

Listening and Praying for People who are willing to Change - 4

Session 4 - Holiness in what we listen to ourselves and in others

1 - Overview of the Course Structure

Listening:

- 1 – Persons in relation to God and to one another.
- 2 – Living the Union with Christ by the Spirit
- 3 – Presupposed matters for citizens and Christians in Australia
- 4 – Listening to one another: listening for one another.

Praying:

- 5 – Access to God through Christ in the Spirit
- 6 – Secret prayer, requested prayer and corporate prayer
- 7 – Presupposed matters for Christians in Australia about prayer
- 8 – Praying according to the will of God – led by the Spirit

Doing it:

- 9 – Praying with faith
- 10 – Working together.

So far:

Session 1 explored the basic relations on which we conduct the life God has given us. We saw that knowing God, on the basis that He has begun the conversation with the Jewish people, and then through Christ to us, means that we are relational in all our exchanges with Him and with one another.

We explored how this was reciprocal, and that it was based upon a wonderful act of grace which drew us into the love of God. We investigated how Christ has done all this work for us, and that we needed to see how it led to a gracious exchange with the Holy Spirit now, as we are in union with Him in our spirit.

In Session 2 we introduced the rather obvious principle that when people have done things in the past, they have, of course, decided to act. So we saw that we may presume they have decided to do so. We outlined the importance of following people's decisions.

Further, we saw that the gift of repentance was decisive for shifting and establishing a freedom to take place from past actions, habits and commitments.

Session 3 showed us that people do not arrive into our presence and relationship as neutral. Folks arrive committed to certain ideas, both from their education, their Christian culture that which surrounds them. We ignore these at our peril. Where people are not clear in their knowledge of relationship with God causes most of their problems. This raised the importance of teaching people right there, as you talk with them, the truth about matters upon which they are confused as they are committed. These current corruptions in the teaching of the church block the reception of grace, because they force us into a contractual, rather than a covenantal understanding and they make people insecure and works-driven.

We also gave an example of how to pray with someone in such away as to: [1] keep them free in their decision making from ourselves as they go. [2] to follow their decision making path to the issues that confront them today. [3] to make certain that they have a freedom to pray, which is not always the same as the freedom to talk about a matter.

Here in Session 4 we open ourselves to an important matter of the holiness of God. We look at how that holiness manifests itself in His life and accordingly, how it comes over into ours. We explore what it means when people are ignorant that God is holy. We investigate how being holy implies that we listen exclusively to God.

PART 1 - being holy involves listening exclusively to God

- 1 – Hearing the word of the Lord is something we may expect
- 2 – The Christian life is a constant struggle.
- 3 – The indwelling Spirit of God may be grieved and his purifying fire can be quenched.
- 4 – Other human voices than the shepherd's voice.
- 5 – Salvation from bondage and salvation to exclusive relationship with God.
- 6 – Other demonic voices than the shepherds.
- 7 – When is it that God says He does not want to hear from us?

Listening and Praying for People who are willing to Change - 4

Session 4 - Holiness in what we listen to ourselves and in others

8 – When does God stop speaking with us?

9 – Are there times when the word of the Lord does not come?

PART 1 - being holy involves listening exclusively to God

1 – Hearing the word of the Lord is something we may expect.

We have seen that the discipleship school is for a “new” Christian, or a more experienced Christian of some years standing in the Church. For the new or the older Christian the Holy Spirit has come to dwell within them. He brings the Word of God to them, either through quickening the written word of God or registering the impact of preaching and spoken prophetic word or He speaks to us through our conscience as He guides our thoughts.

This means that listening to God is something we are equipped to do; and the presumption is that He is speaking to us and that we shall receive this word of God given. We do expect to hear; for He said, “...my sheep hear my voice...” [John 10.4-5,14].

In this course we expect to hear God in a clear way. Our faith is that He speaks, and speaks personally.

But do we always hear Him? Is it always clear? Have we ever heard Him? Do we sense He is quiet with us? These are possible and important questions. What if they are our own questions? Then we need to look at what follows carefully.

2 – The Christian life is a constant struggle.

As we shall see later in the discipleship school, there is a place of constant tension that the Christian occupies as living in this world but with a new birth which is not of that world. We are strangers as to our origin, and we have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us to empower our life in this struggle [Romans 8]. He also fights for the holiness of God in our life against our own lusts and desires [Galatians 5.16-6.8].

3 – The indwelling Spirit of God may be grieved and his purifying fire can be quenched.

Scripture teaches us that the Holy Spirit is a person; He can be grieved by what we think, say and do. And as a purifying fire for living the godly life, He may be quenched. We can pour cold water on His purifying work in our life by what we think, say and do. Both of these possibilities, the grieving and the quenching of the indwelling Spirit of God emphasise to us that He is gentle with us and that we are free to exercise our will, even in ways that contradict His presence and power.

4 – Other human voices than the shepherd's voice.

Jesus made it clear that His sheep hear His voice. The basis for that was that they are His sheep. He governs them, provides for them, protects them from enemies. In response, their part of the relationship is to obey Him, to accept His provision and to walk in security in the midst of hostile forces all around them.

They do not undertake to provide for themselves or to protect themselves.

It is an exclusive, holy relationship that Jesus has with His sheep. They are not responding to the other voices of other shepherds. He spoke this in the face of the assumed shepherding of Israel by the Pharisees. Men who, in spiritual matters, were blind guides [John 9.35-10.21].

In His teaching to His disciples, He warned them of the leaven of Pharisees; in image, drawn from the Old Testament that refers to the defiling nature of the human, religious traditions of men. Read Matthew 23 in reference to these teachers of the law who burden people terribly.

Read Colossians 2.8-23 where the apostle Paul warns us against a prescribed life style urged upon us; a life based on hollow philosophy and human traditions [2.8] and derived from the worship of angels. This latter is often associated with a false humility [2.18]. It warns us that, if we wish to restrain sensual indulgence, then rules, even if they look wise, are of no value at all [2.21-23].

5 – Salvation from bondage and salvation to exclusive relationship with God.

Because our course should be Jesus-centred, there is a strong emphasis on salvation “from” the impact of the Fall and the bondages of human life - a rescue from Satan’s enslavement of us. Equally there is a strong emphasis on salvation “to” a godly life, lived by faith in the work of Christ for us and in union with Him under the power of His indwelling Spirit within us.

It was a parallel matter for Israel when God rescued her “from” the bondage of living in Egypt under slave masters and then saved her “to” a life with Him. In the wilderness Israel was receiving much revelation about the life to which they were saved. Throughout this early history and their later experiences with God, it was a struggle for them with their sensuality and fleshly desires; as it is with us, although the circumstances

Listening and Praying for People who are willing to Change - 4

Session 4 - Holiness in what we listen to ourselves and in others

es of God's dealing with us through Christ equips us differently.

6 – Other demonic voices than the shepherds.

As they were about to enter into the promised land, from which the eviction of the inhabitants was to make place for them, God knew they would come into contact with people who had listened to voices other than His. Their culture was powerfully infiltrated with demonic sources. These demons were the source of the misinformation about spiritual matters so evident in the Canaanite culture.

In one of the final speeches of Moses before they enter a warning is given about the detestable practices of the people of that land.

"When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or his daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord, and because of these detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the Lord your God. The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the Lord your God has not permitted you to do so." Deuteronomy 18.9-14

[1] This makes a clear contrast between the prophetic voice of God which is found in Israel as a reliable, true voice [Deut. 18.21-22] that God will constantly guard and call to account [Deut 18.17-20].

[2] It bases the warning on a connection between the practice of these Canaanite folks and the sort of voices they listen to. It shows that when these detestable practices are seen, they are of the kind that testify to the origin of what they listen to.

[3] Occult – secret or hidden – practices are driven by man's desire to know the future, to learn information hidden from us, and to use these powers to manipulate others.

[4] Over these practices God has said to His people simply, "Not permitted!"

Later in Israel's history He dealt strongly with them over these things.

7 – When is it that God says He does not want to hear from us?

[a] When He requires some action to be done before He will speak openly again. "Return to me, and I shall return to you." That is He has registered His displeasure with Israel and she experiences that displeasure as His absence. It is not His absence, but His refusal to speak which is the issue.

[b] When we are involved in listening to other sources which He has forbidden us. Eg. Ezekiel 14.3-11; 20.3. Saul died for this reason [1 Chronicles 10.13-14]. For this is listening to false prophecy, seeking it out and wanting to know it.

8 – When does God stop speaking with us?

[a] Whenever He wishes to. We need to see that all revelation is absolutely in the hands of the Lord. However, He has taught us generally that He is a revealing God [Amos 3.7] and doesn't do things without revealing it to his servants, the prophets.

[b] Consequently, the absence of a clear word from God is a judgment upon God's people. [Isaiah 28.10-13; 29.10].

9 – Are there times when the word of the Lord does not come?

[a] During the time when Eli was the priest at Shiloh there was a time of infrequent visions and the word of the Lord was rare [1 Samuel 3.1,21]. This drought of the word was broken with the judgment of Eli and the arrival of Samuel, about whom it was said that the Lord, "...let none of his words fall to the ground" [1 Samuel 3.19].

[See the way that Luke uses the background of 1 Samuel 1-2 as a model for the way he portrays the infancy of Jesus.]

[b] Amos was a prophet sent to the traditional religious folks to proclaim a famine of the word of the Lord [Amos 8.11-12. See also Amos 4.4ff; 5.18ff; 7.10-17; 8.5,11]

It is possible that the famine of hearing the voice of the Lord has to do with your own practices and it is helpful to check these against the Occult Practices of the Bible. If we want to hear God's voice now, and throughout life, then we may find the Holy Spirit convicting us of sin regarding our practice of such things.

Good to clear this first.

Listening and Praying for People who are willing to Change - 4

Session 4 - Holiness in what we listen to ourselves and in others

Part 2 - A personal checklist concerning forbidden practices

How did things get on the list?

Some of these things listed here are simply

1. contrary to the word of God and are explicit, clear and obvious. To read the text of the Bible is to know they are forbidden. Others are listed because they ask for a
2. commitment of will in the doing of the practice of them; this is, in itself, an opening to a deception. Others are listed because in the practical awareness
3. of local Australian Christians the Holy Spirit has often convicted people of sin in regard to them.

How best to use the list?

Each of these describe a practice; something which 1. has been done. It is the deed God forbids us here. It says nothing about motive, circumstance, or how it came to be that you did it. So, there is no judgment on motive required, for yourself or for others.

The list is simply a prompt list. It is not a rule or 2. some regulation imposed on you. If you can read it, find no conviction of sin from the Holy Spirit, then leave that prompt. Don't be controlled by the list, or persons who gave it to you. Just let the Lord speak.

The list is not exhaustive, but simply a list of 3. examples known to those who know. If you don't know what the things mentioned are, you probably haven't done it. Don't let the list make you curious. On the other hand, if you have been extensive in your occult activity talk to some older experienced Christian who can advise you.

What to do if I have done some of these practices?

Should the Holy Spirit convict you of sin, bringing to your memory certain deed/s then speak aloud to God about it. Confess the practice to God as a sin

1. Ask His forgiveness about it; confidently knowing
2. His reconciling work for you done in Christ. Trust Him about this. You will have His forgiveness. Repent of the deed; resolve to not do it again and
3. tell Him so. Renounce each deed particularly and any
4. associated occult involvement. Renouncing is a decision to cancel your commitment to the deed. Get rid of all articles associated with this activity.
5. Don't give them to others. Trust God to empower you, through the Holy Spirit,
6. to lead a clean life; one which God does not detest what you do. If you have the sense from the Spirit you should,
7. get others to pray for you about these matters.

1. Breaking the first commandment

Exodus 20.1 "I am the Lord your god...you shall have no other gods before Me."

Submitting our will to enquire out of curiosity into ☐ pagan religions. Visiting places where so called "god's [demons] are worshipped when we have no kingdom business there.

Have you voluntarily enquired into or passively ☐ contacted Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism or other voices contrary to Christ?

Have you, at any time in your life, searched for truth not ☐ based on the person of Christ? If so, have you decisively turned from it?

Have you been to pagan temples and other places ☐ of pagan worship? They may have been in Japan, Korea, Bali, Fiji, Singapore, Thailand, Greece, Dome of the Rock, Joss houses, Bahai temples, Sikh temples Mosques, Aboriginal or Maori sacred sites?

2. Satanism

Exodus 20.1-6, Deuteronomy 18.10, 1 Corinthians 10.2

Satan worship and other associated activities☐

3. Witchcraft

Deuteronomy 18.10-14

Includes all activities of witchdoctors. Spells, curses, throwing bones and pointing bones, drinking muti, the use of fetishes, initiation into blood brother relationships.

Listening and Praying for People who are willing to Change - 4

Session 4 - Holiness in what we listen to ourselves and in others

Have you ever put a hex or a curse on anyone? ☐ Have you paid someone else to do it?
Have you ever practiced on anyone, or passively ☐ allowed it to be done to yourself: mind control, mental telepathy, clairvoyance, extra sensory perception?
Have you ever made a blood pact, even when ☐ young, or “just for fun”?
Have you ever wished someone else dead?☐

4. Spiritism

Deuteronomy 18.11, Jude 7 [?]; Psalm 106.28-29

Calling up the dead, ancestral spirit worship, contacting spirits by ouija board [Faafee boards, “glassy glassy”], spiritistic healing, Spiritualism as a religion, necromancy [predicting the future from information gained from the spirits of the dead], psychography [like a ouija board], incubus – intercourse with demons, eating sacrifices offered to the dead.

Have you ever been to a spiritualist séances or tried to ☐ contact dead persons?

Have you ever spoken to the dead as if they can hear? ☐ Eg prayed to the saints, or spoken to relatives at grave sites.

Have you voluntarily read books on spiritualism which ☐ allege that the dead can return?

Have you consulted a medium?☐

Have you watched séances on TV or movies?☐

Have you ever played with a ouija board, even “just for ☐ fun”?

5. Astrology

Genesis 11.1-9, Isaiah 47.13-15, Jeremiah 8.1-2, 10.2, Deuteronomy 4.19, 17.3 Job 31.26-28

Have you read your horoscope? Do you attribute your ☐ relationships to other people as influenced by a Zodiac signs?

Have you ever had an extended horoscope or “life ☐ reading” made?

6. Fortune telling and divining

Deuteronomy 18.9-11, Ezekiel 13.23, Isaiah 2.6; 2 Chronicles 33.1-9; 2 Kings 17.17, 21; Jeremiah 27.9; 29.8; Leviticus 19.26; Micah 5.12.

Palm reading, cartomancy [telling fortunes by tarot cards and others], clairvoyance, tea-cup rading, augury [reading the entrails of a bird or animal], analysing a person’s handwriting style as a predictive basis, raading a crystal ball [mirromantics], divining by means of a rod or pendulum, psychmetry [diagnosing from a person’s hair or clothing] iridology.

Have you consulted a palm reader, crystal ball, or a ☐ fortune teller?

Have you, or allowed others for you, to read tea leaves, ☐ hand writing style with a view to some prophetic information?

Have you been controlled by bio-rythms, or ☐ numerology?

Ever used a divining rod to find water? Or let others do ☐ it for you?

7.Activity involving soul power

Romans 8.5-7; 12.1-2; Ephesians 4.23; 2 Corinthians 10.5

Includes mental telepathy, Mind dynamics, hypnosis, mesmerism, transcendental meditation, telekinesis and psychokinesis [moving or bending objects by psychic power], speaking in a trance, premonitions. Levitation, automatic writing and typing. Mind science and theosophy.

Have you tolerated the presence of poltergeists in your ☐ home?

Have you ever hypnotised anyone, just for fun?☐

Have you allowed yourself to be hypnotised for any ☐ reason?

Have you succumbed to psychic healing?☐

Have you had healing treatments by colour? Re-☐ birthing?

Have you performed or attempted to perform, astral ☐ travel, levitation, table tipping?

Have you been into mind science and metaphysical ☐ teachings. [These try to contact God with the mind only.

Mind science has the view that the mind is the only reality - so sin, sickness are not real, just errors of thinking.]

Christian Science? Scientology? Theosophy?

Have you ever done automatic writing or painting?☐

Have you played party games involving mental ☐ telepathy?

Listening and Praying for People who are willing to Change - 4

Session 4 - Holiness in what we listen to ourselves and in others

Have you ever done transcendental meditation? Zen □ meditation?
Have you ever blanked out your mind as a pre-cursor □ to these things?
Have you ever chanted a mantra mindlessly? Hare □ Krishna? Om?

8. Magic

Exodus 22.18

Black magic and white magic [there is no difference in source], use of charms, amulets, bewitching, enchanting. Death magic - the use of effigies, dolls, and pins. Passing illnesses to the dying. Using magic to defend oneself or to harm others.

Deception, sleight of hand, tricks. Transference [the moving of symptoms from one area to the other].

Have you slept with a charm [even the Bible] under □ your pillow?

Have you used magic to defend yourself?□

Or allowed others to defend you by magic without □ inquiring into what they are doing?

Have you burnt an effigy of someone, politically or for □ other reasons?

9. Superstitions

Pendants, amulets, lucky charms, St. Christopher medals, fetishes, letter of protection, chain letters.

Have you ever given lip service to superstitions: Friday □ 13th, black cats, slat over your shoulder, touch wood, wished on a star, walking under ladders, lucky and unlucky numbers, things come on threes, wishing wells etc.

Do you wear or have in your car, a St. Christopher □ medal?

Ever passed on a chain letter because of the threat □ implied?

10. Blasphemy and mocking God

Exodus 20.7, Isaiah 52.5; 2 Samuel 12.14

Material that is designed to mock God and promotes the idea that Satan wins.

Have you looked at material, movies, which mock God?□

Have you read the 6□th and 7th book of Moses, the book of Venus, the Other Side, books on occult practices?

Have you defiled the name of the Lord?□

Have you ever denied the divinity of Jesus, or His □ resurrection?

Have you read false teachings on re-incarnation? □ [These mock the resurrection and deny the atonement].

Have you engaged in Bahaism? [All religions are a □ manifestation of God. None are superior. Christ is one of the nine religious teachers.]

Have you joined a secret society or Masonic order?□

Your **reading assignments** to consolidate this session is to make your own notes of this session. Master these distinctions which we have made - they will alert you as you listen to others.

2 - The Use of the hour we have together:

[a] To acquaint you with the main things

[b] To direct you to the reading outside of the sessions

[c] Reading is mainly found on the website **www.davidboan.net**.

Linked to this site is **www.thegraciousgod.net**. It carries larger files, particularly of audio material in mp3 and mp4.

[d] To be constantly interrupted by what you ask and want to talk about.