



DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Couch – Part 3
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Main Idea – Unlike people of the distant past, you do not need to rely on selected individuals to tell you what God is thinking. The Holy Spirit is God Himself, and will speak to you directly “person to person” in different ways.

We are made in God’s image

- Human males and females together reflect God’s image. Together, God is reflected through men and women. We can, therefore, do things He does.
- Through human males and females, God produces beings who are both spiritual and physical.
- That is different from animals or angels. Angels are spiritual, but they do not reproduce. Animals reproduce only physical likenesses of themselves. But animals are not spiritual beings as are humans and angels.
- Therefore, it is only through humans that God’s likeness is reflected.
- The earthly Church is the “maternal” complement to the Father’s “paternal” quality. God the Father works together with the Church to produce His will on the planet.

The Holy Spirit is God’s communicator to you

- There are things God asks of us in response to His free gift of salvation. However, God has no needs Himself. He does not need anything from you. Rather, His desire is to communicate more things to you.
- **John 14: 25-26 – These things have I spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. (NKJV)**
- God is able to communicate to you first-hand, person-to-person, through the Holy Spirit.

The importance of first-hand information

- In the Garden of Eden, Eve likely received her information about the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil* from Adam. Based on the sequence of how Genesis is written, it could be understood that she, therefore, did not hear from God directly, first-hand, about the tree.
- **Genesis 2:16-17 – And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the**

knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

- **Genesis 2:22 – Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.**
- *However, she did receive deception first-hand from Satan.*
- **Genesis 3:1-7 – Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’” Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.**
- None of this removes, or diminishes, Eve’s responsibility for her own sin. However, it might demonstrate the power of receiving information first-hand.
- It also displays one of Satan’s fundamental tactics to this day: he attempts to get us to question, and then ultimately ignore, something God has already said.

The Holy Spirit is a first-hand communicator

- **Acts 2: 1-4 – And when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.**
- The Holy Spirit is God Himself. He will communicate to you first-hand. When you hear first-hand from God, there can be no doubt about what is right or wrong.

Three ways the Holy Spirit communicates to us

1. An inner witness
 - a.) **Romans 8: 14-17 – For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”**

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs -- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

b.) God affirms in your spirit who you are. This will have an impact on how you outwardly act and appear to others around you.

c.) You are God's adopted child. In biblical times, an adopted child could not be disinherited. Therefore, there is nothing that can happen that can remove you from God's family. He is your Father regardless. This is the inner witness the Holy Spirit will affirm in you.

2. With leadings

a.) God opens doors and He closes doors. **Acts 16: 6-7 – Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.**

b.) The Holy Spirit will tell you when to go, and when to stop. Be alert. Pray that the Holy Spirit will clearly open doors through which you are to walk, and that He will slam shut any doors that appear to be open but are actually not in your good interest.

3. With visions, dreams, and prophecies

a.) **Joel 2: 28-29 – And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.**

b.) It is not likely you will receive visions and dreams if you are too busy with other ideas and thoughts. Schedule time to have no schedule. You will not hear from God if you are too busy "talking" with other things.

Everyone can hear directly from God. Everyone can prophesy

- Prophecy has been simply described as "anointed, Scriptural declaration." The Holy Spirit will anoint you (give you utterance) to declare what has already been written in the Word.
- In order to be in a position to prophesy you must first have invited God into your heart and soul, and then have diligently studied what He has already declared in the Bible. **Romans 10: 8-9 – But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.**
- Begin prophesying what you know from Scripture, even if you feel you don't know much. Declare what you do know. As you continue to grow in the Word, the Holy Spirit will bring more to your remembrance. **Luke 16:10 – He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.**

- If you receive visions or dreams, speak them into existence. Declare them as truth.
- Don't stop growing in the Word. Continue studying and learning. God will be faithful to speak through you if you are faithful in pursuing Him.

Matthew 10: 32-33 – “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”

Reflective Questions for The Couch – Part 3

1. Based on what is written in Genesis (above) how is God's image reflected through both men and women together? What does this say about the significant characteristics of marriage and parenting?
2. What is your reaction to Pastor Stephen's observation of the idea that Eve may have received the information about the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil* from Adam, and not from God directly? Do you think it is possible that is the way it happened? Why or why not?
3. Do you agree that first-hand information has a greater impact than second-hand information?
4. If the Holy Spirit will speak to you first-hand, is there even a need for the Bible? Why or why not? (Use the definition of prophecy above as “anointed, Scriptural declaration” to help answer.)
5. What might happen to someone who relies on hearing from the Holy Spirit first-hand, but does not place great importance on Bible study? How do the two go hand-in-hand?