

Look Who's Talking

Resolving Relentless Restlessness

January 26, 2025

Today we're learning to find rest in **God's Word by confirming it's Him we heard**. Cuz, in a world full of *pep-talk preachers* and *feel-good churches*, God's message can get *watered down* or *dressed up* so we'll hear what we want to hear – even if it means *manipulating* the message. So, the *convicting* question of the day is this: **Are you sure your faith is in the right place?**



Well, we better be sure cuz this *might be* the most *important* question in our *lives!* Cuz **the beliefs we build are only as good as the foundation we trust** and therefore **misplaced faith leads to total failure**.



You ever *misplace faith* in a *contractor* to build something in your house? *I have*, and I think *everyone* who *has* can agree that *communication breakdown* is what led to the *construction meltdown!* Cuz if you're *not* on the *same page*, a *simple addition* can become a *painful money pit!* That's how I had someone *rebuild* a wall that I *never wanted* to be torn down and why *two* of my living room outlets *don't work* after someone *else* cut a cord *without checking* what was in our wall! So, it just made *sense* when **Jesus stressed the idea of staying on the same page when it comes to building our faith**, when He said:



Everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built *his* house on the rock. – Matthew 7:24 NIV



Cuz, as Bruce brought up *yesterweek*, **it's God's trustworthy words that comfort, encourage, and talk us off the ledge when we're on edge!**

[So, like Ezekiel, we're repeatedly reminded to:] Receive into your heart all My words that I speak to you, and hear with your ears. – Ezekiel 3:10 NKJ

But you ever wonder, **what's with God's ongoing emphasis on who's who when it comes to our conversations?** I mean, isn't it kinda *easy* to see *who's* speaking? And don't we kinda *have to* hear with *our ears*? Why is He *so worried* about *miscommunication*? Well, in a *nutshell*, it kinda *killed* all humans and got us *kicked out* of *His* presence in *paradise*. *Remember?*

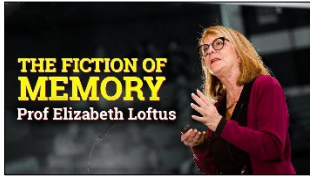
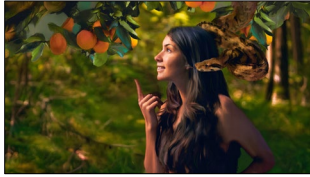
Back in the *beginning*, we had it *made* in the *shade*; chilling out, *maxin'*, *relaxin'* all *cool* cuz:

The LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there He put the man *He* had formed. [And] The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food [to feed us *humans*]. – Genesis 2:8-9 NIV

That was God's *original recipe* for the good life: **He provides, and we partake**. We were at rest and the *only effort* we had to *make* was following *His orders* to make sure we'd *avoid* the *poison*.

[Cuz all He said was:] You are *free* to eat from *any tree* in the garden; *but you must not eat* from the [single] tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from *it* you will certainly *die*. – Genesis 2:16-17 NIV

And **who can't remember one, easy-to-follow, life-saving rule?** How could things go wrong?



[Well,] The *serpent* said to the woman, "Did God *really* say, 'You must not eat from *any tree* in the garden'?'" [to which Eve must've thought, "*No. Nobody ever said that's what He said... why would you even think that?*" So,] The woman said to [correct] the serpent, "We *may* eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God *did* say, '*You must not* eat fruit from the [single] tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" – Genesis 3:1-3 NIV

Wait, He did?! Maybe it's not *recorded*, but from the story *we just heard* in God's Word, **Eve seems to be misquoting the command!** And from *here*, the *serpent* easily *corrupts* the rest of the *conversation* until Eve completely *abandons* God's *simple* command! *How did that happen?*

Well, as the *kids* say, "**She got played.**" But as the scientists say, "**She fell victim to the psychological phenomenon called the misinformation effect!**" Because when *someone* presents *new information* that conflicts with *old memories*, it can *retroactively* interfere with our ability to *retain* what we *remember*. It's kinda like brainwashing. And *get this*, it's been shown that individuals can be *made* susceptible to incorporating *misleading information* into their *memory* when it's presented within a *question*! Lawyers use this to their advantage all the time by using *leading questions* like, "**Did you see the broken headlight?**" rather than, "**Did you see a broken headlight?**" Cuz subtly **introducing a false fact leads us to reconstruct what we remember so it can fit.**

So, **just by asking if God said something He didn't, the serpent began corrupting the whole conversation** – and *that* opened the door to a *new narrative* he could help *create*. It's like the movie *Inception*. Cuz in that sci-fi *classic*, Leonardo DiCaprio travels *into* someone's *subconscious* and *plants an idea* by subtly *tweaking a memory* in an effort to *control* the person's *behavior*. As he explains, "**The seed we planted in this man's mind may come to define him.**"

So all the *serpent* had to *do*, was plant a seed of *doubt* about who's *talking* we should *trust* and sure enough, **doubt came to define us** as it *led* us to **focus on the fraud instead of listening to God.** And since losing our *attention* meant losing His *presence*, we *also* lost what He *provided*, and what seemed like *simple miscommunication* ultimately meant *losing* the *rest* we *had* in our best life. Cuz

"*Cursed is the ground* because of you [letting the dummy speak for God! Now], *through painful toil you will eat food from it* all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you ... [So,] *By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food* – Genesis 3:16-19 NIV

Mishear His *words* and *no more* "**Lord God**" doing the heavy lifting! Cuz **we can't cooperate if our communication is corrupted!** Cuz without His *real words*, we get lost *real quick!*

In fact, **everything falls apart when unnecessary steps are added**; especially when a *third-party* is added to a *one-on-one* discussion. You ever play the game telephone? It's *fun* cuz we can *count* on communication *breaking down* with each *layer* that's *added* – because, **the more indirect our communication, the more intense our contamination!** Add a *few steps* and a *simple* sentence like **"The cat is asleep in the laundry basket"** *twists* into **"The bat is a creep who's fond of caskets."**



But the *phenomenon* is only *fun* when we anticipate the *effect*, otherwise, **relying on others to relay our words leads to worry**. Which you *already know* thanks to high school. Cuz it's *built* on *important information* being shared through *indirect communication*. And *how* did that go for *you*? Did *you* feel that you were *accurately* represented when *you* were out of the room? *Probably not!*



Cuz **the only way to assure our words aren't being twisted is to speak for ourselves**. And that requires *constant* contact, cuz if high school taught us anything it's that **drama develops from talking about people instead of talking to people!** And the *same* goes for *God!* Cuz **most of our problems stem from talking about God when we should be talking to God**. *Eve* should've gone to *God* before trusting the *serpent* and we should turn to *His Word* before trusting *anyone else's* input!



[Like Paul told Timothy,] *Guard* what has been entrusted to your care. Turn *away* from *godless* chatter and the opposing ideas of what is *falsely* called knowledge, which *some* have professed and *in so doing* have *departed* from the faith. [Cuz,] – 1 Timothy 6:20-21 NIV

If any of you lacks wisdom, *you should ask God* [No serpent, sermon, or other go-between. Go to the Source]... *But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt* – James 1:5-6 NIV

Because the input of *others* may *corrupt* communication, but **how we hear is just as important as who we hear**. Y'see, there's *two sides* to *every* conversation and once we get the *speaker* straight, we need to learn to *hear* with *our ears* cuz sometimes our **own heart steps in to twist the truth. And letting our own desires manipulate God's words is just as deadly as the serpent's subconscious sabotage!** Even the *disciples* had to deal with *that* danger! Remember *this* story:

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." – Matthew 16:13-14 NIV

Good! They're *aware* of the outside influence we need to *see* to *guard* God's words. But *now, to see if the truth has been tainted by their own hearts* Jesus asks *the million-dollar question*:

"But what about *you*?" He asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by My Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church [Good job Charlie – you get the chocolate factory! I know ol' Slugworth was trying to twist my words but your trust in who I am wasn't corrupted! So maybe it's time for this:] – Matthew 16:15-19 NIV



[And] Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must ... suffer many things ... [and] be killed and on the third day be raised to life. [But,] Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to You!" [Correcting Jesus... bold move Pete.] Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God [anymore], but merely human concerns." – Matthew 16:21-23 NIV



Peter, Peter, Peter. So close and yet so far. Two verses earlier he was a hero cuz he heard God's words in spite of all the interference – but when his heart refused to hear what it didn't want to hear, all of the sudden, he's back on the side of the serpent as Satan himself!



[Cuz] The heart is deceitful above all things – Jeremiah 17:9 NIV

But whether it's caused by others or ourselves, **twisting God's Word means war** cuz only **trusting God's Word means rest!** And since Jesus knows how deadly this simple mistake can be, you can hear it get Him fired up cuz He really rips into people whenever it comes up! Ask the Pharisees!

[Jesus told 'em] "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: "These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. They worship Me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.' You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions." ... "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! ... Thus you nullify the Word of God by your tradition ... And you do many things like that." – Mark 7:6-9, 13 NIV

Regardless of what our human heart wants to hear, **we've gotta let God's Word have the final word.**

[Like the Bereans! Cuz] The Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and [to check their heart] examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. – Acts 17:11 NIV

And I wish this was at the top of every Sunday service, because I want us to be crystal clear – **churches shouldn't speak for God, they should urge you to speak with God!** And that means pointing you to prayer and Scripture. Cuz to be sure our faith is in the right place, we have to be sure we're hearing the right words. So when His message got misheard, thank goodness **God put it in writing! Literally!** We got duped, so **He wrote us a book to keep us on the same page** so we'd always know where to go to confirm we're in communication with Him and not some other dummy or our own wicked heart. So **how often do you turn to God's Word to hear His real heart? Not enough if you're not at rest!**



[Cuz Jesus said] Come to Me ... and I will give you rest. [but coming to Him means reading His Word cuz as He explains:] – Matthew 11:28 NIV

These are the very Scriptures that testify about Me, yet you refuse to come to Me to have life. – John 5:39-40 NIV

So if you're feeling unrested, here's your assignment: unplug from others, quiet your heart, and get in God's Word to get your relationship back on the same page, so He can provide and you can partake!