Can You Hear HIM Now?

THE THREE VOICES OF GOD

1. THE BIBLE
   2 Timothy 3:16-17, Romans 12:2 & 2 Peter 1:20-21/ 2 Peter 3:15-16 & Titus 3:8-9
   - It provides God’s point of view. (Commands, promises, principles)
   - It contains real letters to real people.
   - Worry about the clear stuff, not the obscure stuff.

2. THE HOLY SPIRIT
   John 16:6-13/ 1 Corinthians 2:10-16/ Philippians 2:13/ Romans 8:6-9
   - He provides spiritual insight and understanding.
   - He changes us from the inside out. (With both desire & power)
   - He primarily guides us through our thought processes.

3. WISE COUNSEL
   Proverbs 13:10/ Ephesians 4:11-15/ Hebrews 10:24-25
   - Together we can decipher things we’d otherwise miss.
   - Isolation is ultimately a sign of spiritual arrogance.

THE ONE THING MOST PEOPLE DON’T FACTOR IN

- Sometimes God sends us into a tough battle
  or through a deep valley.
  1 Peter 1:6-9/ Matthew 4:1/ Hebrews 5:8

WHAT IF THE THREE DON’T AGREE?

- The Bible trumps everything else.
  Acts 17:11/ 2 Timothy 3:15-16/ 1 Kings 13

- The Holy Spirit trumps wise counsel – But ONLY IF you are
  ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN!
  Acts 17:11/ 2 Timothy 3:15-16
Food for Thought
For the week of August 26, 2007
(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

1. In 1 Kings 13:1-26, we see the consequences of not listening to the clear voice of God. After reading the story, answer the questions below.

1 Kings 13:1-26

By the word of the Lord a man of God came from Judah to Bethel, as Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make an offering. [2] He cried out against the altar by the word of the Lord: "O altar, altar! This is what the Lord says: 'A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who now make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you.' " [3] That same day the man of God gave a sign: "This is the sign the Lord has declared: The altar will be split apart and the ashes on it will be poured out."

[4] When King Jeroboam heard what the man of God cried out against the altar at Bethel, he stretched out his hand from the altar and said, "Seize him!" But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back. [5] Also, the altar was split apart and its ashes poured out according to the sign given by the man of God by the word of the Lord.

[6] Then the king said to the man of God, "Intercede with the Lord your God and pray for me that my hand may be restored." So the man of God interceded with the Lord, and the king's hand was restored and became as it was before.

[7] The king said to the man of God, "Come home with me and have something to eat, and I will give you a gift."

[8] But the man of God answered the king, "Even if you were to give me half your possessions, I would not go with you, nor would I eat bread or drink water here. [9] For I was commanded by the word of the Lord: 'You must not eat bread or drink water there or return by the way you came.' " [10] So he took another road and did not return by the way he had come to Bethel.

[11] Now there was a certain old prophet living in Bethel, whose sons came and told him all that the man of God had done there that day. They also told their father what he had said to the king. [12] Their father asked them, "Which way did he go?" And his sons showed him which road the man of God from Judah had taken. [13] So he said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." And when they had saddled the donkey for him, he mounted it [14] and rode after the man of God. He found him sitting under an oak tree and asked, "Are you the man of God who came from Judah?"

"I am," he replied.

[15] So the prophet said to him, "Come home with me and eat."

[16] The man of God said, "I cannot turn back and go with you, nor can I eat bread or drink water with you in this place. [17] I have been told by the word of the Lord: 'You must not eat bread or drink water there or return by the way you came.' "

[18] The old prophet answered, "I too am a prophet, as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the Lord: 'Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.' " (But he was lying to him.) [19] So the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house.
[20] While they were sitting at the table, the word of the Lord came to the old prophet who had brought him back. [21] He cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah, "This is what the Lord says: 'You have defied the word of the Lord and have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you. [22] You came back and ate bread and drank water in the place where he told you not to eat or drink. Therefore your body will not be buried in the tomb of your fathers.' "

[23] When the man of God had finished eating and drinking, the prophet who had brought him back saddled his donkey for him. [24] As he went on his way, a lion met him on the road and killed him, and his body was thrown down on the road, with both the donkey and the lion standing beside it. [25] Some people who passed by saw the body thrown down there, with the lion standing beside the body, and they went and reported it in the city where the old prophet lived.

[26] When the prophet who had brought him back from his journey heard of it, he said, "It is the man of God who defied the word of the Lord. The Lord has given him over to the lion, which has mauled him and killed him, as the word of the Lord had warned him." [NIV]

What was the clear command of God for the young prophet?

What caused him to disobey God’s clear command and what were the consequences of his disobedience?

Why do you think the young prophet so readily listened to the old prophet?

How does this passage illustrate what Larry shared in his sermon about “what if the three don’t agree?”

2. The Apostles were people who consistently listened to the Holy Spirit. At times they wrote about specific things God told them to do. Yet at other times, their Spirit-directed decisions were communicated without a lot of “God talk.” Notice in the verses below the normal words used to explain their actions.

1 Thessalonians 3:1

So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. [NIV]

Philippians 2:25

But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. [NIV]

1 Corinthians 16:4

If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me. [NIV]

Acts 6:2

So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. [NIV]

Acts 15:28
It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: [NIV]

How could these examples affect the way you would talk about a decision you believe the Lord has led you to make?

3. In the two passages below, identify the wise counsel given, the response to that wise counsel, and the outcome of following or rejecting the wise counsel.

**Exodus 18:17-26**

Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. [18] You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. [19] Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. [20] Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. [21] But select capable men from all the people--men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain--and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. [22] Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. [23] If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied."

[24] Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. [25] He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. [26] They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves. [NIV]

**2 Chronicles 10:1-17**

Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all the Israelites had gone there to make him king. [2] When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard this (he was in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon), he returned from Egypt. [3] So they sent for Jeroboam, and he and all Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him: [4] "Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you."

[5] Rehoboam answered, "Come back to me in three days." So the people went away.

[6] Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. "How would you advise me to answer these people?" he asked.

[7] They replied, "If you will be kind to these people and please them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants."

[8] But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him. [9] He asked them, "What is your advice? How should we answer these people who say to me, 'Lighten the yoke your father put on us'?"

[10] The young men who had grown up with him replied, "Tell the people who have said to you, 'Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but make our yoke lighter'--tell them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist. [11] My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.' "
Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam, as the king had said, “Come back to me in three days.” The king answered them harshly. Rejecting the advice of the elders, he followed the advice of the young men and said, “My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.” So the king did not listen to the people, for this turn of events was from God, to fulfill the word the Lord had spoken to Jeroboam son of Nebat through Ahijah the Shilonite.

When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, they answered the king:

“What share do we have in David, what part in Jesse's son? To your tents, O Israel! Look after your own house, O David!”

So all the Israelites went home. But as for the Israelites who were living in the towns of Judah, Rehoboam still ruled over them.

What benefits have you received from listening to wise counsel? What consequences have you paid for not listening to it?

4. As you look back on the three voices of God, which of them do you have the easiest time hearing? Which do you have the hardest time hearing? What steps can you take to more clearly hear God speaking to you through that voice?