

THE SCRIPTURAL AND SENSIBLE BASIS FOR DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL RECEPTIVITY

“The first step in developing a more spiritually receptive life of listening to God is becoming convinced that listening to God is not something strange or sketchy. It is not something added or extra. It is the normal, natural, plain, pure, sweet, sane and sensible means by which God builds our relationship with Him and leads us in life. ”

2 Timothy 2:7 *Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.*

2 Timothy 3:16 *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

1. While it is true that the cannon of Scripture is closed, we should not assume that God has gone silent with respect to his children.

When we say that God still “speaks” or “communicates in many ways with us we are not claiming that our experience of that or our reporting it to others somehow becomes “inerrant”. We are definitely not adding to the Bible.

When we say “God spoke to me” aren't we claiming inerrancy? No we are not claiming inerrancy nor are we claiming canonical revelation. I do not believe God reveals himself in fallible ways. But I do believe there is a difference between revelation and inspiration. Unless, with the revelation God gives a divinely superintended reporting and recording of that revelation we can not claim inerrancy. (For a further discussion of this see Grudem, Wayne. *The Gift of Prophecy In The New Testament And Today*; Crossway Books, Westchester IL. 1988 pp 81ff)

There are several common objections that often surface to squelch the idea that God speaks to us outside of Scripture.

1.) If you have Scripture you are thoroughly equipped, why would you need another voice to speak to you? 2 Timothy 3:16 *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

2.) Direct revelation was necessary in the early days of the church because the Bible wasn't complete.

3.) Direct revelation was only necessary during the formative years of the church.

4.) God is no longer speaking through prophets etc. His Son is the final revelation. Hebrews 1:1 *Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.*

2. In Scripture direct revelation came not only to extraordinary believers and those closely connected with them but to all kinds of people according to the will of God.

3. In Scripture God's communication is not limited to an audible voice bringing a crystal clear message there are many ways he speaks, leads and guides.

Numbers 12:6-8 *And he said, "Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. ⁷ Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. ⁸ With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"*

John 16:13 *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.*

4. In Scripture God’s communication in terms of leading and guiding his people is not unusual or sporadic but common and frequent.

5. The Bible specifically teaches us to expect God to be in communion with us, complementing what is revealed in Scripture and is guiding us in the issues of life.

6. The Bible itself teaches us to test everything and hold fast to what is good.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.

7. The possibility of misuse, mistakes or even abuse is not a good reason for neglecting an important aspect of Christian spirituality and ministry.

**Overly
Rationalistic
Biblicist**

Too dismissive of the
mysteries of spirituality

Overly confident in the
powers of rationality

Biblically rigid but selective

1 Thess. 5:19-20 *Quenches
the Spirit and despises
prophecy.*

**Spiritually
Discerning
Disciple**

Biblically Grounded
And Spiritually Receptive

Humbly relying on the work
of the Spirit

Biblical Integrity and
Spiritual vitality

1 Thess. 5:21& 22 *“Test
everything; hold fast what is
good.”*

**Overly
Impressionistic
Charismaniac**

Too accepting of feelings
and hunches.

~~Emotionally dependent on
spectacular experiences.~~

~~Shallow emotionalism and
And spiritual immaturity.~~

1 Thess. 5:19-22
*“Inadequate testing and
holding fast to abuses.”*

