

## When God is silent

- There are times when you stop hearing God speak to you
  - Appropriate first response: self examination
  - Are you aware of unconfessed sin?
  - Have you ignored something God told you?
- Option 1: Wait until he speaks
  - Isa 40:31, “. . . those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.”
  - If God is silent, then your strength will increase if you wait with anticipation.
- Option 2: Use your sanctified intellect
  - Fox version: “Take your best shot and keep your spiritual ears open.”
  - God gave us resources to use, including intelligence and common sense.
  - Here’s the process:
    - decide what you should do, based on sanctified intellect
    - check for internal/spirit peace
    - if the decision seems right & you have peace, move ahead
    - keep your spiritual ears open; be alert to God’s voice
    - monitor your inner peace, be willing to change if you sense something
  - Our God-given authority & dominion
    - God created us as sentient beings — we have conscious awareness — and gave us the authority & ability to make our own decisions — we have free will
    - He honors our decisions and allows us to experience their consequences
    - He also wants to be a partner with us, a co-laborer in what we do
      - a “cooperative, interdependent relationship”
    - Maybe God isn’t speaking to you about what to do because it’s your decision and he’s waiting for you to decide
  - Acts 16:6-10

Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

    - How might the Holy Spirit have prevented Paul from preaching in those areas?

- George Mueller's method
  - surrender your own will
  - search scripture for relevant verses
  - note any providential circumstances or signs, divine appointments
  - pray for guidance
  - come to a decision you believe is God's will
  - if you have peace about your decision and it remains after 2-3 times of prayer & reflection, then proceed
  - if you're still unable to make a decision, use "balance sheet" approach
- Summary
  - Most important: be sensitive to Holy Spirit
  - A regular "quiet time" with God is always worthwhile

## **Journaling**

- If what comes from your spirit can produce life, shouldn't you pay attention to it?
- It's very convenient to write down what comes from your spirit, including what comes from God through your spirit.
- Advantages of journaling:
  - Allows you to record your experience; can be invaluable in the future.
  - Habakkuk 2:2-3 "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay."
  - Journaling allows you to evaluate much more than a few words or sentences.
  - Easier to evaluate something written than something in your memory.
  - Journaling keeps your mind preoccupied so it's easier to receive from your spirit.
- Other ways God may respond/speak
  - Impressions, insight, ideas, mental image, sensations

### **Comments & Recommendations**

- In addition to daily time for Bible reading & prayer, have regular appointments each week to spend significant time with the Lord
- Have a specific location, free from distractions, very comfortable
- Have a notepad & be prepared to journal
- Make sure you enter the current date on each journal entry
- Consider transcribing your handwritten journal entries into a word processing document
- Consider journal excerpts by topic & date
- Consider journal kernels (extremely condensed phrases or statements) by topic & date