Paul describes people *"whose god is their stomach"* (Phil. 3:19)—that is, their appetites, their wills, their self-priority. When the heart governs and God merely "signs off" on it, faith loses its center.

How God usually speaks - and why it's uncomfortable

God speaks in many ways, but He never contradicts Himself. And there is a pattern: God's voice aligns us with **His** will, not our convenience.

- **Discernment:** God calls Samuel by name, but learning involves discernment and submission (1 Sam. 3:9–10).
- **Correction:** God guides, but He also corrects: *"Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear"* (Matt. 11:15). In the Bible, hearing is more than capturing sound: it is obeying.
- **Tenderness vs. Hardness:** God insists that His people do not harden their hearts when they hear His voice (Heb. 3:15). In other words, the voice may come with discomfort because it touches exactly the point we want to avoid.

The right question is not just "Did this bring me peace?" but: **Does this make me more like Christ?**

"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mark 8:34). The voice of the Good Shepherd (John 10:27) leads to a path where the "self" is not on the throne.

Safe Discernment: Five healthy filters

If you want to escape self-deception and walk with maturity, here are five practical filters:

1. **Scripture in Context:** The first test is biblical: *"Test everything; hold fast what is good"* (1 Thess. 5:21). Moreover, texts must be read in context, with honesty. God does not "speak" something today that contradicts His Word.
2. **The Character of Christ:** Direction from God will produce the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23). If the "message" feeds arrogance, carnal haste, revenge, sensuality, or lies, it is not from the Holy Spirit.
3. **Prayer that includes Surrender, not just Requests:** Mature prayer says: *"Thy will be done"* (Matt. 6:10). It is not an attempt to convince God; it is a place of alignment with God.
4. **Communal Confirmation:** God saves us into a body (1 Cor. 12:12–27). The wisdom of the Lord frequently reaches us through leaders, mature brothers and sisters, and sincere counsel. When every prudent person warns you and only you are "absolutely certain," stop and re-evaluate.
5. **Time and Fruit:** Decisions guided by God withstand the test of time and produce consistent fruit. *"By their fruit you will recognize them"* (Matt. 7:16). Not all excitement is anointing; sometimes it is just impulse.

The invitation to maturity: Hearing even when it doesn't please

The greatest danger is not God falling silent; it is me listening to myself so much that the silence becomes "confirmation." Therefore, the Christian life requires humility. It requires a teachable heart, capable of saying: "Lord, if I am mistaken, correct me."

There is a type of Christian who only wants an "encouraging" God. But the God of the Bible is also the "sanctifier." He does not just cheer us on the way; He defines the way.

And here is a liberating truth: when God confronts us, He is not rejecting us; He is rescuing us. The Lord's correction is proof of sonship (Heb. 12:7–8). The voice that confronts may hurt, but it saves.

To conclude: Three questions worth their weight in gold

1. If God said "no" to me today, would I still love and obey Him? (John 14:21)
2. Is what I call the "voice of God" more aligned with the Word or with my preference? (2 Tim. 3:16–17)
3. Has my spirituality made me more humble, holy, and servant-like, or just more self-assured? (Mark 10:45)

God still speaks. The question is: are we willing to hear the whole voice, including the part that doesn't please us, but transforms us?