

How to Hear From God

by Shane Idleman

To truly hear from God, you must make a sacrifice, remove distractions and idols, and make time for God in a quiet, solitary place.

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Scripture: Numbers 23:3

Topics: "Hearing from God", "Removing Distractions"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the importance of hearing from God amidst the distractions of modern life, urging believers to seek a desolate place free from competing voices. He highlights that true communication with God requires sacrifice, obedience, and a willingness to remove distractions, drawing parallels from the story of Balaam in Numbers 23. Idleman encourages the congregation to create space for God in their lives, reminding them that the Holy Spirit guides and directs those who seek Him earnestly. He concludes by inviting the church to reflect on their relationship with God and to remember His goodness through communion.

Transcript

And this will be one of your greatest battles. I'll just let you know up front. This will be one of your greatest battles, but it doesn't have to be.

This does not have to be a challenge. And some of you will say, I just wish I knew God's will. I just wish I could hear from God.

And I can sympathize with you. I'm right there with you. Sometimes it's a challenge, but I don't think it has to be as hard as we make it.

And what I want to do this morning, there's a text here that I read on vacation. I've been kind of putting this together for the last few weeks. And I believe God put on my heart for a few different reasons.

Number one, in case you haven't caught this, actually it's not number one of the sermon. It's just part of the introduction. There are too many voices right now speaking to us.

Isn't there? Or aren't there? Too much stimuli. Maybe some of you over 55, 60, you don't realize that, but for us that are younger, there's just too many voices. Too much stimuli, too much Facebook, too much Nike propaganda, right? And all the too much, too much, too much, and who to listen to.

Who to invest into our lives. Who do we allow to speak into our lives? There's too many distractions as well. And a scripture that really leaped out is be still and know that I am God.

Why is it so hard to be still? Have you ever tried to just be still for an hour? I can't, I can't, I'm restless. There's a restlessness. That restlessness has to be brought into submission to truly hear from God.

He says be still, wait on me. Know that I am God. Listen, I will direct you.

I will guide you. Remove the competing voices. Because as the world gets louder, God will not necessarily raise his voice to be the loudest voice.

It's often the still, small voice that directs us in the calm and in the quiet seasons of our lives and to remove ourselves from these distractions. Now I did fact check this because when I read it, it was pretty hard to believe, but it is true. Melinda Gates, that is Bill Gates' wife, said her children don't have smartphones and only use a computer in the kitchen while they're under 14.

Her husband Bill, the Microsoft co-founder, spends hours reading books while everyone else is refreshing their homepage. The most sought-after private school in Silicon Valley, the Waldorf School of the Peninsula, bans technological devices for those under 11. They teach children of eBay, Apple, Uber, and Google to make go-karts, knit, and cook.

Facebook Mark Zuckerberg wants his daughters to read Dr. Seuss books and play outside rather than use Messenger. Steve Jobs, his children, when he was alive, had strict limits on how much technology they used at home. And Bill Gates said we often set a time after which there is no screen time.

In their case, this helps get them to sleep at a reasonable hour. So it's astonishing if you think about it. The more money you make out of the tech industry, the more you appear to shield your family from its effects.

Because they realize this is affecting us. The culture war that is raging is fueled by the media, primarily, not by the word of God. And we're being distracted.

Christians are being led astray, pulled in the wrong directions, making decisions they shouldn't make, all outside of God's will. But God says stop and listen. Now, I'm gonna actually pull this message from a peculiar text in Numbers 23.

Numbers 23, it's the story of Balaam. And I'm gonna read it up here. Many of you know it.

I've talked about it before. But to summarize it, King Balak saw the children of Israel coming, advancing. And he said we are going to be outnumbered.

We are going to be conquered. So I'm gonna hire a prophet for hire, King, Prophet Balaam to curse the children of Israel. Now, Balaam is a particular character in himself because is this guy, was he, he heard from God.

He blessed the people. But then we see that he was killed later in the siege of certain cities. We also see that the doctrine of Balaam is not something that is positive in the book of Revelation.

We see that Balaam led the children of Israel astray because he enticed them to follow the women of the land, the false religions. But we also see that he was God's messenger in this case, that he spoke thus saith the Lord, that he said I can't say anything except what God puts in my heart. So this guy's interesting.

We don't know whose side of the camp he's on. But it appears that he's a prophet for hire. His motives were not clear.

But something really stood out to me when I read this a few weeks ago. And the scripture, actually the sentence that stood out was this. So he went to a desolate height and there God met him.

He went to a desolate height. He went high up in the mountain away from everybody and there God met him. And then my memory went right back to three years ago.

I looked it up online. I found my notes on the message I gave, the need for a desolate place where Jesus would often go where? To the crowd to pray or to a desolate place? And I begin to look at this passage and there's a few things I wanna share with you. They're all biblical.

I might have taken a little bit too much liberty on this in regard to certain things, but it's all biblical. And I wanted to share with you what I pulled out of this and it's helped me tremendously, not only of course the last two weeks, but in my life these points to hear God. Because I think most of you wanna hear from God.

I'm assuming this is relevant, right? Anybody here says, I don't wanna hear from God. I got it all taken care of. Most of us are not there.

So let's read this, Numbers 23. Then Balaam said to Balak, okay, you want me to curse the children of Israel? Build seven altars for me here and prepare for me seven bulls and seven rams. The reason is Balaam, I believe, is going to go and seek the advice of God.

He says, okay, we better make a sacrifice. We better prepare our hearts. He knew the Old Testament.

This King Balak didn't know the Old Testament and the way that God would provide redemption. But Balaam, I have a feeling knew. And Balak did just as Balaam had spoken.

And Balaam and Balaam offered a bull and a ram on each altar. Then Balaam said to Balak, stand by your burnt offering and I will go. Perhaps the Lord will come to meet me and whatever he shows me, I will tell you.

So he went to a desolate height and God met Balaam. Then skipping to verse five. Then the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth and said, return to Balak and thus you shall speak.

This is interesting. Anytime God speaks, he doesn't say candy coat it. He says, here's the meat.

Don't put lettuce and tomatoes and a bun on it. Just here's what I want you to do. Don't tone it down and don't bring it up.

Just do what I've asked you to do. So he returned to him and there he was standing by his burnt offering and he and all the princes of Moab. So what Balaam went on doing is he began to bless the children of Israel and not curse them.

So this king hires Balaam to go and curse the children of Israel. Curse them so they die. They're coming after me and instead of cursing, Balaam begins to bless the children of Israel and after spending time with God, that's what God wanted him to do because he was pronouncing blessings on the children of Israel.

But verse 11, then King Balak said to Balaam, what have you done to me? I took you to curse my enemies and look, you have blessed them bountifully. So he answered and said, must I not take heed to speak what the Lord has put in my mouth? In other words, it doesn't matter what you want. It's what God has told me to speak.

So I'm gonna pull some keys from this. Four keys from this passage and then four keys from the word of God and they all go together. Number one, to hear from God and I want you to just get your hearts right this morning and say, Lord, in your own heart, Lord, I want to hear from you.

I need to hear from you on this situation. I need clear direction. I need to know what your will is.

I need, God, I need to hear from you or if you've been distant from God, if you're bored in church, you don't have that powerful relationship, say, I want that to change this morning. So here is number one that we glean from this text. A sacrifice was made.

A sacrifice must be made. To truly hear from God, it involves a cost. Most of you know that, right? We need to remind ourselves often because sometimes we forget that there is a cost.

To live a holy life and blameless life before God, there is a cost. You won't look like the world. You might lose some friends.

You might be mocked. You might be ridiculed. You might be scorned.

Even those who are religious won't understand what you're doing and when it comes to hearing God, there is a cost. Well, like what, Shane? Like going to bed and turning off the media so you can hear from God. Rising up early or going to bed.

If you're a late nighter, then turning off the junk and getting alone with God, but I can't do that. That should tell you something. I'm too antsy.

I'm a busy body. I just can't focus. Right, the flesh is prevailing and there is a cost.

This has to be number one. A sacrifice has to be made and you know what it is in your own life. I don't need to throw things out there, but what is preventing you from making that sacrifice? I'm just too busy, people say, right? I heard an acronym for that.

Being under Satan's yoke. Now, busyness, we know, can be good, right? You don't wanna be lazy. You wanna be doing God's work, but when the busyness begins to pull you away from God and many of you say, I know I need to be in the Word more.

I know I need to be praying more. I say that. We all say that.

So to do that, to hear from God, there has to be a cost. I'm gonna turn this off so I can approach God. I'm gonna end this relationship that is pulling me down so I can approach and listen to God.

There always has to be a sacrifice. Something has to go. In order for God to be added, something has to go.

God, that idolatry has to be removed and God has to take center stage. On a separate note, this is just a little extra information. When I'm helping people eat better and take care of their body, I remind them that

once something goes, you better add something because, oh, I'm gonna take away this and this and this.

What are you adding? Because you'll go right back to this, this, this, and this. Well, I'm gonna get rid of, no, you have to add. You have to replace a sacrifice.

Isn't that so true in every area of life? To truly experience the best that God has for us, other things, even good things, have to go, have to be removed from our life if it's distracting us from the call of God. Now, be encouraged. Don't feel beat up.

This is a continual process. I've not mastered it. There's things that still need to go in my life, you know, maybe too much time on social media, too much time on this, and not spending enough time with God during certain days.

And it's not about perfection. It's about getting the heart right. So once you say, okay, Lord, I'm gonna make, I'm gonna make that, I'm gonna take that challenge.

I'm gonna remove some things. For most of us, it begins with what we're watching. Oh, that's quiet.

The pin drop, right? Is it this kind of pin or a different little pin? You see, we have to remove that, and it's gonna hurt. Here's why. Removing an addiction always hurts.

It took about five days with no phone on vacation. What's going on? What's going on? You know, where's the phone at? Shane, you left it back at the, oh, no. Why? Because the addiction, it's sensory.

It's always wanting to be entertained. And so there's a cost that has to be made. And then number two, this is absolutely important.

A desolate place was sought by Balaam. A desolate place was sought by Jesus Christ. Jesus would often withdraw to a solitary place, a desolate place, a quiet place.

So there has to be somewhere, something you go, somewhere you go to where you spend time with God. I remember reading an A.W. Tozer's book, or one of those guys, many years ago, that they wrote it many years ago, that it was so bad for this mom, with all the kids running around, she said, my quiet place is when I put the apron over my head. And I just sit there in the kitchen with the apron over my head and just spend that time with God.

Finding that place, there's gotta be a place where you go to and say, Lord, I'm putting you on the calendar. You'll go to the doctor's appointment. We'll go to all these other places, but saying, what happens is you get to that place and you say, God, here, I wanna hear from you.

I wanna meet you, I wanna listen. And I believe God will put things in your spirit to guide you according to his word, as you're looking at his word. And one of the things I'm gonna talk about, one of the announcements I'm gonna make, it's something I've been praying about for a year.

And God spoke to me in a powerful way and I asked for confirmation and different things, but it was in a desolate place, just taking time away. We live in the desert, people mock the desert. Moses didn't have a problem with it.

John the Baptist didn't have a problem with it. Instead of complaining, why don't we start embracing what God has given us? You live in the Mojave Desert, people say to me, so did John the Baptist. He lived in a

desert, so did Jesus.

I haven't mastered locust and wild honey yet, but there's something about getting away and moving the distractions and hearing from God, because then his voice will become more prominent. You'll be able to hear more strongly the voice of God. Here's why, to hear someone, you must draw close and focus your attention by removing the distractions.

Somebody out in the lobby when they close the door is not going to be able to hear me very well if there's not a speaker on out there. What do they have to do? They have to position themselves, come in the door, remove distractions, and if you're talking to your neighbor, you won't hear either, right? So why do we think when it comes to God, this doesn't apply? It actually applies even more. To remove the distractions, to focus, okay, Lord, let me look at your word.

I want to meditate. That's why I think meditating on the word of God is so important. Sometimes you just chew on scripture and meditate on it and remind yourself who God is.

It's interesting, working with my son in baseball and different sports, I saw these new glasses advertised. They're called swivel vision, and they actually block the peripheral vision. They wear glasses like this, and so when they're at batting practice, all they see is the pitcher and the ball, not these distractions.

Same with basketball. Here's the hoop, here's the hoop. Not all these distractions.

How much more for us in our life, in our walk with God? That's what the desolate place does. Just here, well, Shannon, I don't really have one. Do this, tell your spouse, I'm going to just take a drive for a half hour.

Turn off the radio, even. That'll be hard. Gosh, it's so quiet, yeah.

I just think we're overstimulated mentally. They didn't have this problem 100 years ago. We're just overly, and that's why I think we're seeing attention deficit disorders skyrocket.

We're seeing kids can't go to sleep and they're not getting good sleep, and health issues is because we're just over the top. Stimuli. So make sure you find that desolate place and do this.

Matthew 14, 22. Immediately, Jesus went to a mountain by himself to pray. I love praying with our spouse and we try to pray with our kids more often, but you have to get away and just pray by yourself.

And maybe some of you need a little help in this area. I don't just go all the time and have this long list with God and just sit down this checklist. I don't know if that's always the right approach.

Sometimes I just sit there and say, God, I need to hear from you. I'm hurt, I'm wounded, I'm discouraged. I don't know what to do.

Every Monday, my prayer, I have no clue what I'm saying next Sunday. Lord, we need, what's the plans for our children? Lord, I just need to hear from you. And you begin to be built up and encouraged, especially as you look at the word of God, you start to put the mind and counsel of God into your own mind.

And you begin to, God just begins to build you and strengthen you. I don't know exactly how it works because people say, I don't know how to pray. Well, sometimes you don't have to have a checklist.

You just, like you would talk to anyone else. God, help me. I don't even know what to pray for.

Holy Spirit, would you help me? He comes alongside and helps you in this area. And then number three, let this be an encouragement. Circumstances can get us out of the comfort zone.

Circumstances can get you out of the comfort zone so you will now hear from God. In this case, and this is what I meant by some of these principles, I don't know if you could really pull them out of this text, but the circumstance that got Balaam out of his comfort zone and King Balak went and approached him is because the children of Israel were coming, the children of Israel were coming to conquer. And the circumstances, difficulty got him up and out and seeking God.

But God will also use challenges in our own lives. They were here at early morning worship, David and his wife, Jennifer. I don't know if I've shared.

I've shared before on Facebook and in the bulletin. But I think it was April, he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, a lot of dots in the brain, multiple sclerosis, and also two inoperable brain tumors. And they couldn't get answers from the doctors.

Long, long story short, this is the home of the pantry I cleaned out and the refrigerator I cleaned out. You know, the pantry pastor that gave me that title. And going through and cleaning out, it was bad, they would tell you.

I mean, there's nothing good in there. So we started with that, got their health back on track. See, we forget that.

We think everything's spiritual. Not necessarily. A lot of it is also physical.

What we do with our body affects how we live. So once that was taken care of, they started to feel so much better, got their life back on track health-wise and doing so much better. Then we helped them out a little bit.

There was a GoFundMe account. And they were actually able to go to UCLA and get some good medical advice. And one of the surgeons said, I don't know where that other surgeon got their advice.

You don't have multiple sclerosis. Those are just little specks from your sleep apnea and oxygen. And here, we just gotta get you on a better sleeping.

And those are benign tumors. Those aren't cancerous tumors. They're seeing.

It's like, so he was so angry. Yeah, I mean, he's like, I do not wanna talk to that other surgeon. I mean, he just, what do I do with this anger? And I said, but look at the good it got you and your wife on the right track.

You're sleeping well now. Not three monster drinks a day. Angry outbursts, children, you know.

Look how much, look at how God used his circumstance. Now, that's a positive one, but also sometimes there's negative ones. God will use circumstances because many times we don't wake up until we're woken up.

Uh-oh, things are changing. The circumstance now has forced me to do something. There's water in the room, metaphorically speaking, right? Or I lost my job or this is happening.

And now we begin to, God can move us because of the circumstances has allowed us to, has motivated us to move. So as in this situation and with God, allow circumstances to get you out of that comfort zone. One thing about the flesh, it'll always default to comfort.

Many reason, the reason many people aren't here in the morning for worship or aren't serving at the church, I mean, just so convicting part out right now, is because we're in a comfort zone. Let's just be honest. We get in a comfort zone.

The flesh goes, let's put that air conditioning right on 72, comfort. Let's put this body right on the sofa for three hours every day. Comfort, comfort.

And there's nothing wrong sometimes with being comfortable and relaxing, enjoying the things God has given us. But when that begins to dictate your life and rule you and control you, it's gonna be hard for God to direct and lead because you're in a comfort zone. You're in a car that doesn't wanna move.

So he'll put it and drive and then now you gotta drive and steer the steering wheel in the correct direction. And then number four, I love this point, I bring it up often, but it bears to be repeated. It's obedience leads to direction.

Amen? Obedience leads to direction. Verse five, then the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth and said, return to Balak and thus you shall speak to him. And verse 12, Balaam said, must I not take heed to speak what the Lord has put in my mouth? In a nutshell, what is whispered in the ear, proclaim from the rooftops.

What you hear in secret, proclaim where? On the mountaintops. So when God says do something and we do it, it leads to hearing God better. Sometimes, because we think God will change his mind.

I know he told me to do that, but I'll get to that later. I wanna hear from God. He says, no, you're gonna stay stuck and stupid.

You're gonna stay there for 40 years until you listen to me, until you obey me. See, this is a hard lesson. Let me see if I can get way back here.

The biggest thing I've learned about God's will is he says, do this. I say, mm-mm, not right now. I want direction.

No, go back. Okay, all right. Now do this.

I don't wanna do that. Go back. Oh, man.

Knowing God's will is basically steps of obedience. Steps of obedience. As I obey his word, prompt of the Holy Spirit, guided by godly counsel, and begin to obey his word, his will unfolds.

So that's what I meant by hearing God is really not that hard. We make it difficult because we fight against it. That's why it's hard.

Because the most miserable spot for any Christian to be is halfway, right, on the fence. Double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. And we get over on this side.

I know God wants me here, but I'm over on this side. I'm miserable. I'm anxious.

I'm fearful. I'm confused. I'm lashing out at people.

What's wrong? God, I need to hear from you. Go back. All right.

God, you're positioned well again. Now there's the joy, the peace, and then God says, stay in that area. Let me guide you.

So obedience, one of the lessons I did, I did a devotion with my kids last week. I said, I gotta tell you guys what I learned in the Bible. What, dad, what? Obedience brings life.

Meaning joy, contentment, direction. You know Christians. Let me talk to the Christians who have a solid relation with God.

The most joyous times of your life are when you're right with God, are they not? Are they not? Come on, we know the joy and the peace, the joy, the contentment, the love. When I'm right with God, it brings life. So obedience brings life.

Disobedience brings death. And I pulled in stories from the Old Testament. It's God's word.

He would just say, just obey me and have life. Disobey me and there's death, spiritual death often. Death of a marriage, death of a family, death of a relationship.

There's so many people, and my heart is, that's why this isn't really a rebuke. It's a tear-stained plea. So many people are not doing what God wants them to do because they're in that state of disobedience.

They don't have the joy of the Lord. I'm not in the Bible like I should be. I know I shouldn't be doing this.

And there's just no joy. Now, I don't know if it's possible to walk in joy 24-7. I haven't mastered that yet.

If you have, come talk to me. You know, it's always a challenge because the enemy will take things. And even Charles Spurgeon, I'm finishing up one of his biographies, he suffered through depression many times and gout.

And it was a very challenging time. But I do know that obedience brings life. Obedience brings direction.

So is there an area that God is working in your heart in? Listen, that's the next step of hearing from God. For example, there's people who have unforgiveness in their heart. And God has been dealing with them.

Nope, not that, Lord, not that. Okay, let's praise the Lord. Let's go to Bible study.

But you're still not hearing because He wants you to go back and fix that issue, fix that unforgiveness. Anger over something, a job let you go, bitterness, an addiction that God is dealing with, certain things that God is convicting us, change, stop, and we say, no. It's hard to get direction, clear direction.

Because what we're really doing is putting earplugs in. And we wonder, where's God's voice? It's right there, through obedience. What God, in a nutshell, what God tells you to do, just do it.

Let's write to Nike and tell them to use that one. Right, what God says to do, just do it. What He says to do, just do it.

And I could go on there, but I'm not going to. By the way, pray for the unity night this Tuesday. We're having it this time at Pastor Darrell's church.

And a lot of these hot button issues are gonna come up, so I do need a lot of grace and just unity. And I try to remind myself that we're Ephesians four, to just be lowly and gentle. And I think the enemy's just having a field day.

My advice is gonna be not to have so much dialogue, but to have prayer meetings together. That's where we're gonna fight this battle. We're not gonna fight going back and forth.

We're not gonna win anything. It looks just like the world. But sometimes I think it's good to hear the other side and hear where people are coming from.

And then, okay, let's take this to prayer. Let's just seek God. Let's worship together.

Let's pray together. That's where real change takes place. Not in the protest line in the prayer closet.

That's where we change the heart of our nation. So here's some extras that I didn't pull from the story, but many of you know, and I think it'll help a lot of you. Number five, use the word of God to convict and confirm.

Use this to convict and confirm. So if you wanna know, Lord, Lord, I wanna hear from you. Do you wanna know how God thinks? Do you wanna know, Lord, I wanna know what your thoughts are about this situation.

Begin to put the thoughts of God into your mind, and that's how you understand where God is coming from. When the word is in you, you're in the word. When you're in the word, the word is in you.

And it begins to, oh, that makes sense. I understand the heart, the counsel of God. A business decision, a financial decision, a relational decision, you'll start to understand the mind and counsel of God.

So here's my question. How do you make wise decisions if you're not saturating your mind with wisdom? How does a person, and we know, most people, I'll just throw out there so you don't feel too convicted, most people are too busy to spend a significant or a decent amount of time in the word. Let's just be honest.

If we took a poll and we were honest, most people are not spending a lot of time in the word. So they want to make wise decisions, but their mind is not focused on wisdom. It's not wisdom.

Well, if it's not in this shame, what is it in? I'm glad you asked, Netflix and Facebook and YouTube. That's where we're getting our wisdom. So we're making financial decisions we shouldn't have because we don't have the wisdom.

We're making relational decisions we shouldn't have because we don't have the wisdom. We're getting into arguments that never should exist because we're getting into the world's mindset. So use this to convict and confirm things.

The announcement I'm going to make, I had to do a lot of confirmation on. Lord, what does your word say? I need to have confirmation, and I believe the fleece, you know, the fleece that Gideon did, that can be dangerous, but it can also be good in this sense. If you get carried away with it, you know, Lord, if the

light turns red, then I know I need to stop.

Well, it just might be set up on the city timer to be red. And people just don't, oh, I need to know, I need to know that, but I also believe if you come to God and say, Lord, I trust you, I don't trust me, and I don't know if this is shame or God. I don't know if this is your will or my will.

I don't know if this is a good thing or a God thing. Lord, I need confirmation. Lord, would you show me? Please, God, show me, because I don't trust myself.

I trust you. I believe God will show you. I believe he will.

Funny, this is just a side note. As we were praying about when Pastor Abraham, and we talked about coming on board and whatever that looks like, Mike Thomas, I don't know if he's here, there he is, he texted me on vacation. He goes, man, Abraham did a great job.

We should bring him on. Like, ah, Mike, you don't even know what you're asking and praying about, and see, so the Lord will use little confirmations like that sometimes, because I believe that God's people, his church, will confirm his will. That's why I often go to the leadership team or to the church body and confirm, what do you guys think of this? I went to the elders before, and they didn't like my idea, and so we dumped it, because in the multitude of counsel, there is wisdom, in the multitude of seeking advice from others and looking to them, but I also believe, the reason I'm on this portion of wisdom, I believe God will direct us through wise decisions more than we think, because what we do is we don't make wise decisions, but I wanna hear from the Spirit of God.

Well, no, the Spirit of God will always line up with wisdom. Where I took vacation, up close by, there's a lake up there, many of you know of Convict Lake. Seven people drowned in 1990 on the lake.

They went out because the ice looked fun. There's a boys camp, a couple fell in, counselors went to help them, then two rescuers went to, firemen went on the ice, and they fell in, and the recovery efforts were sad to watch and look at some of the pictures, but it wasn't wise, it wasn't wise. There's also another one, the lakes I go to, they lost, in October, three people when a boat went under.

Three foot waves, it's stormy, but we wanna fish. She's just not wise. These adrenaline junkies that you see on YouTube, I try to have my kids not watch too much of this, because it's just stupid, it's not wise.

You don't need to do a backflip off a church that's 40 feet high, and try to land in a swimming pool 10 by 10, and all these things, it's just getting ridiculous. Have you heard of the Tide Pod Challenge? Do you know what Tide Pods are? It's laundry detergent, and they do look pretty yummy, and they're in little pods, and now kids are having a challenge, I dare you to eat Tide Pods. Rewind, that is the stupidest thing I've ever heard.

You're gonna die, probably, or go to poison, the poison center at the hospital and have your stomach pumped. See, wisdom, wisdom cries out. The book of Proverbs says wisdom is the principal thing.

Therefore, all you're getting, get wisdom, get understanding, she will exalt you, she will promote you, so God says, I've laid before you the way of life, and the way of death, what? Choose wisely. So many people, it comes to wisdom. I see so many marriages being ruined before they've even started.

Before they've even said, I do, it's destined to fail unless God intervenes. Why, because they didn't use wisdom. But Shane, they're so attractive.

That's called hormones. That's called sex drive. That's called lusting.

That's not necessarily wisdom. Use wisdom. What does God's word say about finances? How did I get in this financial pickle? What does God's word say about finances? Because I'm a little concerned.

I mean, I like to be one of those people, I'm led by the spirit. I use that term, I'm led by the spirit often. God will prompt me to certain things, but it better line up with wisdom.

It better be according to God's word. I don't wanna discount number six either. The counsel of others helps remove personal bias.

When you wanna hear from God, do you know you have personal bias? Did you know that? You have your own personal defense attorney. Right in here. He'll go to court with you.

He'll make excuses for you. He'll allow things that God won't allow. It's a defense attorney.

Inside, it's called the flesh, and it'll defend itself at any cost. So here's what happens. When you go to other godly Christians and you ask for counsel, hey, what do you think of this decision? And if the majority say, I don't think that's a good decision according to wisdom, and you go against that, be careful.

Because God will use the counsel of others often to help us see clearly, because we often don't see clearly. If you're not open for godly counsel, you're probably not hearing from God as clearly as you think. And I'm often leery of those people who haven't sought godly counsel and still make decisions.

I'm at the point now where I probably ask too much counsel. Too many emails. Dave, you probably say, the elders, Shane, you email me too much.

Right, what do you think of this? Because I wanna, you know, I'm trying to balance things off of people. I'm actually looking for red flags. It's okay to look for red flags.

What if the person says, I don't care if there's any red flags. I'm going forward. So when you ask godly, hey, what do you think of this? Be ready, be ready for their advice.

And don't go ask people you know what they're going to say already. You know you're about ready to go make a bad financial decision. You know exactly who to go ask for advice that's going to support you.

Right? Go to my friend who's a car buff and say, hey, I'm thinking of getting a Dodge Charger, \$70,000, right off this 1,000 horsepower, right off the starting, I'm gonna park it right out front. What do you think? Oh man, that would be so awesome. We can go take drives on the weekend.

That's, oh, see, I got godly counsel. No, that's not godly counsel. That's bad counsel.

And you start to look to others for advice. Now, of course, you have to be careful here because others don't control us and we're always getting advice from others and we can't make our own decisions and we're lost without the advice of others. I believe they should just come alongside and help support our decision or help us kind of challenge us in some areas that maybe we're not seeing correctly in.

And that's the whole point of that. And then number seven, the Holy Spirit does direct us. He comforts us, he convicts us, he assures us.

So the Holy Spirit, I believe, will lead believers, spirit-led, that's where that term comes from, to be a spirit-led. Now, people have made this weird when it shouldn't be. You should be led by the Spirit.

I believe that God's Spirit will lead us and convict us. And again, that's what I'm gonna talk about after the announcement is that God put something in my heart, it was spirit-led, and it lined up with his word. And the Spirit will come alongside and help.

That's one of the words of the Holy Spirit in the Greek, *parakletos*, is to come alongside and help you. A good example of this I had, we actually rented bikes on vacation and I had to pull the two little ones with a trailer. Have you ever tried that on not-too-flat areas? 100 pounds in this trailer I'm pulling? Well, I got, right before he hooked up to the bike, I said, what's that bike? He goes, oh, that's our battery-operated bike.

I said, I want that bike. I want that bike. What's \$25 more? I don't care, I want that bike.

And I was just zooming past everybody. Why? Because I could go to one, two, and then three. And whatever you pedal, it matches it.

So I felt like somebody pushing me. And I said, Lord, this is exactly what the Holy Spirit's role is, as to come alongside. See, I still had to pedal.

I still had to do something, and the whole, just that extra power, that extra thrust got me going, kept me going. Same thing with the Holy Spirit in your life. Holy Spirit, lead me, direct me.

I'm going to go in a certain direction, but I need you to come alongside and help and direct me in this area. And then finally, number eight, what we're going to do now at the end of each service is worship cleans and renews our hearts and our minds and our ears, spiritual ears, so we can hear from God. That's why I'm such a big proponent of worship.

Worshippers hear from God. And I hear from God often throughout worship, don't you? Those of you who like to worship, you hear God's voice, not necessarily a booming voice and this, but you hear the still saw voice of the Holy Spirit just comforting you and being there and directing you, maybe in certain decisions, maybe you didn't know what you were going to do coming into church, but now you know what you're going to do on a major decision leaving church because that worship spoke to you. And in a nutshell, we reap what we sow.

So it does beg the question, what are we sowing this morning? Because we will reap what we sow. Don't say that God is silent when a sacrifice is not being made. Don't say that God is silent when you're not obeying.

Don't say that God is silent when your Bible is closed. Don't say that God is silent when your prayer closet is empty. Don't say that God is silent when you're not listening to counsel.

And don't say that God is silent when you have no time for him and you're too busy. You see how simple this really is? To hear from God, it's just minor adjustments and getting back on the right track. So what we're going to do during worship this morning is we're actually going to take communion as well.

And communion is a time to remember, and I also stumbled on Jeremiah 18, 15. God said this, because my people have forgotten me. Because my people have forgotten me, they follow the wrong things and they stumble in their ways.

They are double-minded, anxious, and disobedient. I added the item and paraphrase onto that. But the main point was because my people have forgotten me.

Can you imagine forgetting God? Now, of course, they have a concept of God. They didn't forget about God completely. What he's saying here, what happens is they forgot how to live right.

They forgot how to live according to God's word and be holy and set apart from him. So they forgot about the goodness of God and they lived in the old way they wanted to. They forgot who God was.

So this morning, is there any area where you've forgotten God? You've drifted from God? You haven't been able to hear correctly. So before taking communion, get your heart right. Paul reminds us, get your heart right.

Don't come with the heart in a wrong spot. Come with your heart right and saying, Lord, I need to get this area right. Also, communion is for believers, those who believe.

You can't take communion and not know who Jesus Christ is, because that's the whole point. We remember the blood that was shed, we remember the body that was broken, and we take communion, we remember. To me, it's a wonderful time to get back on track.

Don't you ever need to remember? Most people that come back to God, I would say everyone that comes back to God remembers where they have fallen. The Bible says, remember where you have fallen and come back, come back to me. And when Jesus says, I stand there knocking at the door, that's not a proof text necessary for salvation.

It's a proof text for the church, for the Christian to open the door again. I stand at the door and I knock. Let me come back in.

Let me have that relationship with you. Remember the goodness of God. Remember what I brought you through.

Remember the times of refreshment and joy when I sustained you. Remember when I held you through that darkest time. Come back to me.

Remember that, remember and come back. That's the point of communion and remembering God.

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