

WEEK THREE: continue Ch. 1, “Why You Don’t Have to Hear God’s Voice in Your Heart; Or, How God Really Speaks Today” and ch. 2 “Why You Don’t Have to Believe Your Intuitions Are the Holy Spirit; Or, How the Spirit Shapes Our Hearts”

Week 2, recap: “I have good news for you: the voices in your heart are all your own. So you don’t have to get all anxious about figuring out which one of your voices is God. None of them is. The revelation of God comes in another way, through the word of God in the Bible, and this is something you can find outside your heart” (2).

Engaging the Problem More Deeply

1. How External Things Shape our Hearts

1. *Mass Media and Consumerism* - trying to shape our hearts into wanting and needing their products
2. *Group Dynamics, or the Herd Instinct* - “Have you ever been in a room full of people doing something together that doesn’t feel quite right to you? Despite your discomfort, you’re likely to feel all sorts of pressure to give in and join the group” (10).
3. *Consumerist Spirituality* - “What people hear in their hearts is actually pretty predictable. You don’t need to look inside their hearts; just look at the social environment that surrounds them and the peer pressure it generates. . . . The entertainment on our screens these days is carefully designed—and often extensively tested—to shape our feelings and opinions, the voices of our hearts. There’s a whole technology for this, techniques you can learn in a marketing class or a church growth seminar. . . Your heart is part of their statistics. This leads to the great irony of consumerist spirituality. The practice of inward listening is not an escape from external forces like mass media, social engineering, electronic technology, and statistics. On the contrary, it’s promoted and supported by the marketing techniques of consumerist churches” (12-3).

2. Understanding Intuitions

1. *Define* - “Intuitions are perceptions rooted in the habits of our hearts” (21)
 1. “They’re ordinary, frequent, and important, but not mysterious. You don’t need the Holy Spirit to explain why we have intuitions. And yet, once we understand what intuitions are, we’ll see why a heart in which the Holy Spirit is working will have different intuitions than a heart that’s unholy” (21)
 2. “I can’t explain it’ is *not* a sign that it’s God working in our hearts . . . [rather it means] ‘I don’t have the vocabulary I need to say this right.’” (23)
 1. *Intuitive reason* - “Although intuition is often hard to explain and is not the result of a process of reasoning, it is not alien from reason either. It’s not something unreasonable that makes no sense. It’s a perception based on an intelligent habit, something skilled and insightful, even a kind of wisdom”

2. *Dispute* - "Our intuitions are worth arguing over because, just like our attempts to figure stuff out and explain things, they can be wrong. That's why it's so important they're not the voice of the Holy Spirit. They're the ordinary result of human skill and understanding, which means they're often not right, but sometimes wrong. They're certainly not infallible or beyond criticism." (25)

How God Truly Shapes Us

1. By His Word - God's Voice Matures us in Wisdom

1. "As our moral character develops and the Spirit works within us, the voices of our own heart can even grow into voices of wisdom. This is not a wisdom we should trust as if it were the word of God, but it is a wisdom God commands us to seek: the wisdom to discern good from bad, to make responsible adult choices, to live with moral integrity." (7)
2. "The place to look for God's word is not in your heart, but in the gathering of God's people for worship, prayer, preaching, and teaching." (16).

2. By His Spirit - God Forms our Intuitions and Heart

1. Consider the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5.22) and how God forms these virtues in us.
 1. "The Spirit does not bypass our hearts, their voices and feelings, and efforts, but rather works in us to reshape our hearts so that, while they remain truly our own hearts, they are **formed in the image of Christ**" (29)
 2. "They are perceptions of our own hearts, but they result from the Spirit's work in us...so the **fruit of the Holy spirit is a sanctified heart**, and the intuitions of a sanctified heart are worth listening to"
 3. "The Bible assumes we know something about our hearts which in modern times we often forget: that **our hearts are about what is outside them**. They are inwardly shaped by what they outwardly perceive, by the people outside them that they love and the things outside them that they do, like an artist practicing the violin or the saxophone. . . . This is because our hearts are inherently turned outward, just like our eyes, which are always looking away from themselves." (33)
4. **How do we know God's Spirit is working in us at all?**
 1. "The biblical answer to questions about how we know God keeps coming back to God's word and especially his promise. There is a promise of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures (Gal. 3.14; Acts 2.38). **If we think that's not good enough, then we'll end up having to look to ourselves for an answer.** So the more anxious we are, the less we trust God's word, and the more likely we are to try to look into our own hearts to find the Holy Spirit." (34)