

GOD IS NOT GIVING YOU NEW REVELATION

HAVE YOU NOTICED how many Christians claim to have received direct, divine revelation from God Himself? It's become very common for Christians to claim that God told them to do whatever it is they're doing. People say things like "God told me to preach this message" or "God told me to phone that person" or "God told me to make that decision". In each case people claim that they were not acting of their own accord; instead God Himself ordered them to do whatever it was they did. They were acting under Divine Command.

This phenomenon greatly disturbs me because it is completely unbiblical. Whenever someone begins a sentence with "God told me..." I inwardly wince. Stop and think about it for a minute. As soon as someone claims that they are acting under the direct command of God, they make themselves unaccountable and it becomes impossible to criticize them. After all, it wasn't *their* idea; they were just doing what God told them to do! God told them to jump, so they jumped. You can't even have a rational discussion with them because any criticism of their actions becomes criticism of God. After all, if God told them to do it then who are you to question God?

However, does God actually speak to people in that manner? Does God *really* talk to people and send them Divine messages telling them what to do and when to do it? I am

convinced that the answer is a resounding *no*. In this era of history God does *not* speak to us directly. He may use our consciences to convict us and He may use those around us to remind us of the truth, but God is no longer in the business of talking directly to His people. Instead He has given us the Bible, and He expects us to learn what it has to say and apply it to our lives. God wants us to guide our lives *by the Bible*.

ALL MEANS ALL

You see, the Bible tells us that it is all the divine revelation that we need:

2 Timothy 3:16: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto **all** good works."

This passage says that the Scriptures have been given to us so that we can be perfect. It tells us that the material it contains within its pages is enough to *thoroughly* furnish us for *all* good works. In other words, there are no good works that are outside its scope. The Bible claims that it has 100% of the divine revelation that we need in order to live in this era. No other revelation is necessary. This means that *we do not need extra messages from God in order to live our lives and do God's will, because God has already told us everything that we need to know*.

Now, the Bible's claim to be sufficient is either true or false. If it is true then we do not need a "personal word from

God". We don't need God to speak to us because the Bible already contains everything that we need to know. In other words, it means that God has *already* spoken and all we need to do is read the Word that He has given to us.

However, if God *does* speak to His people today then 2 Timothy 3:17 is a lie. It means that the Bible is *not* enough and that we need additional information that God failed to supply. It means that the Bible does not fully equip us for life but instead leaves us unprepared for many situations, and our only hope is for God to speak to us directly and fill in the critical information that He left out of the Bible. Since this train of thought is utterly ridiculous (because every word in the Bible is true, including 2 Timothy 3:17), that means that *there are no such things as personal words from God*.

But, some may say, isn't it true that God used to speak directly to His people? Didn't God speak to men through dreams, angels, and so forth? Yes He did, but the Bible tells us that He no longer does that. His method of speaking to us has changed:

Hebrews 1:1: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,
2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;"

As you can see, things are different now. In the past God spoke to mankind in many different ways, but now God only speaks to us through His Son Jesus Christ – and Christ's teachings can be found written in the New Testament. The Bible that God gave to us is complete. He did not leave anything out.

EVEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, GOD RARELY SPOKE TO PEOPLE

I realize that people think that God has always led His people by speaking directly to them, but that is not the case. The truth is that very few people in the Bible were *ever* spoken to by God. According to Dr. Sam Kurien:

“The only individuals who heard from God more than twice in the Old Testament are Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jacob, Aaron, Joshua, David and Solomon. These eight and no more!”

Think about what that means! People commonly assume that God has always talked to His people to tell them what to do whenever they were faced with a decision, but that is not the case. Even in Bible times it was an extremely rare thing to hear from God. The Lord simply did *not* communicate with His people on a regular basis in order to guide them through life's decisions. There are large numbers of prominent Bible characters who never heard from God *even one time*, as Gary Gilley points out:

“Below are some of the important characters found in the Old Testament who never heard directly from God as far as we know: Caleb, Esther, Mordecai, Ruth, Joab, Hezekiah, Josiah, Jehoshapat, Jonathan, most of the judges, Ezra, Nehemiah, Shadrack, Meshach and Abd-nego (although they may have been comforted by the Son in the fire). In addition whole categories of key leaders never heard from God personally, including none of Jacob's sons except Joseph, none of the kings of Judah after Solomon, none of the judges except for Gideon, none of the

returning exiles and none of David's mighty men or military leaders. This is just a sampling; many more could be cited." (Gary Gilley)

On top of that, when God did speak He *never* spoke through an "impression" or "feeling". As Dr. Sam Kurien pointed out:

"When God spoke, it was in an audible voice, or on occasions through a vision or dream. There is not a single instance of God speaking to the mind or heart inaudibly through an inner voice."

People today like to say that "God spoke to my heart", but *nowhere in the entire Bible does God ever speak to anyone in that manner*. There is zero Biblical evidence that God communicates that way. It is true that the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin and helps us understand the Scriptures, but even the Spirit is never depicted as whispering to a person's heart. There is not one case of that anywhere in the Bible.

Moreover, when God did speak He talked about big-picture issues, not personal life decisions:

"When God did speak in Scripture it almost always dealt with the big picture of what God was doing in the outworking of His redemption program or the life of His people in general. You will search in vain to find God telling people what job to take, how many donkeys to buy, or what land to purchase — except as it was related to the bigger issue of God's dealings with His people." (Gary Gilley)

Today people believe that when they are faced with a decision they can ask God what to do and God will personally tell

them what choice is right. The problem with this idea is that the Bible does not support it. That type of divine advice is exceedingly rare in the Bible. There were a couple men (like King David) who had the ability to inquire of God, but few people ever had that privilege, and those who did only used it in the most extreme circumstances. It has *never* been the ordinary course of action for the average believer.

You will simply not find any verses in the Old or New Testament that say “When you are faced with a decision, ask God about it and He will divinely impress the correct decision upon your heart.” Nor will you find any verses that say “Sometimes God will impress an action on your heart, and whenever God does that you should obey it immediately.” I realize how common these two beliefs are, but they are not Biblical. It is true that God guides us, but He speaks to us through His Word, *not* through “impressions” or direct revelation. It is true that God shapes our lives, but He does so by His divine power – the same power He uses to raise up nations and cast them down. God is *not* sitting in Heaven hoping that you will make the right decision so that His plans will work.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE APOSTLES?

Some might say, weren't there times in the Bible when God guided the lives of the apostles? Yes, there are – and in each case He did so through angels or supernatural revelation, *not* through speaking to their heart:

“...all of the examples which are selected to support individual guidance are clearly instances of *supernatural revelation*. In the book of Acts, such guidance came through visions

(Acts 9:10-16; 10:3-8; 10:17; 16:9-10; 18:9; 22:17-21), angelic messenger (Acts 8:26; 12:7-8; 27:23), physical miracle (Acts 8:39), an audible voice from God (8:29; 9:3-6; 10:19-20; 23:11) or a prophet who had received direct revelation (Acts 21:10-11). Are there other recorded examples where detailed guidance was given through some means other than supernatural revelation? No...

"At no point in Scripture do we read of a believer asking, "What is God's individual will for me in this matter?" Much of the terminology found in presentations of the traditional view is absent, either in vocabulary or on concept, from the pages of the Bible. One does not read of the "specific will," "center of God's will," "right decision," "putting out a fleece," or even "finding God's will."

"But even more startling is the fact that no decision is ever explained on the basis that it was "God's individual will." Today we commonly hear people say, "I did thus and such because I knew it was God's will for me." Or, "I felt in my heart God wanted me to do it." The apostles often gave reasons for their decisions, but never in such terms." (Garry Friesen, *Decision Making and The Will of God*, p. 91-92)

Many people believe that God has an individual will for their lives, and it's up to them to seek that will and figure out what God wants them to do. Does God want them to go into this profession, or that one? What house does God want them to buy? What car does God want them to own? People pray about

it, get an impression in their mind, and assume that their impression is God's command for their life.

Yet people ignore the fact that *no one in the entire Bible ever lived their life that way*. Gideon's fleece was a real, actual fleece and a real, actual supernatural miracle. The still small voice that spoke to Elijah was an actual, audible voice, not an “impression” or “feeling”. Even in those miraculous cases there is no evidence that either of them spent the rest of their lives living out that example. Gideon did not spend his life putting out more fleeces. No Bible character ever sought a divine word from God for every decision that they faced in life – and the reason is because *that's not how God works*. Instead God gave us His Word and He wants us to live by its principles. Sadly, the modern generation has decided that the Bible isn't good enough for them. Instead they want God to “whisper the right decision to their heart” – even though God never promised to do that. God guides our life by His power, His providence, and His Word – *not* by “impressions” or “feelings”.

DO NOT REJECT GOD'S WORD BASED ON YOUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES; INSTEAD JUDGE YOUR EXPERIENCES BY GOD'S WORD

But, you might say, isn't all of this negated by the fact that these “personal words” really do exist? After all, God really does speak to people and tell them to do things! People pray for guidance and then they suddenly know what to do. Sometimes people get the urge to call someone, and lo and behold something good comes of it. Isn't that proof that God really does speak to His children today?

I'm afraid not. You see, there is an enormous difference

between “I suddenly knew what to do” and “God Himself told me which choice was right”. Likewise, there is a big leap between “I heard a voice” and “That voice was definitely God”. In each case *you* are deciding that the voice must be from God. You are ruling out the notion that it might have been your own idea, and the reason you are ruling it out is because of *your belief* that God talks directly to His children. Therefore, if you ask God what to do and you suddenly think of something, your belief leads you to conclude that whatever you just thought of must have come from God. *But that is not the only possible explanation.*

There is an easy way to prove that these “impressions” do not come from God. You see, God cannot lie and *God cannot be wrong*. Whenever God speaks He speaks authoritatively. In fact, the way prophets were tested was by evaluating the outcome of their predictions. If they ever got *anything* wrong then they were false prophets, and God demanded that they be executed for lying:

Deuteronomy 18:20: “But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.”

21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?

22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.”

That is how serious it was to claim that God spoke to you. People who stood up and said “This is what God told me” were literally putting their very life on the line. If anyone ever claimed

to be speaking for God when God had not actually spoke to them, *God commanded that they be executed*. This means that whenever you stand up and say that God told you something when it wasn't God at all, you are committing a sin as serious as murder. If you are wrong about the source of your “impressions” then you are committing a *very, very serious sin*. You may take it lightly, but *God does not*. It is a very serious business to say “God told me”.

It is even worse when you realize that there is no record of God ever talking to someone through “impressions” or “feelings”. People who say “God told me” have invented an entirely new method of divine revelation that has no Biblical support whatsoever. That is a very dangerous thing to do. If you are wrong and that inner voice isn't actually God then *you are in a whole lot of trouble*.

So what about these “impressions” – are they 100% accurate 100% of the time? Absolutely not! Sometimes they work out and sometimes they don't. When something good happens people use that as proof that it was from God, but when things go terribly wrong they say that they “misunderstood” – or they blame God for giving them bad advice! On top of that, there are times when one person claims the Holy Spirit told them one thing while another person claims the opposite. Is God divided? Do you really think that God is so confused that He can't even figure out His own will for people? Of course not! The truth is that God isn't speaking to anyone. He doesn't do that anymore *because He wants us to live by the Bible*.

Since these “impressions” cannot be trusted 100% of the time, that means they cannot possibly be from God. A prophet that had that kind of track record was labeled a false prophet and was to be *put to death* for the serious crime of claiming that God said something *when God had not said anything at all*. Putting words in God's mouth is *that serious* to God.

The Bible has a lot of negative things to say about these

“personal words from God”. It says that the Scriptures are all we need in order to thoroughly furnish us for all good works. It says that we do not need *any* other revelation. It says that God has stopped speaking to people through dreams and visions and direct revelation. It says that very few people in all of history have ever heard directly from God Himself, and that God has *never* talked to *anyone* by impressing something upon their mind. It also says that anything that is not 100% accurate 100% of the time is not the voice of God.

All of this makes it crystal clear that “personal words from God” are just our attempt to dodge responsibility for our own actions. Instead of being honest and saying “I decided to do that”, we claim that it was God's doing. Instead of admitting that our dream really was just a dream (and not an actual guided tour of Heaven), we claim that God is giving us extra information that He did not include in the Bible – information that we *have* to have, even though 2 Timothy 3:17 says that the Bible is enough to cover all situations that we will ever encounter.

THE BIBLE IS A FINISHED BOOK

That last point often gets overlooked. If personal words from God exist, then the Bible is an open book that can be added to at any time by anyone who claims to have heard from God. It means that the Bible isn't finished but is a work in progress that is being constantly enlarged. After all, it's impossible for Jesus to speak with anything less than absolute authority! If Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, told someone something then whatever He said is absolute truth and we should add it to our Bibles. If Jesus gave someone a tour of Heaven and revealed all kinds of new information about it then we should add a new book to the Scriptures. After all, Jesus has spoken and every one

of His words is flawless. It means that we should be busy collecting all of this new revelation and adding it to our Bibles so that everyone can know what *else* Jesus had to say.

I realize that line of reasoning is ridiculous, but that is exactly where belief in “personal words from God” leads. The Bible simply does not support the idea that the Word is an open book that can be added to as the need arises. After all, we are told that we should contend for the faith that was *once* delivered to the saints:

Jude 1:3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was **once** delivered unto the saints."

You can search your Bible from cover to cover and you will never find any verse that says “The Scripture is a work in progress. God is going to add a lot more to this as time goes on, so stay tuned!” The Bible is a closed book; you cannot add a Book of Mormon, a Book of Tours of Heaven, or a Book of Things That Jesus Revealed To Me. I realize how popular the “God gave me a tour of Heaven” books are, but guess what: that constitutes *new revelation from God*, and God is not in the business of giving people new revelation.

This is how one person put it:

“The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture does not imply that God cannot add any more words to those he has already spoken to his people. It rather implies that man cannot add on his own initiative any words to those that God has already spoken. Furthermore, it implies that in fact God has not spoken to mankind any more words which he requires us to believe or obey

other than those which we have now in the Bible.” (Grudem)

Does this mean that God will never speak to His people again? Of course not. But it does mean that for now, in this era and in this life, the Bible is all that we need. When we crave a “personal word from God” we are telling God that His Word is not enough – that God omitted important information that we cannot live without. We are telling Him that His Word does not thoroughly equip us for all good works and that we need something more in order to get by. That does not honor God or His Word.

The truth is that God did *not* tell you to make that choice and God did *not* speak to you and give you new revelation. There are no personal words from God! The Bible is all that God has given to us, and it really is all that we need.

