

## L. LISTEN

In our effort to increase our spirit man's maturity so as to be truly able to become all we are destined to be in Messiah, we are *finally* coming to the place where the rubber meets the road. In the last article, I spent considerable time talking about how we must slow down in order to see the signs that He is constantly putting before us. The next letter in the acronym **S.L.O.W.** is "**L,**" which stands for "**Listen.**"

Do you ever wonder why God gave us two ears and only one mouth? We can all hear the voices of our mothers crying out right about now, "***Because God wants you to listen twice as much as you speak!***" And there is definitely a lot of truth to that. So let's unpack this concept of listening from a spiritual perspective and see what we can learn.



First of all, what does it mean to "***listen***"? What are we listening for, anyway? Are we to be like Charlton Heston waiting to hear the voice of God coming from the burning bush? What exactly are we looking for when we are listening for God? When it comes to listening, there are two types. First of all, there are the *ears of the physical body* and there are the *ears of the spiritual body*. We have touched on this concept before, but I cannot stress how important this is to understand when we are talking about listening for the "***God frequency.***"

In the natural, there are frequencies that your physical ears simply cannot pick up.

As we get older, our range of frequency decreases. But just because we don't *physically* hear something doesn't mean that it doesn't exist or isn't affecting us. For instance, in some movie theaters, they play a sub-sonic frequency that your ears cannot pick up but your bladder can, because it is designed to get you out of your seat to go to the bathroom. This is all in the hope that if they get you out of your seat, there is a better chance that you'll purchase some of their \$10 popcorn. Or have you ever seen one of those dog whistles that seem to make no noise when you blow it but after it's blown every dog in town starts barking? A human may not be able to hear it, but every canine can! There are physical frequencies that we can hear and frequencies that we cannot hear.

In the same way, there are spiritual frequencies that only your spiritual ears can pick up on. In the beginning, when we were first created, our spirit man was fully developed, and it dominated the soul of man. It had no problem picking up on every frequency that emanated from God. When Yahweh spoke, it was as natural as having a conversation with another human. Because the spirit man was in full operation, it was more **"connected"** to our physical brain, making the frequencies that were being picked up in the spiritual realm easily transferred to the soul (physical mind, will, and emotions) for decoding and understanding. Today, science is continually discovering the connections between the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the brain.

The more our spirit man grows inside of us, the more integrated it becomes with all of our physical members, bringing us closer and closer to our original designed state of existence in the garden. This is precisely why we are so intent on our journey to discover and grow our spirit man **AND** our soul man at the same time. A man can think he is perfectly obedient to God's law and can know the scriptures better than anyone, but if his spirit man is weak, his faith is weak, and *"without faith, it is impossible to please God"* (Hebrews 11:6). This is the main focus of the journey He has me on, the journey of what real faith in Him looks like.

Without straying too far from our subject, it is important for me to point out that there are two types of faith mentioned in the scriptures. There is faith that is expressed in the soul and faith that is expressed in the spirit. When James says that *"faith without works is dead,"* he is specifically talking about proving one's salvation by doing what the Master said to do, and, in context, is talking about being a doer of the Word, or the Torah of God. This is faith expressed in the soul. The other kind of faith is the faith expressed **FROM** the spirit man where a believer has a certain promise, a word, a vision, a dream, or a prophetic scripture that has been confirmed to be from God and, by faith, the spirit man agrees with those promises and declares them from the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2). The soul then aligns with that declaration and lives as if those promises were already manifested in reality. This is how faith becomes the **"substance"** of things hoped for and the **"evidence"** of things not seen. The stronger the spirit man becomes, the less the physical world has any power to steal his peace. Why did Yeshua sleep in the storm? He simply knew the promise of God and knew that no storm could threaten his life without His Father's approval. He maintained his perfect peace because (listen to what I am about to say)...it is **ONLY** from that place that the spirit man can begin to operate and bring forth the power of God for a particular situation. This is why the enemy wants to remove our peace. Once he knocks us off kilter, we lose our power. This is where the power of listening comes in.

In Hebrew, the word for "listen" is *Shema*. That's right. The famous **Shema** out of Deuteronomy chapter 6 where God tells His people to listen and obey His instructions when they go into the land so they will be blessed. The main definition of *shema* is to "hear with one's ears intelligently" and can be both intellectual as well as spiritual. Strong's says, *"To hear means not only to hear what is said but to agree with its intention or petition."* This is exactly what we have been talking about, to hear both in the intellectual realm (of what the actual scriptures have to say) and in the spiritual realm (of what He has said in a particular situation through a promise, word, etc...) and then agreeing and aligning your life with what you *"heard."* In short, *"Shema"* means to **"hear and obey."**



Most of us have been conditioned to believe that that means hearing and obeying the scriptures. And there can be no question that on the Truth side of the coin, that is certainly the case. But what did it look like **BEFORE** the scriptures were written? What did it look like to Abraham, to Enoch, or all the way back to the first couple? What did "**Shema**" look like back then? What did it mean to "**Listen**" before the fall? They simply walked with God. They talked with Him. They knew Him like they knew each other. They "**heard**" His voice. It was natural because their spirits were at full capacity and the flow of the Holy Spirit went through their spirit and then into their soul to carry out His will. Today, it is just the opposite. The Holy Spirit is forced to go through a soul that is constantly being influenced by the principalities of this present darkness just to get to the spirit man so it can then be fanned into flame to re-influence the soul like it's supposed to.

So. How do we listen? At first, the answer will seem simple, so hang with me for a minute. We will go through several practical steps to actually grow our spirit man. We must take the time to physically slow down, either overall in our lives or during a certain time of our day, because the only way to truly listen, or *shema*, is to remove all the other voices, distractions, and possible intrusions and go into our spirit man to pray. Did you hear what I just said? I didn't say go into your prayer closet (although I strongly recommend having a private place like that to pray). I said go *into your spirit man*.

There is a big difference between praying with your head, which is part of your soul, and praying from the center of who you really are, your spirit man, the **real** you. Most of us are conditioned to pray from the "**what we can see**" side of the coin. We pray from what we know and through

our intellectual members. But this is not praying according to the Spirit. That kind of prayer is praying from the "**what we can't see**" side of the coin, from the eyes of the Spirit side. It is from this side that real power comes. Instead of just throwing up the proverbial "*If it be your will...*" at the end of every prayer, what if it were possible to pray **EXACTLY** His will in a given circumstance because He revealed it to you? How many prayers have you prayed to ask God for this and for that, mercy for this, help with that, only to find out that if He would have answered your prayers the way that you wanted your life would have been ruined? I don't know about you, but I am really glad that Yahweh didn't answer my prayers in Junior High to marry a certain girl that I was "*in love*" with. Wow would that have been the biggest mistake of my life! I would have been asking God to take the royal diamond He had planned for me and trade it for a neat rock. Not a good trade. But I digress. Bottom line? We want to make sure we are not praying against His will. The best way to make that happen is to *pray from the eyes of the Spirit*. How do we do that? Good question.

When I used to pray, I used to go through a list of things that I wanted to pray for and simply work my way through that list. And while there is certainly nothing wrong with that - I continue to pray like that sometimes - that is not going to grow my spirit man any more than just watching an exercise video is going to enlarge my muscles. Praying from the Spirit is different. It's deeper. It's more focused. It's intentional. It's slower.

When I pray now, I *shut myself in* somewhere. There are no distractions. I even put earplugs in so that nothing can distract me. Then I begin by praying in the Spirit, by praying in tongues.



There are two types of tongues in scripture. The first is the speaking of a real foreign language that you don't know but the hearer hears it in their language. This is what happened in Acts 2. The other is the personal prayer language that does not edify the body but edifies your spirit man. The Spirit prays through you and intercedes for you with groanings that cannot be uttered (Rom 8:26, 1 Cor 14). According to the scriptures, praying in tongues is praying in a heavenly language that we don't understand. 1 Corinthians 14 says that the "*spirit speaks mysteries*" and "*He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself...*" In verse 14 Paul says, "*For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.*" Did you catch that? His spirit man is praying when he is praying in tongues. He has no idea what he is saying because it is not with his **physical mind** that he is praying, but his **spirit** that is praying.

Amazingly, there are still believers today that don't believe in the gift of tongues. They believe in every other gift but that one. Coincidentally, those same people don't have that gift. I can assure you that not only is it alive and well, but there is **NOTHING** that has been done away with in the Spirit. The gifts were given for the edification of the body, and the body still needs edifying.

I'll never forget the story a very close friend of mine told me one time. He was on an airplane one day and he was sitting next to a black man that barely spoke English. My friend decided to read his bible. The Spirit told him to start praying in tongues. He told the Spirit, "*Are you kidding me? Here? On the airplane?*" The Holy Spirit kept pushing him. Out of embarrassment, he decided to just pray in tongues under his breath where it could barely be heard. After a few minutes, the gentleman that was sitting next to him started to cry. It startled my friend, and he stopped praying. The man asked my friend to tell him more about his God. Although my friend had been praying in tongues, this man had heard it in his native African tongue, and he was telling him all about Yeshua and how he needed to come to the real God! He got saved right there on the plane!

Another friend of mine was preaching at a Baptist church once when the Spirit told him to close the service and pray in tongues. (That is a big no-no at a Baptist Church.) After he was finished, an older couple was on their way home and the wife asked her husband what he thought about that gibberish my friend had prayed from the pulpit at the end of the service. The husband replied by telling his wife that my friend's prayer was one of the most beautiful prayers he had ever heard in his life! The husband heard it in English! He was the interpreter of the tongues and didn't even know it!

These are just two examples to show how this gift can be used today by the Ruach to powerfully influence the ones that have the interpreter. But the gift that we are talking about is the same gift done in private prayer where there is no interpreter needed because your spirit man is praying directly through the Spirit to God Himself who knows what is being said.

There can be no doubt that, for me, "**praying in the Spirit**" is the most powerful weapon I have. Imagine having the Ruach Himself praying through you exactly what needs to be prayed. This is the power of praying in tongues as a private prayer language. I have had more revelations, visions, and divine understanding of things right after praying in the Spirit than at any other time. It's like the Spirit prays through you and things just start happening in the physical realm that manifests as thoughts in my natural mind, a revelation of scripture, or something else that brings an answer I've been looking for. *Words are creative*, and there are no more powerful words than the words the Spirit Himself speaks in a given situation. *Things happen when God speaks*. So praying in the Spirit is where I begin.

Once I begin in the Spirit, I will continue to pray there until I sense He is finished. Then I begin to praise Him and thank Him for His glory and majesty in my life. I am waiting for things to begin to "*bubble up*" from my spirit to my mind so that I can pray in English. Many times, I will have people, circumstances and situations come to my mind that seems to be out of nowhere. But they're not out of "*nowhere*;" they're things that my spirit is transferring to my mind from the mind of the Spirit that He wants me to be aware of. I pray intentionally that the Father will grow my spirit man and enlarge the borders of my inner man so that I can house more and more of His fullness in my life. To become "*spiritual*" is to have a very strong spirit man. So, I pray for the Father to make me "*spiritual*" so that I can better accomplish His will in the earth realm.

The best way to explain how I am praying now is it is like being out in the ocean on a surfboard waiting for a big wave. I pray in the Spirit, then wait, slowly praise Him, pray whatever comes to my heart, and, most importantly, **LISTEN** intently to what He wants to say. I am pressing in to

hear through my spirit. I have no idea what I am listening for, but this is the type of "seeking" that God is talking about for those that want to find Him. This type of intense, intentional seeking to grow something that you have no power to grow without Him, invokes the Spirit to **"be found"** and to do for you what only He can do. He understands that the only true way to accomplish His will in the earth is through the spiritual gifts - with faith at the top - which only flow through the spirit man. One can know the bible inside and out, but if he does not have a strong spirit man, he has little faith and, by default, has little of the spiritual gifts designed to edify the body. This means that one can be the best bible teacher out there, but if that teacher does not have his gift flowing through the spirit man, he will only be delivering information that will tickle the ears, not information that will change lives. They have learned a lot and have learned nothing all at the same time. Since the beginning, God's intent was that the spirit man is the dominant force inside a man. Unfortunately, believers today seem to be more turned on by information, logic, the finite, and things they can understand rather than by the things they'd have to pursue in the infinite, the spiritual, things that only the spirit understands.

Many times I do not get anything from the spirit when I am meditating (thinking deeply about Him or a given situation waiting for divine assistance) and praying in the spirit. I have learned that this is okay. Praying this way is not about me **receiving** anything; it's about me **spending time** with Him and investing in our relationship by pressing into His spiritual "heartbeat." When I do that, the Spirit automatically begins to sculpt my circumstances and take care of whatever my concerns actually are. The key is actually listening as I'm praying, in between my praying, while I'm meditating, etc. It's slow on purpose. It's not about bringing my "list" to God for Him to answer like some genie in a bottle. It's about reverently coming before His throne and slowly bringing to Him what I am feeling in my spirit and letting **HIM** lead me closer to Him and to what HE wants. It's all about **HIM** and what He wants to do, say, and live through us.

We need to stop praying with our minds. He is looking for us to intercede from our hearts, from the center of our beings. The mind cannot connect with God. It can only be transformed by Him. It is our spirit that connects with **THE** Spirit. It is deep that calls to deep (Psalms 42:7). It is our spirit that "sees" things, "feels" things, and "hears" things that we could never comprehend in the natural. To live "by faith" is to let the Spirit lead through your spirit. To live by sight is to make all your decisions by your physical mind, will, and emotions. And because "we don't fight against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers of this present darkness" (Heb 6:12), if we spend our time walking by natural sight and natural logic, we will eventually be deceived by the evil one and be left out to dry because we didn't see it coming. Once we start taking life and start filtering it through the spirit side of the coin first, everything changes...and I mean everything.

Although I'm sharing with you a little of what the Spirit has been teaching me on how to grow my spirit man, *there is no formula*. **God cannot be contained in formulas**. He is perceived through experiences. When we want something bad enough to put other things aside to pursue it, we end up obtaining what we're after. When we seek the things of God, we will find them. *You become what you pursue*. If you do not currently have the gift of speaking in tongues, but desire it, I encourage you to pray earnestly and ask the Spirit to fill you with that gift. Ask someone that does have it to lay hands on you to receive it and then just attempt to pray in tongues and let the Spirit take over. You will never be the same. You will be able to pray constantly, at all times,

and in all situations. If I'm by myself, I am praying in the spirit, whether I'm walking, sitting, working out, or trying to fall asleep. Imagine how much time we spend just driving and walking places each day. Now imagine filling that time with perfectly accurate prayer and the growing of your spirit man. This takes pursuing God to a whole new level. When all you think about is Him, engaging in Him and doing His will, supernatural things happen.

In the book of Acts, chapter 8, the apostles heard that Samaria had received the word of God and were being saved and baptized in the name of Yeshua. So they sent Peter and John to lay hands on them so that they could receive the power of the Holy Spirit, as well. For all those that desire this gift and don't have anyone to pray over you, I would like to pray over you by faith and ask the Spirit to bless you in this way:

*“Father, I come before you by faith, outside of time, transcending where I am at right now and ask you to bless each and every person that truly desires to receive the gift of praying in the spirit. I pray according to the will and the blood of Yeshua that you will fill them with your Holy Spirit and manifest yourself in them through this gift. Increase their spirit man to be able to receive all the gifts in the measure that you have apportioned to them and to use them for the benefit of your Kingdom. Father, thank you for blessing your people by the thousands with this gift that you might increase the spiritual army for your Kingdom. Amen.”*

Now, do what Peter did and begin to walk on water, begin to speak in your heavenly prayer language and the Spirit will take over!

I am truly excited to begin to share these things with you as the Spirit begins to transform all of us by the water of His word and by the gifts that flow directly from Him. In the next article, I will be spending time talking about the next letter, my favorite, "**O - Observe.**" Learning how to observe and "*track*" things in the spirit is one of the most powerful things I have ever learned, and I am eager to share with you what He is showing me.

*Shalom,  
Jim Staley*