

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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Illumination and Personal Direct Messages

by Dan Trygg

We have been going through a study by Pastor James Brown on **the importance of seeking a “direct message” from God**. The focus has been on “Seizing the Direct Message” (*Carpe DM*), opening oneself up to the reality that **God is a communicator, and that He has things to communicate with you!** **There are many voices that come into our lives every day**, ...through entertainment, podcasts, advertising, and interacting with the people around us. **These voices affect us. They are influencing us**, ...informing our expectations, values and even norms that we may tolerate. **As disciples of Jesus Christ, it is vital for us to carve out time to seek out God’s voice**, ...*His message to us*. **We need to know what is truth, what is God’s wisdom for living**, ...**because the voices of the world around us would lead us in a different direction**. In the book of Proverbs, it is *the voice of Wisdom* versus *the voice of Foolishness*. In the NT, it is *the voice of the devil*, working through the world-system, versus *the voice of the Spirit* through the word of God. The devil and foolishness lead us to waste, distraction, sickness, loss, and even destruction. **God wants to lead us to health, benefit, productivity, and life that brings strength and blessing to us, ...to others, ...as well as honor to Him**.

If we want God’s counsel and wisdom, we must choose to make time for Him and His word. We must choose to carve out time, ...to set aside time..., to listen to, read, study and digest God’s word, so that *it* is what is guiding our thoughts and values. **We must make time in God’s word a priority. PRIORITY, ...that is an interesting word**. It means it is **FIRST, ...prior to anything else. It is to have first place**, ...the number one spot in our consideration and the foundation of our world view. It is to be the bedrock upon which we build our perception of reality. **It is to be the touchstone by which we evaluate and test out other ideas**. God’s messages are sound, healthy, tested and found to be dependable (Prov. 30:5). His way is the good way, ...the safe way, ...the healthy way, ...the sure way. As we choose to embrace and live by what He has revealed to us, **we will begin to discern where other voices or claims do not measure up**. They do not agree with what God says. **To be forewarned is to be forearmed**. We avoid trouble, because we listen to the counsel of God. We also can make better, wiser choices by following what God says. But, **we must know God’s wisdom first, in order to avoid trouble, or make wise choices. The prior knowledge of the word of God can equip us for living life more effectively**.

Developing habits of regular Bible study is a practical step toward gaining that prior knowledge of God’s word. Pastor Brown spoke of “keystone habits”, ...fundamental, strategic habits that will motivate us to form other habits that will be significant in transforming our lives and character. **If you change your habits, you will change your life. We make our habits, and then our habits “make” us**. JB shared that over 40% of the decisions we make on a daily basis are the fruit of the habits we have established in our lives. **What we are looking for is to hear a Direct Message, ...a personal word to us..., from God. We begin by taking time to read His word every day**. We should read until we hit something that “hits” us. **Don’t just read to read. Read to hear from God**. Expect Him to speak to you, to show you something that is applicable to you.

When you read through the Bible, one of the major themes that is revealed over and over is that God is a communicator. As the writer to the Hebrews wrote, “**God ...spoke long ago to the fathers ...in many portions and in many ways**” (Heb. 1:1). He conversed with Adam and Eve in the garden. He spoke to Noah, ...and to Abram. He appeared through visions, dreams, and even by coming in the appearance of a man. He spoke through prophets, ...in generation after generation throughout the centuries. He communicated with the great and powerful, ...and the poor and lowly, ...even to children. In one of my times through the Bible, I underlined every time God communicated with people in some personal way. It was amazing, ...mind-blowing! **God is a communicator, ...and He has chosen to parade that aspect of His nature in front of our eyes** in the uniquely inspired record of His dealings with people, ...the Bible. **He also is a God who hides Himself, ...but He invites us to seek Him**, assuring us that if we do so with our whole hearts, He will allow Himself to be found by us (Isa. 45:15; Jer. 29:13). **He even says that He will permit Himself to be found by people who are not even pursuing Him, ...calling out, “Here I am, here I am”** to those not intentionally looking for Him (Isa. 65:1). He says that **He is intimate with the upright, and His personal-counsel is for those who reverence Him** (Prov. 3:32; Psa. 25:14). How can you read these statements and invitations, and imagine that God is not interested in communicating with you? You are *not* an orphan child! You have a Father who loves you, and wants to have personal, intimate communication with you!

If you didn’t grasp that from reading the Old Testament alone, ...surely you can’t miss the next step in God’s invitation. Again, the writer to Hebrews wrote, “**...in these last days He has spoken to us in His Son...**” (1:2). **Jesus was the greater revelation of the Father’s heart**, ...the expression of His grace and the remover of every barrier to

reconciliation and intimacy with Him. The apostle John called Jesus “the Word”. He was God’s communication of love and grace come to dwell among us so that we would “see His glory”, and so that Jesus could “make Him known” (Jn. 1:1,14,18). **Because He laid His life down for us, the way has been opened into God’s holy presence, and we are exhorted, “let us draw near”** (Heb. 10:19-22). Jesus’ coming was all about establishing reconciliation, removing barriers, and inviting us into intimate fellowship with our Father in heaven. **That is the point, however, ...intimacy with God!**

On the night Jesus was betrayed, He spoke of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was to be a “Helper” like Jesus. This word means a “comforter, encourager, advocate and assistant.” The word itself, *paraklētos*, meant “one invited alongside to help”. As He introduced this ministry of the Holy Spirit, **Jesus further defined His role as being an instructor who would “teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you”** (Jn. 14:26). He will testify about Jesus, and take the things of Jesus, and make them known to them (15:26; 16:15).

In Ephesians 1:15-19, the apostle Paul prayed for those who had come to Christ, that God would “give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, that the eyes of your heart may be having-been-enlightened towards you to know ...what is the hope of His calling, ...what is the wealth of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and ...what is the surpassing greatness of His power unto us, the ones believing...”. **It is the work of the Holy Spirit to give us the skill (wisdom = ‘practical-skill, know-how’) to come to recognize and experience God, ...as well as to reveal (‘uncover what is hidden’) Him.** This is specifically so that we might know what is involved in being called by Him, ...what He has allotted to us, as our portion in doing His will, ...and what is the incredible greatness of His power that is available to us to accomplish His purpose. Notice that this work of the Spirit is described in terms of “the eyes of your heart having been enlightened”. **The Spirit enables us to see what we were otherwise dull toward. This is the illumination work of the Holy Spirit.** This can happen as we read the scriptures, as well as in other situations in life. **We are to “ask for” this illumination of the Holy Spirit,** as Paul was doing for the Ephesians. Remember, Jesus referred to the Spirit is the “one *invited*-alongside to help”.

The apostle Paul followed up on this idea in 1 Corinthians 2. **The Spirit of God has been given to us to reveal or “uncover” the wisdom of God that is otherwise hidden from our perception.** He has been expressly given to us for this purpose: “in order that we might know the things freely-given to us (lit., ‘graced to us’) by God” (vss. 7-13). **We start out as spiritual babes,** as people who are still thinking, feeling and perceiving things from a “fleshly” perspective (1 Cor. 3:1-3). **Some believers do not move beyond that stage,** either because *they do not know* that there is more, ...or because *they are unwilling to invest* in developing their spiritual maturity and discernment (Heb. 5:11-14). **Maturity comes through investing in and implementing the word of righteousness.** Those who intentionally develop a mindset, practice, and habit of looking for and applying the truth of God, as revealed in the scriptures and by the Holy Spirit, develop their ability to discern what is good and healthy from what is bad and unhealthy. This happens on an individual basis, and, **when we have a network of other Christ-followers who are seeking discernment, we can put our heads and hearts together to ascertain God’s revelation and leading.** “...with spiritual ones judging-together spiritual things” (1 Cor. 2:13). “...the things of the Spirit of God...are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14).

When you read through the book of Acts, you see over and over that the Holy Spirit communicated with His ministry workers and others in the body of Christ (8:29; 10:19; 11:12,28; 13:2; 16:6,7; 19:21; 20:22,23; 21:4,11). We are to be led by the Spirit (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:18), walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16) and keep in step with Him (Gal. 5:25). He helps us to pray effectively (Rom. 8:26), and manifests through us empowered gifts that come from Him (1 Cor. 12:4-11). Paul says that the law has been written on our hearts through the Holy Spirit, and it is He that is transforming us into Christ’s image, manifesting His character through us (2 Cor. 3:2-18). **It is quite clear from these passages that there is more to the ministry of the Spirit than illuminating the scriptures,** as strategic and significant as that aspect of His working is. He is a Person, living inside of us, who will direct us into action and empower us to reveal Jesus by our very lives, as we walk in obedience to His leading. So, **not only does He enable us to see and grasp the message of God recorded for us in the scripture, but He Himself is ready and able to lead us into His will, and empower us to do it.**

Jesus had indicated that He did what He saw the Father doing. He was paying attention, watching for what the Father would be initiating, so that He could join with Him. **He said that the Father had affection for Him and made known (‘showed’ or ‘pointed out’) to Him what He was doing** (Jn. 5:19,20). Later on, Jesus indicated that we who have loved and trusted in Jesus *also* have the affection of the Father (16:27). **He wants to also include us as co-workers in what He is doing.** It is the ministry of the Spirit to “make known” (indicate, show or point out) when He is inviting us to join Him. **This is a “Direct Message” from the Spirit that is for a particular situation or circumstance.** This “prompting, leading, or stirring” that we might experience *on the inside* of our inner selves, ...or some noticeable “coincidence” of circumstances, events, or conversation *in our surrounding situation or in our interaction with others...*, may be the indication of the Spirit that God is at work. This is our invitation to engage in that opportunity as co-workers with God. Because we spend time in the word of God, and seek to know Him and His communication with us, **we develop the ability to recognize Him and His leading, and learn to discern and act on the direct messages that come from Him.**