

Listening to God

Read [Psalm 46:1-10](#)

LESSON 6

THE HALLMARKS OF GOD'S MESSAGES TO US

Jesus said of those who follow Him,

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand” ([John 10:27–29](#)).

What a great statement of hope and comfort that is to us! We can know the voice of the Lord. As we follow His voice and do what He says to do, we will never perish, and neither will we ever be snatched out of His hand.

“But,” you may say, “how can I be sure that the voice I’m hearing is truly the voice of God?”

There are five identifying hallmarks of God’s messages to us. They are a means of determining whether the voice that we are hearing is truly the voice of God. If you have questions about whether a message is from God, line it up against these criteria:

- 1. The message must be consistent with the Word of God, the Bible.**
- 2. The message will usually be in conflict with the mainstream of conventional human wisdom.**
- 3. The message will clash with fleshly gratification and basic human lusts.**
- 4. The message will challenge one’s faith to rise to a new level.**
- 5. The message will call for personal courage to do what God has said to do, or to change in one’s life what God has said to change.**

The Call to Have Courage

Finally, a message from God will likely call for you to have courage. If you are being asked to move against the tide of conventional human wisdom and act in contradiction to your fleshly nature, and if you are challenged in your faith, you are going to feel as though you are taking a risk in obeying God’s message to you. Any time you take a risk for God’s purposes, you are going to need courage.

Joshua knew this need for courage. The Lord challenged him with the mission of getting thousands upon thousands of grumbling Israelites across the Jordan River so they might claim the land of promise as their own. Prior to their crossing the river, the Lord exhorted Joshua three times to have courage:

“Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them” ([Josh. 1:6](#)).

“Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go” ([Josh. 1:7](#)).

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go” ([Josh. 1:9](#)).

Take a close look at these verses. In the first verse, the Lord reminded Joshua of the promised blessing that lay before him. As you stand in faith, believing God to be true to His Word, and you step out in obedience to His voice, keep in mind God’s promises to you.

The second time the Lord admonished Joshua to have courage, He said, in essence, “Stay on track. Don’t stray from My commandments and laws.” As you obey the Lord, you must stay in the Word, stay in fellowship with other believers, stay in prayer, and continue to listen keenly for God’s voice.

The third time, the Lord said to Joshua, “Don’t let yourself get scared or discouraged. Remember that the Lord is with you.” Fear and discouragement are subject to your will. You can command fear to leave you in the name of Jesus. The same goes for worry or feelings of frustration that you aren’t seeing God’s results as quickly as you would like. Remind yourself daily of what you heard God say, stay close to Him, and refuse to allow yourself to give in to fear or discouragement.

The good news is that the Lord doesn’t expect us to have courage on our own. The Lord tells us that if we will have courage, He will strengthen our hearts. (See [Ps. 31:24](#).)

When God speaks to us, the fulfillment of His plans hinges to some degree on whether we respond with confident, courageous spirits. His voice leads us not into timid discipleship but into bold witness.

