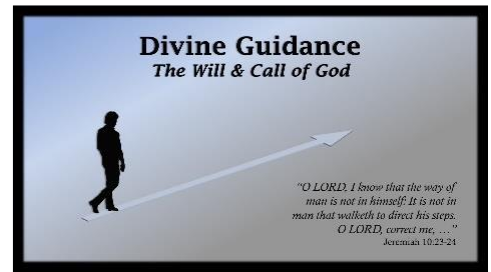


Keystones for Living

Divine Guidance The Will And Call Of God

Lecture 11



And it's Keystones for Living time! Lecture 11. Alright, Divine guidance and the will and call of God. Three words we've been talking about are these: Number one- the word revelation. You remember that word revelation. We're talking about the Holy Spirit speaking to us, getting to know his voice. It's by revelation. Number two - by association. These all go together, revelation, association. Just to let you know, these are things my pastor taught me years and years ago. He tried to instill it into me and I want you to know I'm thankful for that. Number three – cultivation.

The revelation comes by association and cultivation, but I've been finding out that there are some other words that are connected with this. We'll get to that in just a little bit, but we're still on this word “association”. We want to get to know the voice of the Holy Spirit. And we remember that the Lord spoke about Samuel these words, it says, in First Samuel, that Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the voice of the Lord yet revealed. There it is, revelation. That happens by association. That's where we are right now.

Let's turn in our Bibles to Isaiah Chapter 50, and let's read what we've been talking about. I told you we're going to finish some of this today. Isaiah 50, beginning with verse 4. Remember these words, “the Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned, or the tongue of the taught, how many know God is a good teacher. Yes he is. The Lord God has given me the tongue of the taught. That I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. Notice, “that that I should know how to speak”

A word- that's What to speak

In season - When to speak.

To him who is weary – to Whom I should speak.

Those are powerful words. But notice how that all happens. Look at the next line. He wakened me morning by morning. How many see this? He wakened me morning by morning, he wakens my ear to hear as the learned. Keep reading. The Lord God has opened my ear. Now think about all this. We're talking about association. That revelation is going to come by association with him. With the Lord. In his presence is fullness of joy. It's spending time with him.

Notice I know how to speak. I know what to speak. I know when to speak. I know to whom I should speak. But notice how this happens. As we get to know his voice. It happens morning by morning. There's your association. It happens morning by morning. Now I know we have talked about this already, but we're going to continue and follow on here, he says “he wakened

me morning by morning". What does he do? He wakens my ear. I think we mentioned last time that we need our ears to be awakened. Not necessarily these physical ears. But these ears, (of our heart, our spirit) wouldn't you agree? He wakened me morning by morning.

What does that mean? Well, if you keep reading, I think he's going to tell us something. Notice what it says in the next verse. The Lord God has opened my ear. Really, it needs to be opened. Did you know that my ears need to be opened? That's right. Now, what does this word "open" mean in the Hebrew text? My understanding of it is this, that the word open means "to pick." To pierce, to pick. The Lord God has picked my ear. Now, that doesn't sound too good, does it? But it's true, the Lord God has pierced my ear! Not to wear an earring. Not that kind of a pierce. A piercing? Why? Because things get caught in there. Things get cluttered in there.

Now we're not necessarily speaking physically, but I do remember something that took place often when I was a little boy. My mother used to have to turn me on my side on her lap and clean out my ears. I just squirmed and I just had a terrible time. But when she finished it was all better. I could hear better. I think she probably wanted me to be able to listen better to what she was trying to tell me! But I can tell you this, in the spiritual sense, we all need to have our ears cleaned out. I hope you hear what I'm saying. The reason why some of us are having a hard time hearing his voice and discerning his voice is because there are so many things cluttering these ears.

Not the physical ear, but it's a spiritual thing, a spiritual. Lord Jesus, help me to allow you to open my ear. To pick or to clean or to pierce my ear, because there are things that are blocking it, hindering me from hearing your voice. Let me ask you this. What kind of things are you allowing in these ears, I mean the physical ear? What kind of music do you listen to? What kind of company do you keep? You know the kind of company you keep is going to determine what kinds of things you hear with these ears, which really then gets inside you, doesn't it? Well, sure it does.

The Bible says and Jesus said it, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks". What goes into these ears affects my inner man. Well, absolutely. Therefore, I must ask the Lord to clean out my ears. I think about the Book of Revelation and the ending of each letter. The Lord says this: "let he who has an ear". Did you hear that? He who has an ear, let him hear. Hear what the Spirit says unto the churches. So he was sending them a letter. The Bible is our Word. This is the Word, but it's the Spirit talking to us, is it not so? Again he says, "he that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches".

Lord, I pray, pierce my ear, my spiritual ear and drain it, clear it, of things that hinder me from hearing your voice. Can you say Amen to that? Oh, yes. Spending time in his presence is association. It helps me, doesn't it? Now I asked you the question before, I'm going to ask it again because this is so important. We think sometimes that since we're men of God, men of faith and power, women of God, women of faith and power, that we can just hang out with anybody. Well let me just say we need to be careful of our associations. That important word

associations. Would you agree that we need to be concerned about who we associate with? Now, that doesn't mean we're not going to normally, in the course of everyday life, come in contact with people of the world, of course. But association is a little bit different. So what we see is this. Revelation by association.

Oh, Heavenly Father, help me to associate with You so much, so often, that I get to know Your voice so well. And waken me morning by morning and open my ear to hear. Awaken me yes, but open my ear to hear. In other words. Drain it. Clean it. Take out of me what's not supposed to be there.

Let's take a look at the third word: cultivation. My association should lead to cultivation, OK? Thank you, Lord, I want to spend time with the shepherd, but it's not a one time thing. Cultivation. What does the word cultivate mean? Well, a good way to say it would be this way. To foster the growth of something. It also means to improve by labor. You can look this word up. It means to further, to nourish, to develop. Let's say that again, to further, to nourish, to develop, and cultivate. How many see continuous, how many see a continuing on? It's not just a one time thing. You see waking me morning by morning. It's even in there, isn't it? In Isaiah 50. So we see cultivation.

Now I want to show you a verse. Go to Hebrews Chapter 5 and I want to read this verse to you. This is a great verse. I think is a very important one. Read with me verse 14. "But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age". And then it says "even those who by reason of use". Alright, now you could say "habit" Alright, you could say complete or perfection, "who by reason of use" did you see that? "They have their senses" now that spiritual perception, that's internal. That's internal sensing. That's internal perception. "Who have their spiritual senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

Let me just read that again. "But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who, by reason of use." Can you see an idea of cultivation by reason of use? "Have their senses" which is spiritual discernment, spiritual senses, spiritual perception? Did you know you have a perceiver? It's your spirit man. He perceived by the spirit. OK, your spiritual senses. "Exercised to discern both good and evil". Now what's this all about? We need to continue to use these senses by exercising them. I can see cultivation there, to nourish, to develop to cultivate, to exercise, can you see it?

Let me write a word on the board, a Greek word. This word Exercise. This Greek word exercise. And here's the word, GUMNADZO. OK, everybody, see that word? So now this word is the word for exercise. What God wants us to do is exercise well. It's not necessarily a physical exercise, it's a spiritual exercising. What do we mean, exercise? Well, if you look at this word right here, gumnodzo it means to exercise. This is a word that will shock you, maybe a little bit, but it means to exercise naked. This is a word whereby we get our English word gymnasium. You can see it in there. What's a gymnasium? It's where people go to exercise. Now what

about this naked part? Well, that's really what the word means is naked. It means to exercise naked. Don't be alarmed by that. We're talking spiritually, aren't we? Well, absolutely.

So what we need to do is exercise our spiritual senses. The naked part can simply mean unhindered. You could say, in other words, we need to be stripped of things that hinder us. Remember the verse in Hebrews? The verse that comes to my mind is this, and you know the verse well. "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us" You see, it helps us in exercising. More is accomplished when we take off, take off, get off those things that are unnecessary or will hinder our ability or capacity to receive, to hear from God. Does that make sense to you? I like that. Let's read it again in Hebrews, "but strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil"

We need to cultivate. We need to continually practice this association. We need to keep it going. It's not just a one time moment in the presence of God. It's an ongoing thing. Now I know when you stop exercising what happens? That's right, we get what we call- flabby. I'm kind of there now, but what I'm saying is I need to exercise, not just my physical body, but I need to exercise my spiritual senses. That's right. How? By spending time in the presence of the Lord Jesus. Absolutely! We need to continually practice this association in the secret place. That's right, that's in the presence of God. Get into the secret place. Now if you can get anything, get this. I think as a pastor it's vital for me. Get into the secret place of the Most High, the secret place, the holy place, spending time in His presence.

My association is with the shepherd. Spending time with him, I believe that that is something I need to cultivate. All right? I think that's something that needs to become a familiar place. In a lot of churches, the altar calls and the time spent waiting on God is becoming uncommon. In fact, some pastors have stopped doing it. I'm not going to stop doing it. I want to continue spending time in the secret place, not just personally, but with the congregation. Pastor, listen, don't be afraid to spend time standing behind that pulpit while there's a worship song going on, or even after the song is over, don't be afraid to spend time worshipping him, waiting on him, quietly cultivating this presence, fostering the growth of your own spiritual life. Your spiritual senses having been exercised. Lord Jesus help me to exercise by taking these things off of me that are hindering my development.

Spiritual development, I hope you hear what I'm saying. I hope it's coming across to you. We need to remember that the altar - the altar at home, and at church, maybe the altar in your car, or even on your motorcycle. The altar needs to become a familiar place, not just to the pastor and his wife. But to the children of the home. I know from my own experience, my dad was not a pastor, but I have four brothers, so there are five boys in my family. My mom and dad were not ministers. They were not pastors. But four of the five boys in our family, me being the youngest, four of us are preachers. I can tell you that my mom and dad took us to church faithfully. They didn't send us. There's a difference.

They took us to church and they themselves were the example to us of what it was to spend time at an altar of prayer. I remember my dad taking me by the hand as a little boy and bringing me to the altar with him. Yes, and I remember kneeling. I didn't know what I was doing, but I would kneel beside him and I would hear him pray. And I actually learned by hearing my dad pray. I would also hear other people praying at the altar. You need to know the altar call is so important. If nothing else, children need to come to hear other people praying at the altar. Do you believe that? Association and cultivation are going to increase our sensitivity to the voice of God.

I hope you believe that. I can tell you it happened in my life and I'm not even close to where I should be. I'm just saying I think the altar, the secret place, wherever that is, in the car, on the motorcycle, walking on the street, walking along the path, waiting on God. I think that needs to become a familiar part of our daily lives. Let the altar be a familiar place to your children. Not something that is sporadic, not something that is once in a while.

I want to associate with Jesus. That word association, even in and of itself suggests time. It suggests something ongoing. Then you must cultivate that association. Cultivate it, foster it, develop it. Exercise it. I hope you hear that. I know that you do. This is important for me as a pastor because I deal with people all the time. And I can tell when I'm speaking with them. I can see it, I can hear it, I can feel it. I can sense it. That more time needs to be given to the secret place.

Now listen to Psalm 91, verse one. This is a great verse. It says "he that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High" Now look at the promise. "Shall abide" Do you wonder why there's not enough abiding pastor? You can teach your people this. To me this is one of the most glorious things. The word of God is telling me right here in Psalm 91. A lot of people quote this verse and they get excited. "He that dwelleth in the secret place". Good stuff, isn't it? But listen to it. Don't be in a hurry. Don't be in a hurry.

He that "dwelleth" in the Greek Septuagint, (which is the Old Testament in Hebrew translated into the Greek) In the Greek Septuagint, the word dwell, or he that dwelleth comes from this word, these are English letters, OIKOS. You may have heard that word before. You may not have it where you live or in your country. I understand that, but in our country when you go to the grocery store, you will find this word on little containers of yogurt. It's called Oikos yogurt. It's a brand name of yogurt. I've often wondered why did they call it Oikos? Well, the word oikos means HOME. Oikos yogurt would be something like homemade yogurt, or yogurt like your mother used to make at home.

OK, you got the idea. Like a homemade bread. You make it at home. So they're trying to convince you that Oikos yogurt is probably the best yogurt because it's more like homemade. Well, I want to let you know that "he that dwelleth in the secret place" is a person who makes a home in the secret place, or the presence of God. He who finds a home, or makes a home, or is at home in the presence of God "shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" You know, we

might get into the presence of God once in a while. But you know what? It needs to be like coming home. It needs to be like coming home. And I admit to you, Pastor, Deacon, teacher. I admit to you that I need this.

You say I thought we were talking about Divine guidance and the will and call of God. Yes, yes, there's your problem. This is why the divine guidance sometimes evades people. They can't get it. Because our own personal lives need to line up. In other words, I'm not talking perfection. I'm talking about getting into his Word and allowing it to speak to your heart. Exercising, cultivating, Lord Jesus, let the association be even greater because of this. Amen Amen Amen Amen. I decided this in my own life many years ago and I when I was a Youth Pastor in a church, my pastor taught me these things. Not everything that I'm saying. You know, some of this is what the Lord has shown me. But I wanted that in my life. I wanted the revelation and I wanted the association, but the cultivation was just a little more difficult.

I hope that makes sense to you. I needed to exercise. I needed to ask the Lord to strip me of things that would hinder, that were keeping me from cultivation from developing, from growing. I know you sense my voice is different because I'm feeling His presence. You say this is a Bible institute. Well, yes it is. You see, some professors in colleges, Bible colleges or Bible institutes have been doing this so long. It's almost like some have missed out on the presence of God in the classroom. We need to get back to the presence of the Holy Ghost in the classroom.

I've taught in Bible College before and this is exciting for me. I know what it is to teach in a Bible college. Understand that I know, that I've been there. I've done that. But I can tell you, it's marvelous when you're teaching in a Bible school and the students begin to sense the presence of God while the professor is lecturing from the Word of God, talking about whatever it is, and the presence of God sweeps into that classroom. And the professor, the instructor, the teacher, whatever word you want to use, cannot continue because the presence of God is so strong that the students end up lifting their hands, praising God. And the rest of the class is spent in His wonderful presence! That to me is cultivation. And can you guess what the result is? That's right, truths emerge and are discovered by association and cultivation.

But you see folks, the voice of the Lord, the voice of the Lord was not yet revealed to Samuel, so God wants to reveal his voice. He wants us to know it. He wants us to uncover it. He wants us to discover it. He wants us to know His voice. How? By association. Remember we said, how do the sheep know his voice? Well, Jesus sends the sheep to Sheep School. No, he does not. They just associate with him. You can get more by associating with the Shepherd of your soul, the Bishop, the Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, but you must cultivate it. Cultivate. Yes, I told you earlier I decided to do this. And as I decided to do it, I would spend time with the Lord. It was a new thing for me. I was only 22 years old. It was a new thing to me. Oh, I had read about it, but I had never really done it. But I started to do it.

I told you my pastor taught me some of these things here, but I started to do it. And the more I did it, began to cultivate it, the more I did it, the more I sensed the voice of the Lord speaking to me. He speaks to us through his Word absolutely, but he also speaks to us through our thoughts. Did you know that? Did you know that the Lord speaks to us through our thoughts in our Spirit man? So I decided to spend time, not just once, but to continue to foster, to continue to develop, this association. To nourish it, to further it, to augment it, so that it would be increased. Augment means increased. Doing that in order to augment or to increase the sensitivity. My own sensitivity to his voice so that I could hear it. Lord, pick my ear, clean out my ear, does that not kind of go along with exercise naked? Stripping me of what's hindering me. Can you see a little correlation there? I think that's pretty cool.

I want my capacity to know His voice to increase. To become so familiar with it that I know that it's Him. I know that it's Him. And again, I wasn't good at it. I was just learning. Maybe you're just learning. That's ok, be patient with yourself. But start cultivating your relationship with the Lord in the secret place. That association so that God can reveal his voice to you. And when he reveals his voice to you, you will have your divine guidance, you will have a knowledge of what he wants you to do, an unveiling and a revelation. Uncovering revelation by association and cultivation of his divine purpose for your life at that place and time.

Amen! So I started to do this. I decided I was going to stay up while my wife and my little boy went to bed, I stayed up one night and fostered that presence of God. I just waited on the Lord. I just spent time in His presence. And wouldn't you know? It took a little bit, not a lot, but it took some time and the Lord spoke to my heart. He did. Now at the beginning, I really wasn't sure, because I was new at it. But I believed when that voice of the Lord came to me I had to do something about it. What do you mean? Here's what I mean.

I was in my apartment. My wife was in bed. I began to pace back and forth with my hands up. Just saying Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. I love your word, Lord Jesus, I want to know your voice, Hallelujah. And I did want to know His voice. And after a while, as I was just worshipping him, not thinking of anything, just Him, just Him. Waiting on Him is worshipping Him for Who He Is. Don't ask him for anything. You don't need a grocery list. Just worship Him and allow His presence to come. And wow, did His presence come in that hour! You know what he said to me? He spoke to me, the voice of the Lord was revealed to me. Oh yes, and do you know what he said? Here's what He told me. This is what He said. I want you to go to the Avon High School. Avon was the city where I lived. He said, I want you to go to the Avon High School. That's all He said.

Now remember I'm a young youth pastor when that happened. I got on my knees. Then I did something. I got on my knees and I put my hands in the air and I began to thank Him for speaking to me. And the more I did that, the more conscious I was of the of the confirmation of God's word to my soul that I needed to do this thing. You know that in the abundance of counselors there is victory. That's what the Bible says "in the abundance of counselors there is victory" So when I got up in the morning, and went to the office at the church, I went into my

pastor's study where he was sitting and I said, Pastor, I want to share something with you. I'm new at this, but this is what I believe the Lord wants me to do. So I told him, and he said I think that's the Lord.

Like I said I had not been thinking about anything special that night. I was just worshipping the Lord and BAM the thought came to me. It just came to me. And so I said, I'm going to do something about it. So I got up and I went to the high school and I asked the Principal if I could come in during the lunch break. So during the lunch period for all students at the high school I would go into the lunch room and sit with the kids. These were some of the students of my own youth group at my church. The school allowed me to do this. I encountered opposition immediately. I don't just mean people calling me names or saying why are you here? That did happen, but I mean evil, adversarial attacks.

A teacher harshly spoke out against me publicly in front of the entire lunch crowd. And it shook me, but it gave me courage too, because I knew I was doing the right thing. The enemy of my soul saw that there was something to worry about, and he decided not just to be my enemy. Oh now the devil is your enemy. Yes, but he decided that he wouldn't just be my enemy, but that he would be an active enemy. How many see the difference? Do you know there's a difference between an enemy and an active enemy? You may have enemies pastor, but they might be dormant. They might not be doing anything against you at the moment, or they may never bother you. They may just be an enemy, but when they become active in opposition, that's when the enemy turns into an Adversary. An adversary is an active enemy.

You can be an enemy, but not an adversary. But as soon as you are active against that person or thing then you become an adversary. Interesting, isn't it? Adversaries are enemies, but not all enemies are necessarily active or adversarial. I hope that makes sense to you. Well, the devil became adversarial. And he always is towards us, isn't he? He's an active enemy, and he came after me. But God intervened and I'm giving you a short story of a long one. And that is this. After it's all said and done over the next four years, I kept going to the school. It ended up God was opening doors for me to go into four schools. I ended up having a big Gospel meeting called an assembly at the high school. 139 young people, (and the reason I know that is because we had cards for them to fill out) who gave their hearts to Jesus. 139 students received Christ as their Savior. Now whatever they did with that, I guess I don't know the end result, but I do know that they responded, Amen.

I think that's what the devil was worried about, but I can tell you this, when God speaks and you respond, He then opens that door and you walk through it. You don't have to worry about the adversary. You don't have to worry about the enemy that becomes active. Listen to Exodus chapter 23. Listen to what it says. God said "if you will obey". To me, I obeyed that voice of the spirit of God. He said "if you obey me and do what I ask", he says, "I will be an enemy to your enemies" glory! and he says, "and I will be an adversary to your adversaries" How many see that? Do you?

Remember what we said about the enemy? An adversary? Does that not excite you? That means you can, when you know the voice of God, by association and cultivation, you can, can, you can, and you must confidently obey that voice. And God will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries, and no weapon formed against you shall prosper. Oh thank you Jesus! And you know what happened? The enemy did not prosper and young people got saved in that high school campus ministry. And I ended up being able to be a part of a classroom experience in that high school. And two more students got saved out of it and later their mother. Oh thank you Jesus. God does want to guide us and he guides us not just by the Word of God but by the Spirit of God and also by the Providence of God. We haven't even gotten to that yet, but the next time we get together, we're going to talk about that. I don't want to wear you out, but I have to tell you what God has done in my life to prove to you that this is real. And I have another story I'm going to tell you the next time! Alright see you then!