

Hearing God's Voice Thru the Word

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of worship and obedience to God's Word as essential for hearing His voice and experiencing spiritual transformation.

Duration: 49:33

Scripture: Psalm 107:20, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 40:31, Matthew 28:19-20, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, 2 Timothy 4:2, Hebrews 4:12, James 1:22

Topics: "Worship And Prayer", "Hearing God"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of hearing God's voice through worship and His word. It highlights the power of worship as a message that can open hearts and bring about change. The sermon stresses the need for spending time in worship, prayer, and studying the word of God to fully surrender and experience God's guidance and transformation. It also addresses the deceptive nature of sin and the necessity of aligning with God's will through obedience and discernment.

Transcript

We're talking about hearing God's voice. Hearing God's voice through worship was last week, and hearing God's voice through his word is this week. And I don't know how far I'm gonna get maybe the next few weeks on this topic.

But last week, let me just recap last week. I talked about worship and the power of worship. Worship does not fill in the gap until it's time for the message.

Often, worship is the message. If we allow it to be the message, if we allow it to change our hearts and to open up our hearts, it can be a tremendous work of God just in the worship. So I think a lot of times we see this, a lot of people come, you know, and well, I just kinda get the message and then I'll leave.

But it's the worship that opens the heart. It's the worship that we see a lot of change takes place. Why? Because the heart's opening up, and it's worshipping God, and there's power in that.

Worship is a lifestyle of laying our heart before God in reflection and meditation. Tremendous joy and healing often take place, but this is also where heart surgery takes place. See, we have to remember that we were created to worship.

If I could go down the aisle, you, you, you, you, you, you, you, you, you, everybody was created to worship. And what happens is when we don't worship God, guess where that worship begins to go? The other direction, the other way. And God says worship means, spirit and in truth is our hearts worship Him.

We feel that need. If not, we're gonna feel it somewhere else and we'll end up worshipping ourselves. Or you fill in the blank, you'll worship something other than God.

A person who does not worship will have a difficult time hearing and discerning God's voice. I'm recapping from last week, but I wanna make these two points, I wanna make them again. A person who does not worship will have a difficult time hearing and discerning God's voice.

Say, Shane, well, that doesn't make sense. Well, it makes perfect sense, because if we're not worshipping, there's something wrong with our heart. We can't just turn to a few scriptures and go to church and we're good with God.

We have to spend time worshipping Him, setting apart that day to worship Him and to hear His voice, that still small voice of the Holy Spirit. So with that said, why a series, a quick series on hearing God's voice? Well, as I said last week, most follow the wrong voice because they live in deception. Hearing the word of God, but not doing it.

And James says, if we hear the word of God, but we don't do it, we actually live in deception. And I would look at, you know, looking back at all the many counseling appointments or marriages on the rocks or falling back into this sinful lifestyle or actually problems. The majority of our problems are tied to this point right here, hearing the word of God, but not doing it.

We're not hearing the voice of God. So before I wanna go forward into Matthew 10, I wanna say, okay, hold on, let's put on the brakes. Let's stop for a minute and let's listen a little bit quieter.

Let's try to hear what God's saying through us through worship, through His word. So that leads us to this point. Hearing God's voice through His word.

I like what Leonard Ravenhill said, the world doesn't believe the Bible and Christians do not obey the Bible. Spurgeon said, men will allow God to be everywhere except on His throne. Men will allow God to be everywhere except on His throne.

And what obedience is, obedience to the word of God, obedience is submission to who's on the throne. It ties back to this, if I'm obeying the word of God, I'm submitting to Him up on the throne. Those who reject His word, they don't wanna obey the word of God.

It's because they put themselves up on the throne and they wanna become master and God of their own lives. And that's really what it boils down to. I know these are hard statements, but we're in disobedience to the word of God.

He's no longer on the throne. We've basically dethroned Him in our hearts and now I'm gonna do whatever I wanna do. And maybe it's just me, but I see that so many broken lives, even this week, of drug addiction, alcohol, bad relationships, they're tied to not hearing the correct voice.

In all those cases, not listening to the right voice. And they're Christians. So why is this happening? Hearing is very easy.

Oh, I can hear it, that's very easy. Might as well sit down and have a chocolate sundae and hear. But when it comes to actually doing it, that's where it gets difficult.

And the enemy knows that. That's why he'll prevent you more often than not from doing the word of God than he will hearing it. Because the power's in the application.

If you guys know what to do and we don't do it, where's the power of God's word in that? Because the power comes in the application. So we talked about hearing God's voice through worship. Listen to that, it's on the website.

If you didn't get that message, but now we're talking about hearing his voice through his word. And I wanna talk about, before I get into this whole message, the principle of sowing and reaping. You hear that a lot, right? Well, if I sow, I'll reap.

If I sow, I'll reap. But a lot of times, we just put that in with money. Giving and I'll reap and giving and sowing and all that.

But actually, the spiritual principle of reaping and sowing is not just monetary. If you look throughout God's word, it's on giving of our time, giving of our energy, of our resources. We reap whatever we put in, even up here.

Whatever we sow here, we're gonna reap out in our lifestyle. And a few months ago, I wanted to borrow some of the notes that I had a couple months ago into this because it makes perfect sense. Think about reaping and sowing.

We must first discipline ourselves before the desire comes. Because if I hear another person say, I just don't feel like reading the word of God, then I'm gonna add that to my list of dozens and dozens and dozens of people saying, I just don't feel like it. Well, guess what? Most people don't right off the bat.

That's why we have to discipline ourselves before the desire comes. We must first empty ourselves in order to be filled. You can't be filled with the spirit of God if we're full of ourselves.

So we have to empty ourselves to be filled with the spirit of God. We first must obey before receiving the blessing. You see how we're reaping and sowing all these areas? I have to obey the word of God and then I'll reap the blessing.

I must first break before there is restorations. I must first pray before there is transformation. I must praise Him before there is peace.

And I must seek Him to truly find Him. We must sow before we reap. So when it comes to hearing God's voice through the word of God, remember, we must sow into this before we reap.

Many times you don't feel like it, but it's pressing through and the reward comes later. Think about this. Tell me what you had to eat last week.

What? Does anybody remember other than a nice meal? No, I don't. Well, it sustained you, didn't it? It sustained you. The same thing with the word of God.

Sometimes I don't feel like it. I don't have this driving passion. And if we had that, we would always do it.

It would be easy. Oh, I get up in the morning. I have to read the word of God.

I have to. I have this driving passion. Oh, let me get on my knees and pray and read the word of God.

Then we would always do it, of course. Everybody's waiting for that magical moment. Guess what? That magical moment doesn't always come.

Sometimes you gotta pull the flesh out of bed, kicking and screaming all of the way. And then what happens after you're into it sometime? Thank God I did this. Thank God you submitted to me flesh.

Thank God I put God back up on the throne. And then the word of God becomes alive and active and living. The problem is many people never get to that point because they don't feel like it.

I don't feel like getting up. I don't feel like doing it. I don't feel.

And if you allow your feelings to control you, you will never experience the victorious Christian life. To me, the Christian life is abundant. It's God's blessings.

It's great, but it's also about starving the flesh. It's also about submitting to God. It's also about disciplining ourselves.

It's warfare. It's battle. It's not easy believism and then everything goes good.

It's warfare. It's battle. It's difficult.

But look at the athletes. They train and they train and they train and they train for the reward later. That's why Paul said, I discipline my body.

I prepare my body and I bring it under control. Now here's what the word of God talks about. I mean, we talk about this ever since we started the church, but the word of God is like planting seeds into your mind and planting seeds into your thoughts because if you just allow the world to plant those seeds, guess what's eventually gonna grow? Whatever you put in here.

And the word of God, you can go back to when you're discouraged, the word of God reminds me that I'm hard pressed on every side, but not crushed, perplexed, but not in despair, persecuted, but not forsaken, struck down, but not destroyed. So as I'm getting discouraged, I have the encouragement of the seeds I planted. What about financial areas? Money, right? Anybody have questions with that? Well, as decisions are being made, I planted seeds in my heart that a good name should be chosen over great riches.

I'm planting that seed. Another seed I plant is, Lord, give me neither poverty nor riches. If you give me poverty, then I'm gonna be poor and I'm gonna steal and I'm going to profane your name.

But if you give me tons of riches, I will be full and satisfied and I'll deny you. So Lord, give me neither. See, you're planting all this into your heart.

So when the challenges come, how do you think Jesus defeated Satan? With the word of God. That's how we do it. We plant these seeds.

What about purity, sexual purity? Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant, but he does not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of hell. That's about adultery. You keep planting that in your mind, you might think twice before making that decision because you're planting the

right seeds.

Guard your heart. Proverbs says, for it affects everything you do. So as the world is telling me all of this, I need this to tell me something different.

I need to offset. Actually, the world's planting weeds. I've gotta plant the proper seeds.

And that's what this all is. You're planting into the mind, planting in the soul, planting in the spirit. When you get up out of an hour of reading the word of God and praying, you think you'll be a different person that day? Try it sometime.

Put that on and put Howard Stern on for an hour. No, don't try it, don't try it. I'm giving you an analogy here.

What do you think? What do you think's gonna prevail? If I'm in the word of God for an hour, I've got prayer, worship, or I've got the media. Fox, CNN, all these things. The O'Reilly Factor, whatever.

CNN, I'm trying to balance both sides here. And you keep, if that's all you're feeding, news, news, news, news, news, Israel, Afghanistan, you know, this, this, this, the nuclear, it's all you're feeding. What do you think's gonna prevail in your life? If you have no time for the word of God and that's all you're feeding, you're gonna scare your family to death.

You're gonna walk around as Mr. Conspiracy Theory, Mrs. Conspiracy Theory. It's always on your mind, have you heard? And this is all you're feeding. That's why the word of God is a shower.

It cleans off all that moral filth from what we're allowing into our mind. So that's how powerful the word of God is. You are planting seeds, God's seeds.

I mean, it's one thing, it's like, hey, guys, I came across a good book, you might wanna consider reading it. I could see why people wouldn't read it. But when you say that this is the inerrant, inspired word of God, living, vibrant, active, that penetrates the heart, it guides man, it sustains him, transforms him, and yet people still, I'm too busy, I don't feel like it.

I just don't understand. It baffles me. The reason is I don't really think we know what that holds.

And again, we don't worship this, it points to the one we worship. But the one we worship tells us to sustain my mind in here. It tells me to sustain my heart in here.

It says you want godly actions, you wanna be filled with the spirit of God, you better plant the seed of God into your heart. You can tell people who spend a lot of time in the word, prayer and worship, their whole attitude's much different than the carnal Christian. The carnal Christian gets upset at everybody, offends everybody, they walk around a lukewarm lifestyle.

They know nothing about the power of God, everything upsets them, everything is offense to them. If I just say the wrong thing, they're offended. It's like they live in this little world of carnality, and they're not in the word of God.

The word of God transforms the heart and the mind and you're a whole different person. That's the difference. It's the power in the word of God.

So let's give a little practical application. I don't think I've done this before, but I wanna do this because so many people say, well, okay, what do I do, how do I do it? Now you can't say I didn't say this. I'm gonna give you perfect, well not perfect, but guidelines that God gives us as far as practical application.

So do you wanna increase your study time? Do you wanna increase hearing God's voice? Do you want a passion for God's word? Do you want some type of, okay, what do I do, Shane? If I just sit down, because so many people tell me this, this is why I wanna write this down. If I just sit down, I start somewhere I know, I guess in John, then I read for a little while and that's about it. Sound familiar? I mean, it's just too big.

It's too big. I just don't know where to start. It's too complex, it doesn't make any sense.

I'm gonna clarify it and help right now with that, I hope. The first thing you need to do is schedule it. I alluded to this a few weeks ago.

You have to schedule your time with God. Well, that sounds silly, Shane. Well, you schedule everything else.

Everything else you're gonna fit on your schedule. Birthday party, barbecues, going here, doing that, let's go to the movie, let's, everything's scheduled. Why is scheduling? Because we put this on our calendar, it's of importance, and everything else is going to be filtered around it.

So you have to schedule it. Say, okay, this is when I'm going to read the Word of God, this is when I'm gonna pray, and this is when I'm gonna study. And when somebody says, hey, do you wanna do something? Say, no, I have another appointment.

I have an appointment, I don't have time. Now, of course, you have to move it around and shift it, of course. But put it down, I mean, it's just as important as a doctor's appointment.

It's just as important as, what's that happy footer? People get their feet massaged. They love it so much, they schedule appointments weeks in advance, weeks in advance. Nothing's gonna interfere with this hour, nothing.

But yet, when it comes to God's Word, I just can't squeeze it in. So this has to be priority number one. Sit down and say, okay, tomorrow morning, or tomorrow, whenever it is.

But here's the second point to that. It has to be during your freshest hour, or give God some of your best. You try to squeeze a minute, 11 o'clock tonight, and I'm just, oh, I'm so tired, my eye.

No. I give him the freshest moments of my life, and I try to also give others and my kids and family those times. So when are you the most alert? When are you excited? When can you, is it a lunchtime? Because I'm not an evening person.

When it gets to seven o'clock at night, whoo, I'm not gonna read anything. I'll spend time with the kids, I'll pray, but I'm not gonna read much. That's why sometimes I get, I look at the clock, it's 3.30 in the morning, oh, it's too early, because I know I'll be messed up.

I try to go back to sleep, and then I see it's 4.30, 4.45. I'm excited, I get up, it's five o'clock, I've got tea, I make some, and I'm excited to be with God, I can sit there for an hour and a half, two hours, uninterrupted, no kids running in, no neighbors, nothing. That's my time, that's my freshest strength, right there. But for

somebody else, that might not work very well.

And a lot of the reasons why it doesn't work very well is because you go to bed too late the night before. You see how all this works? But I've talked to some people I know are even mad. I don't think he'll mind me saying this, but he enjoys reading at night.

Eight, nine, 10, 11 at night, get a lot done reading, and God speaks, that's perfect. That's why you can't put a legalistic thing on it. But I'll tell you right now, after seven, I'm brain dead.

I mean, it's just not, it's just, you know, probably because I'm up early, you know, see how that works. But I know God put this in me years ago, when I was 17, I had to do this working construction. You had to be at the job site at six in the morning, you're gonna be up by 4.35. And that same pattern has been consistent throughout my whole life.

So that's when I'm the strongest, that's when I'm the freshest. And even in construction, it was hard because I had to be at a job site, so I had to get up early. But then later in the day, I would try to find time.

So you can find time for it if you want to. Those things that are important to us, we find time. So this is number one.

You have to say, this is when I'm gonna do it, it's on my calendar. Put it on your phone, wherever. It has to be the freshest time.

Next, I usually start with worship. I'll put on worship on the phone, iPad, something, songs you like. That's why in this type of setting, doesn't care.

You can't complain against worship. In this setting, guess what? You're doing it, you're picking it. You can go find the old hymns with no instrumental.

You can find the new Hill song. You can all these songs, just worship God. And then what happens is the heart begins to open up as I'm worshiping.

My heart's getting ready, my heart's engaging. When I'm trying to clear my mind, Lord, I'm just here to worship you. And sometimes I just begin focusing on something else that I didn't wanna focus on, I forgot all about, but God brought me back to this.

Pray for these people, pray for the persecuted church, pray for the Christians in Iran. And before I know it, a half hour has gone by because of worship and praying to God in all these areas. And then, of course, during this worship, there's a time of prayer.

And a lot of people don't know what exactly to pray for. And if I had a half hour, I could give you an hour's worth of things to pray for. If you just start thinking the condition of the state, of our state, of our nation.

Actually, the paper just emailed me last week. They want me to write the opposition on some AB bill, forget what, AB6, whatever it is. It's a bathroom bill is what I call it.

So if a boy feels like he's a girl that day, he can walk into the girl's bathroom. And as I'm working on this, I'm sitting there going, Lord, how in the world did we even get here? I've got to write a rebuttal to this bill? We're calling good evil and evil good. A boy feels like he's a girl, he walks into the girl's locker room.

A girl feels like she's a boy, she can go on. You can't discriminate, folks. We're offending these people.

Well, have you stopped to consider you're offending God? Do we have compassion for people that struggle with transgender? Of course. If you watch the little kids as they go through puberty, they're struggling through all these identities and the father and mother guide them in the right direction. But as I'm writing this, I started praying for 20 minutes.

Do you realize the Pandora's box this could open up? Now everybody has to have mutual bathrooms. So my wife and kids go into the bathroom, here comes Larry who feels like he's a girl today at the fairgrounds. It's perversion.

It's perverted and it's perversion. People say, I can't believe you used that word. Look up in the dictionary.

Taking the right thing and making it go the wrong direction. Perversion. You're perverting something.

And then I started thinking about all the Christians in Iraq being displaced. ISIS and the Muslims coming in and taking over 10 minutes away. That'd be like USA losing all their power and authority and Russia decides to send some aircraft carriers and right there in Palmdale they've taken ground.

They say you worship Christ, you will die. I mean, it's that serious. And we have nothing to pray for.

Get on the prayer chain of our church. Prodigal sons, wayward daughters, husbands leaving, single moms in despair, suicidal thoughts. You have nothing to pray for? God guide the hand of our leaders, legislation, president, senate, congressmen.

You don't have to agree with them, but you better pray that God leads their hand because when the wicked are in authority, the righteous will groan. There's nothing a lot to pray for. Those who have little kids, you think the enemy's just gonna let them just slide right into Christianity? He's already coming after them through what they watch, what they view, who they associate with.

He's already planning how to take them down. There's nothing to pray for. When people tell me that, I'm just like, you've gotta be kidding me.

The reason there's nothing to pray for is they're not spending time in the presence of God because you'll think of a whole list of things you have to pray for. I even started about this church. Prayer requests and people tell me needs I know and this and this is going on.

There's so many things. So that's why once it's scheduled and beginning with worship and then prayer, if you don't know what to pray for, Jesus offers a pretty good example. Teach us how to pray.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. You could sit there for 10 minutes. Hallowed be thy name.

How great, air conditioning. Air conditioning. We have ministries in Africa and people would tell you, they don't even know what air conditioning is.

Air conditioning, ice in your water. How great is your name, how blessed we are, thank you. You could sit in your nice comfortable seats.

Most churches are sitting on the ground on dirt. How great is your name. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. The provision, lead us not in temptation.

That great tempter's after me, Lord. He's going to battle as a roaring lion. You can just spend 20 minutes right there.

You have nothing to pray for. So once that happens, then I start to do, I have a systematic reading plan that I would recommend to most anybody. I mean, there's little things you can check off.

I read Jonah or I read, you know, they have things. And I tried that 20, 15 years ago, but I always either fell behind or I wanted to speed up. Or I, you know, Jonah one, that's all I got to read.

Jonah one, I want to read the whole book of Jonah today. I haven't got to stop here. So what I do, what I develop is just a systematic reading plan.

I have a paperclip in Genesis, and I have a paperclip in the Psalms, and I have a paperclip in Matthew. And I just sit and read. Sometimes I'll stay and I can get out of Psalms this morning.

Far as I go. Two, three, four, five chapters. And then Matthew, Jesus, always in the Gospels.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and then the Acts. And then you repeat it, you flip it back, you start over again. And as you're reading the New Testament and Psalms, and Jesus quoting Psalms in the Old Testament, it's like unbelievable how it all unfolds.

Like I'll be reading where Isaiah said, you draw nigh unto God with your lips, but you're far from him with your hearts. And then I read Jesus the next day rebuking the religious leaders with that same New Testament. And then he's quoting Psalms.

It's this whole beautiful book coming together. It's just 20 minutes a day. Do you have 20, 25 minutes a day? That's it.

And then when I get through the Old Testament, I put a check mark. In the beginning, I've got through the Old Testament 10 times and the New Testament 25 times. Just from, Shane, you're so spiritual.

No, I'm not. No, I just have a plan, and I'm disciplined. And 10 times and 25 times, all from 20 minutes a day for the last 15 years.

That's it, 20 minutes, and you have a systematic plan. And now I'm anxious because now it's all making sense. Once you start to read it together and it's flowing, it makes a lot of sense.

You wanna get through it. And then at this point, here's what I also do. I have a journal.

Actually, this Bible's not my Bible from home. I have a study Bible, but I'll journal things in it like, you know, Lord, and I'll look back, 2006, he answered that prayer of provision. We were, the construction industry was plummeting, and we were out of money.

Look at that. And I'll have it, it's like I'm a journal. It's like my life story, how the word of God answered my prayers about my child was born this day in 2005.

It's just whole, it's like the word of God coming alive and speaking to my life. And now I've got an ESV study Bible, and I've got an NIV study Bible. Now I'm reading them for my kids, starting in Genesis.

And as I'm reading, I'm saying, I'm praying for you today. I love you, we're so proud of you. Watch out here, here's where the enemy's gonna come in.

He's gonna try this, and it's gonna take me a couple of years, and then I'll hand that Bible to my kids, one each. See, there's a plan, there's a systematic study of God's word, and the kids can't wait to get that Bible. I'm like, hold on, it's gonna take a while, because I'm leaving them love letters to my children.

Well, my children are old now. How about your grandchildren? What about, here's what Grandpa's been working on for the last three years. I read the entire Bible, I prayed for you, I noted Scripture, I highlighted things, I journaled, here it is.

You think they're gonna throw that in the trash? That's a keepsake, and that will motivate you to read the Bible. Or your kid's 25, 26, 27. I say, I'm gonna pray for you, then, for the next two or three years.

On your 30th birthday, I'm gonna give you the word of God with all my prayers, my notes, and you give it to them. You see how precious, you see how this works? It's a whole life. The word of God is coming alive.

So you have to journal, you have to do those things, because it makes it interesting. If I just picked up, I love to see, people say, don't write in your Bible, really? Don't write in my Bible. The Bible's living and active, it's speaking to me daily, I write things, Lord, He's answering in this way, in this way, in this way, in this way, in this way.

And dating it. And then here's what else I do, a lot of people, you'll note questions. It's good to have questions.

You'll be reading in Genesis going, what, God created the heavens and the earth all in one day? Or, who did Adam and Eve's kids marry? Or, is the earth, are those really seven days of creation on the first day, on the second day, on the third day, on the fourth day? Well, if you listen to Hugh Ross or Ken Ham, they're gonna be divided. Those weren't actual days, some say. Some say, yeah, those were actual 24-hour days.

So what do you do with these questions? Write them down, that's what I do. Every time I read, I have questions. Why is he doing this? Like, one question I wrote down is, I kept reading, they returned to the Lord, but the high places were not removed.

What's wrong with these people? They returned to the Lord, but the high places were not removed. So I took a whole hour and did a study on high places and how they would sacrifice to these other gods. And the kings would go back to God, and let's go back to God, but let's leave these high places up here where we sacrifice to Ashtaroth and Molech and all these gods up here.

They wouldn't remove these high places. And also, other words, you know, if you seek, Jesus sometimes, when he said, if you seek me, right? He who, I'm trying to think of the scripture, it's not in my notes. I believe it's in Luke, where he's talking about the narrow way and the broad road to destruction.

He said, many will seek it and not find it. That doesn't make any sense, because he's telling us to seek Him. So, it doesn't stop my reading, okay? I'm still reading, but those are notes for later.

So I go back and look at the Greek, seek, and look at what it means in the Greek language. Oh, perceive. They consider.

So the people, many will seek me, many will perceive and consider, and I'm thinking about God, but they won't fully surrender, repent. Oh, okay, so you start to answer all these questions, then you have a very solid base of apologetics. You can give everybody a reason for the hope that is within you.

So to me, this can't be a casual five-minute devotional. This should be a devotional time. We're devoting our time, devotional time, to God, writing down these questions, writing down these challenges.

If you think the Word of God has questions, or you're not confused about this, write it down. And then when you seek it, you're gaining a clear understanding of God. And then finally, two things I do, I try to read a devotional.

A book, a good devotional, a good one, if I can recommend this real quick, is My Upmost for His Highest by Oswald Chambers. Man, that's really good. Or anything by A.W. Toews or C.H. Burgess.

They're devotionals. The day of the month, you just read that day, and they'll take you places sometimes that you never thought that scripture could take you. Deep walk with God into that devotional life.

And then I close with prayer. Lord, help me apply these things. I need help.

And that's it. That's the study time. And it goes anywhere from an hour to two and a half hours.

People say, you really study that long? It's God's Spirit. It's everything, praying and worshiping and studying. I actually don't want to stop.

Once you get started, once God begins ministering to your spirit, where do you think these sermons come from? That time in the morning. I've got post-it notes everywhere. This and that.

It's everywhere. It looks like a mess. And then I start to bring it together for Saturday.

Because He's putting things in my heart. Same thing applies for you. You might say, well, you're a pastor.

Yeah, but you're a father. You're a wife. You're a spouse.

You're a leader. You've got people that you're helping. This is not just for pastors only.

So that's how I would study the Word of God, that the practical application. Here's what happens. Here's how it works in my life.

During worship, the heart begins to soften and open, first thing in the morning. You begin to hear the still, small voice of God during prayer as He's drawing your heart towards Him. The reading reinforces, it educates, and it opens our eyes to God's will.

Answering the questions that you have builds your faith. And then the devotional reading sparks a deeper walk, a deeper hunger for God. And then I end off the day with prayer and reading again.

But before I go to bed, guess what? It wasn't CNN and America's gonna blow up and be judged. It was something to do with the Word of God. I mean, I like to read like D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones.

He's got a list of sermons, a list of sermons. And he puts all his sermons in this book, C.H. Spurgeon's book. Or what about biographies, Hudson Taylor, Amy Carmichael, and then you're built up in your faith at night before you go to bed.

And then you wake up with that same hunger. The reason people don't wake up with the hunger of God in their bellies in the morning is because they've been starving Him at night or throughout the whole day. That's how this works.

Sin is deceptive. Here's what I need to let you guys know up front. Sin is deceptive.

You might say, oh, Shane, yeah, no kidding. Well, think about this. We are free from the bondage of sin and death because of the cross, because believers in Jesus Christ, the cross has eradicated the bondage of us being a slave to sin.

But the influence is still there. So I'm no longer bound by it, but I sure am tempted. And that's how the devil works.

Temptation is just an invitation. The devil says, come on. That's all temptation is.

It's an invitation to feed the flesh. And to step on the other side of the fence. So sin is deceptive.

That's why hearing alone is not enough. Many people hear this, right? But they don't do it. So they're living in deception.

So hearing alone isn't enough. And when we get caught in that sinful lifestyle, here's what happens. Sin blinds us.

We're blind to the will of God. And then sin leads us whatever path it wants. It blinds, it leads, it deceives, it makes excuses, and it justifies us.

And it prevents us from knowing the will of God. Listen, we have to get to the point where sin isn't some little vice that you kind of just pull around sometimes. Sin put Christ on the cross.

Sin is destructive. Sin is destroying marriages. It's destroying families.

It's breaking up everything. The enemy comes in with sin. He's come to seek, to seek and destroy.

This is a seek and destroy mission. This isn't like you're playing with some little bunny rabbit who's kind of mean with some big teeth. This sin is destructive.

And if you don't nip it in the bud, guess what happens? It grows, and it grows, and it grows. What is the end result of the growth of sin? Death. We are led away by our own desires and enticed.

And when that sin gives birth, when you give birth to sin, you start to conceive. And then as that grows, it brings forth death. Sometimes I don't think we put enough emphasis on the dangers of sin and what it does to people.

Oh, it's just a little thing. Yeah, it always starts as a little thing. The devil's not gonna push you off the building.

You'd see, oh, I'm not going way down there. Oh, come on then, let's go through the stairway. See, that wasn't too bad.

You know, I've given that analogy many times. It's perfect, it fits perfect. He takes you one step at a time until you're at the bottom going, how did I get here? Because we hear and we do not do.

You might say, oh, wow, that's heavy. Well, yeah, here's the good news. But God uses the word to bring clarity.

See, your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. Uh-oh, I guess that means our baby's crying. I can tell.

So, let me get back on track here. God uses the word to bring clarity, right? So, okay, if sin, you're like, oh, it blinds, it leads, it deceives, all these things. But then God brings the word.

I sent my word to heal them, to deliver them from their destruction. I sent my word to heal them. It brings clarity.

Your word is a lamp and a light unto my feet. Last week, I was on the aqueduct with my little dog and I saw he was running around and I saw coyotes about a quarter mile getting a drink out of him. I'm like, oh, man, put the leash on, get him on.

He doesn't know what's going on. He's running all around. He's getting ready to take off.

He would've took off, he would've been dead. But I saw down there a quarter mile. Said, oh, no, that's what this does.

It looks, you don't see anything right now, no, but you don't see the coyote waiting down a quarter mile or a mile or a month from now or a week from now or a year from now. See, this is a light to my path. I see where this is taking me.

I see where this bad choice is taking me and it's also a lamp to your feet. Everywhere I walk, it's a lamp. It's showing me where I'm going now and it's showing me where I'm gonna end up later.

Your word is a light to my path and a lamp to my feet. Then why does everybody wanna walk in darkness? Because we think we know best. But God sent his word to heal them.

Another example of what the word of God does, it pierces the heart. It shows us the truth of things, right? Because we don't see it in our sin. I got a, my wife downloaded an app on my phone a few weeks ago.

It's a jogging app. I can't jog very far. But it'll say, you know, start jogging.

Man, I went at least a mile. I know I went a mile. What the .60, that's not even three quarters of a mile.

This thing's not, I'm so tired. This thing's wrong. And as you're jogging again, I'm like, okay, I'm at a mile.

Oh, man. I must've looked at that thing six times before I finally got, okay, that's a mile. See, I thought a mile was a half mile ago.

That's what this does. It brings clarity. No, no, no, no, no.

You're going in the wrong direction. You're not there yet. You're on a detour.

Come back, son. Come back, daughter. Would you come back? But we think we're on the right path.

This is like the app to the heart. We should use that now. This is the app to the heart.

Promise. I was gonna tell her this download does not work. I've already jogged a mile.

There's no way. This is, and sure enough, it was, that GPS was within a foot of a mile. But what am I going by? I'm too tired.

Oh, my feet hurt. I've jogged almost three quarters of a mile. I thought it was a mile and a quarter.

I thought I was way past a mile. But unless I had that gauge of truth, I was misled. That's how it works.

We can be so close to something, but not see it. And that's what this does. It brings clarity.

We can be so close. Do you realize we're so close to something we can't even see? This brings clarity. A few years ago, probably five years ago now, my wife, my in-laws pool, and my daughter, I'd have to ask her, I think she was only three or so.

She wasn't able to swim yet. And Morgan was sitting here on the step. And the baby, she's right there standing on the step.

And she just turned to put lotion on the little one-year-old and I'm over just 20 feet away, looking at this, what they call it, creepy. It cleans the pool. It's stuck on something.

And before she looks back, Aubrey's down three steps under a foot of water going like this, drowning right here. She's had to grab that quick, right there. What do you think this is for? It's right, we don't see the danger right there.

Right there, this does. You think danger looks dangerous? No, the enemy comes in as an angel of light. Look at all this beautiful, perfect, brought this together.

Isn't that wonderful? Angel of light deceased. He doesn't show you the end result. He deceased with the enticement.

That's why this is so important. I don't know how people make it without this. Like I said last week, I don't know how people make it without worship.

I don't know how people make it without worship. Usually if they're not worshiping, they're not in this. They go hand in hand, usually.

I know there's a lot of Bible thumpers out there that don't worship. That's because the heart hasn't been softened yet. But we're getting there.

So let's read the power of the word of God. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword. It pierces to division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow.

It is a discerner. This is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart. You wanna know why? Jeremiah tells us that the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked.

Who can know it? So this is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart. My own heart. This comes against my own heart.

Humble yourself, Shane, under the mighty hand of God. Am I trying to exalt myself? God says to humble yourself. Husbands, love your wisest.

Christ, love the church. Lord, I can't do that. I need your help.

My heart's gonna lead me this way, but the word of God pulls me back. It discerns. Discernment means the ability to comprehend what's really going on.

They say, now tell me what's really going on. That's what this does. That's what this does.

Because I've been around long enough to know most of the counseling appointments I do, when they leave, I'll say, I wonder what's really going on. Because we wanna tell people the best thing, right? Well, here's my side, here's why. We wanna, you know, but the word of God just goes right to the heart, divides everything, and it shows us the true intents of our heart.

Teachers, preachers, pastors who fail to preach the word in all its fullness do not pierce the heart. So discernment does not take place. You see how I kind of rattle the cage on some of these guys sometimes, that all they're doing is encouraging, that all they do is encourage? Well, you can never pierce the heart.

You can never allow the word of God to discern the thoughts and the intents of the heart. If all you're doing is encouraging and you're never confronting, change won't take place. And that leads me to the next scripture.

Preach the word, Timothy, be ready. In season, out of season. See, back to the word again, preach the word.

Convince, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching. So if you wanna know what a preacher should be doing, or a pastor, even you sometimes with the word of God, we should be convincing. That means to make somebody sure and certain of something.

We should be convincing them with this. Rebuke, oh, we know that one well, to warn or to confront or to challenge. So to convince, rebuke, and exhort.

The last thing is to give encouragement to. But that's where many people hang their hat on that one. Just encouragement, just encouragement, just encouragement, just encouragement, just encouragement.

What, it also, we're supposed to convince and rebuke with the word of God. That's where the power is. But not like a Pharisee, like your loving Savior.

How would he do it? Woman, I forgive you, but go and sin no more. Gentleness. See, it's often not what we say, it's how we say it that tilts the scale.

You know the old saying, right? It's not what I say, it's how I say it that tilts that scale. And then one of my favorite one is, he sent his word and healed them and delivered them from their destruction. God sent his word and healed them and delivered them from their destruction.

And I wish I had time, I might briefly, put in the scripture in context, verse 11, because they rebelled against the words of God and despised the counsel of the Most High, he brought down their heart with labor. They fell down and there was no one to help. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble and he saved them out of their distress.

He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death and broke their chains in pieces. Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works. And then it goes on to say, then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble and he saved them out of their distress.

How did he save them? He sent his word and it healed them and he delivered them from their destructions. See, that's God's method. Whether it's pastoring, counseling, teaching, whatever it is, he sent his word and it healed them.

Just this hit them and they're healed? Oh, oh, read, convict, repent. Hear, repent. Or hear, convict, repent.

That's what the word of God does. It goes in and it pierces and it pierces. Without this compass and truth indicator, we will hear the wrong voice.

I'll tell you up front right now, I'll be crystal clear with everybody in this audience. If you are not in this often, you will many times be led by the wrong voice. How else can you not? Oh, it's what I think.

I've been raised in a Christian home. I know about God. Wrong voice.

Wrong voice. So you stay in this. Hearing God's voice can keep us from sin or sin can keep us from hearing God's voice.

Did you catch that? Hearing God's voice will keep us or can keep us from sin or sin can keep us from hearing God's voice. They're polar opposites. They fight each other.

Hearing God's voice and besetting sin. God's voice will steal you. The enemy will rush you.

God will lead you. The enemy pushes. God reassures.

The enemy frightens. God enlightens. The enemy confuses.

God encourages you. The enemy discourages you. God comforts you.

The enemy worries you. God calms you. The enemy obsesses you.

God convicts you, but the enemy condemns you. And at this point, many people say, but Shane, I feel all these bad things. Rushes, frightened, confused.

I have a word for you this evening, man. Wait upon the Lord. Be still and know that He is God.

Those who wait upon the Lord. Anytime you feel rushed, pushed, frightened, confused, wait. I've had to make decisions recently that I felt rushed, I felt pushed, I felt confused, and I just said, Lord, it's yours.

I'm not gonna worry about it, it's yours. Tremendous peace came over me the next day I knew how to make the decision. Waiting on Him.

Waiting on Him. So if you feel these things, if you're rushing ahead, then you slow, that's how you slow back. You fall back and you wait on God.

Renew your strength. Now, of course, sometimes we need to make an immediate decision, right? Somebody's on life support, this, you know. I'm not saying that, but overall, it's best to just wait upon God.

And even in those situations, wait upon God and pray. So I just, when I said earlier, sin blinds, it leads, it deceives, it excuses, it justifies our behavior. Here's what the word of God does.

When you hear it and you do it, take this to the bank. It will open blind eyes. So no matter what situation you're in tonight, I don't know what brought you here.

I don't know if you're in deep depression, despair, hopelessness, anxiety, fear. You're out of God's will. It's too late, it's never too late.

If you're hearing the words I'm saying, it's not too late. God is using this to draw you back. And here's what obedience tonight will produce.

It will open blind eyes. It will lead you in the right direction. It will conquer deception.

It will crucify sin. It won't justify it. It will expose sin instead of excuse it.

It will prevent danger instead of leading us into danger. That's what the word of God does. It's that powerful that it'll lead into God.

You have worship, you have the word of God, you have power. And then many people ask, I'll go back to the first question. People said, you know, how can I change my life or what is God's will for my life? God's will is crystal clear on five things.

The Bible says to be saved and to worship him, to be holy and set apart for his glory, to be filled continually with the Holy Spirit and to witness to others and make disciples. I don't know, it might be six things. But it's funny, the Bible says this is the will of God.

This is the will of God. This is the will of God that you be holy and set apart. This is the will of God that you be filled with the Spirit.

This is the will of God that you be saved and sanctified. This is the will of God that you make disciples. There are some things clearly outlined in Scripture.

So if you're not doing these, I wouldn't worry about the other ones. Right? If I had \$10 for every couple I talked to who said, we're having sex before marriage, but we wanna know if this relationship is God's will. Well, let's start with what you do know and the rest will fall in place.

You can't jump ahead to this when we already know these things. So right here, to be saved and to worship him, are you saved? Are you saved? Do you truly know him? Do you have a relationship with him? If not, during worship, all you have to do is repent of your sin and cry, call out to God and say, Lord, I need you. I confess that Christ is Lord.

I believe in my heart that he's raised him from the dead. I want to be saved. That's all you have to do.

That's the will of God. And then the will of God is to be filled with the Spirit of God and to worship him. That's fighting against the flesh, to worship him and be filled with the Spirit of God.

And then it doesn't stop there because if it stopped there, we'd just be fat on the word of God. It tells us now to go out and make disciples, to go out and to witness to others. So as it's coming in, it's got to go out.

If all it does is come in, it doesn't go out, you'll become a very staunch good Pharisee. I've got six translations of the Bible and I got through them all this year. When's the last time you witnessed to Christ or witnessed about Christ? Ah, I don't have time for that.

You see how that works? If it's flowing in, it's got to be flowing out.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/rjGcl7HZzsc.mp4>

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