

## Introduction

This week I had a phone call from a Rich Graham, a friend of mine in Orlando. He is an evangelist and is currently helping to plant a church in Orlando. He called me to receive some counsel about a matter. He and his family members had a number of dreams and he wanted to hear my counsel about what they should do. In our conversation we laughed about the time that they played the Newlywed Game at his small group. Karen and I had been taking a walk around our neighborhood, and while we were walking the Lord began to speak to me. He said that Rich was going to play the Newlywed Game at their small group that week. Then, He told me what the first question was, the second question, the third question, the fourth question, the fifth question, and the sixth question. So, Karen and I immediately discussed the questions and how we were going to answer the questions. When we went to that meeting that week, Rich announced a surprise; they were going to play the Newlywed Game. It was no surprise to Karen and I; the Lord had already told us. So, the men went out of the living room and the wives answered the first three questions. Then, they brought the men back to answer the same questions. The first three questions were exactly what the Lord said they would be, and we got them all right. Then, it was the womens' turn to leave the room. Karen, of course, also answered her three questions correctly. All six questions were exactly what the Lord had said they would be. Unfortunately, Rich had a couple visit that night who also got all six questions right. So, they did a tie-breaking question, and we did not answer that one correctly. We laughed because even when the Lord gave me the first six questions we didn't win. I had heard very clearly.

There are other times where I have missed things. In 1999, our church leadership team decided to move forward with a building project. We bought a metal building, and hired an architect to get all the necessary drawings for permits. Shortly after the building was ordered, a number of things happened, including one of my daughters being diagnosed with leukemia. Consequently, the building was delivered and was never put up. We gave it to another ministry for free. It was a terrible mistake. I had clearly not heard God's plans. Our church leadership team had clearly not heard from the Lord. Sometimes, we just miss it.

We announced a couple weeks ago that we were going to start meeting face to face again. We had a wonderful meeting and lunch last week. Then, this past week the governor announced further restrictions on meeting, quarantining, etc. There was a large spike and she said the hospitals in NM were near capacity. She said tougher restrictions would be announced if this did not work. So, our leadership team announced on Friday that we were going to continue with zoom meetings and forego the face-to-face meetings right now. Did we not hear from the Lord clearly? Were we not being led by the Lord? Were we only thinking of our own interests?

We live with this tension of our thoughts versus God's thoughts. Very often God speaks to us through thoughts, and we must decide if we are hearing God's voice, our own voice, or some other voice. It is not always easy to discern. I really appreciate the Mark Virkler course on Hearing God's Voice. He gave some excellent advice about running things by others to make sure that it is God and not our own thoughts. Mark wrote, "God has established spiritual advisors as an umbrella of protection, to help guard us from self-deception within our own hearts, as well as from the deception of Satan."

Last week, Peter heard very clearly from the Lord when he declared that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Matthew recorded Jesus' response, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven." (Matthew

16:17) Yet in our text today, Jesus rebuked Peter, and said that his mind was set on man's interests, not God's interest. Peter was dialed in to the wrong channel, and the things he was saying were not from God. Peter digressed from a mountaintop experience of clearly hearing God to a place where Jesus had to rebuke him for not setting his minds on the things of God. We all face this dilemma in our everyday life. This morning, we are going to look at Jesus' mindset. Second, we will look at Peter's mindset. Third, we will look at where our mind is focused, and look at some applications for our lives. Let's read our passage.

**38 What Is Your Mind Set On? (Mark 8:31-33)**

1. Jesus' Mindset (Mark 8:31-32)
2. Peter's Mindset (Mark 8:32-33)
3. Our Mindset – Applications for our Lives

(Mark 8:31-33) "And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. {32} And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. {33} But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."

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**1. Jesus' Mindset (Mark 8:31-32)**

After Peter proclaimed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He was not just telling them these things; He is stating these things plainly. The Greek word is *parresia*, which means boldly, confidently, or openly. Jesus was saying these things with confidence. He knew these things to be true. There was no doubt in His mind that He had heard clearly from the Father.

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Why was He confident of the source of His thoughts? Well, Jesus knew why He had come. He knew His purpose and God's plan for His life. In Mark 10:45, Jesus said, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many." Jesus knew why He had come. The things that He was proclaiming lined up with His life purpose.

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Very soon after I had received Christ, the Lord gave me Ezra 7:10, which says, “For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice *it*, and to teach *His* statutes and ordinances in Israel.” I knew that my life purpose was to study God’s word, apply it to my life, and teach His statutes and ordinances. If you are a preacher you have to think in terms that are easy to remember. My life was three “P’s”: to prepare, practice and preach. As I have gone through things and opportunities and am trying to discern God’s voice in the matter, I look at my life call and purpose and try to see if they all line up. Jesus’ thoughts and words lined up with His life call and purpose.

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When Karen and I moved to Albuquerque and were considering churches, there was one particular church that I liked the pastor. They were family oriented, and were elder led. About the only thing that I was not too keen on was their Reformed doctrine. Their lead pastor, Mark, asked me about my views on Calvinism. He told me that unless I was a five-point Calvinist, he would not allow me to teach Sunday school or anything else. My conviction is that the word of God is the final authority, not the doctrines of men. In regard to Calvin’s five points, I think the Bible is very clear about Limited Atonement. Jesus died for the sins of the world, not just the elect. There is not a Limited Atonement. I do not have the luxury of changing God’s word. My calling is to study, practice and to teach. If I was not going to be allowed to teach at that church, this was obviously not where God was leading us to become a part of. Knowing God’s call and purpose in our lives is very important in discerning God’s voice and His will.

(1 John 2:2) “and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world.”

Jesus also knew the prophecies about His life. In John 1:29, John prophesied that Jesus was the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. The Lamb of God was a sacrificial lamb that was slaughtered as an offering for sin. He knew what Isaiah had prophesied in Isaiah 53. The Messiah was a guilt offering who was going to bear our sins and iniquities. The things that Jesus was proclaiming boldly lined up with God’s plan, given through the prophets and recorded in God’s word. There was confirmation from others and from the Scriptures.

(John 1:29) “The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’”

When you hear something, we have to ask ourselves these questions. “Does this line up with God’s word? Does this line up with the prophecies in my life? Does this line up with God’s purpose for my life?”

Right before Jesus was arrested and crucified, He was in the garden praying. In that prayer, He said to the Father, “Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will.” He recognized that as a man, He had His own will and that our will is not always lined up with the Father’s will. Our will is usually set on what is best for us physically, financially, etc. Jesus did not want to suffer. Jesus did not want to die the most excruciating and painful death imaginable – death by crucifixion. His thoughts were not focused on His own comfort or physical well-being. His thoughts were not on His financial well-being. His thoughts were not selfishly motivated. He had no selfish ambition. His thoughts were on the

will of the Father. So, Jesus prayed that the Father's will be done, not His will. When we are faced with thoughts, we should do what Jesus did and pray about those thoughts. We should submit them to the Father and pray that His will be done. Jesus had three very important character qualities that are important in determining God's will. He was selfless, had humility and was submitted to the Father.

(Mark 14:36) "And He was saying, 'Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will.'"

I keep a folder of all the prophetic words that have been given to me. Periodically, I will review these words. Peter tells us that we do well to pay attention to the prophetic word. When we are trying to discern if we have heard from the Lord, we need to make sure that it lines up with the prophetic words about our lives. The things that Jesus was confidently proclaiming to the apostles all lined up with His purpose and the prophecies about Himself.

(2 Peter 1:19) "So we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts."

Jesus' thoughts also included faith. He said He would rise again in three days. When we are considering whether something is from God or from within, we need to consider our faith. "Is this going to build my faith? Is this going to make me depend on God? Is this something that I can do on my own strength or will I need to rely on God's strength? Don't reject a thought because it is challenging and will require faith. Paul wrote that whatever is not from faith is sin. We also find in Hebrews 11:6 that without faith it is impossible to please God.

(Rom 14:23) "But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *his eating is* not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin."

(Heb 11:6) "And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

## 2. Peter's Mindset (Mark 8:32-33)

We have looked at Jesus' mindset, so let's take a look at Peter's mindset. When Peter heard Jesus tell them that He was going to suffer, die, and be raised from the dead, this did not sit well with Peter. This was his mentor, his leader, and his teacher, and He was going to be rejected, suffer, and be killed; this did not sound good at all. So, Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him.

(Mark 8:32-33) "And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. {33} But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."

In one breath, Peter had just proclaimed that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God, and in the next breath he is taking Jesus aside and rebuking Him. Has he already forgotten who Jesus is? Who has the right to challenge God? Did Job have the right to challenge God? No, none of us are in the place to challenge, much less, rebuke God. But, Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him.

When I don't understand something, I accept the fact that God is always right. I accept the fact that the Scriptures are always true. It is me that misunderstands things. Therefore, I ask God to give me understanding about what He is saying. Know this, God is always right.

There are two rebukes in this passage. The Greek word is *epitimaō* (Strong's G2008), which has a positive or a negative meaning. In the positive, it means to mete out honor, while on the negative side, it means to give a rebuke, or charge. As soon as Peter began to rebuke Jesus, Jesus turned around and rebuked Peter. It said that Jesus turned around and saw His disciples, and then rebuked Peter. Peter is the spokesperson for the group, and so Jesus is really looking at the whole group. His rebuke was to Peter and to all the rest of the disciples. All eyes were upon Jesus to see how He would respond. People are watching their leaders to see how they are going to handle situations. Jesus did not hesitate to take charge of the situation and to rebuke Peter and the group.

Jesus' rebuke to Peter could be misconstrued very easily. Jesus said, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." The New English Standard says, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man." Most scholars do not believe that Jesus was calling Peter, Satan. There are really two viable answers. First, Jesus could have been addressing Satan himself. Satan was always looking for an opportune time to attack Jesus, so he could have been there and been influencing Peter's thoughts. So, Jesus was first addressing Satan, and then addressing Peter about where his mind was set. Two separate verses would make this interpretation easier to see.

However, most scholars believe something very different. Our translations have the word, Satan, capitalized, and most scholars do not believe that it should be capitalized. The Greek word is *satanas* (Strong's G4567), and it is a transliteration of the Hebrew word, *satan* (Strong's H7854), which means adversary or opponent. Scholars do not believe that Jesus is referring to the devil, but is using the word to speak of an adversary or someone opposing Him. In this case, Peter is acting like an opponent, in opposing what Jesus is saying. Jesus is rebuking Peter because he is acting like an adversary. Thus, Jesus told Peter to get behind him, as opposed to standing against him. This is the view of most scholars.

When we consider the thoughts that we are having, are they in opposition to God? Are our plans going against what God is trying to do? Let me share a Scripture that speaks about opposition to God. In James 4:6-7, James says that God is opposed to the proud. The word, opposed, in the Greek is *antitasso* (Strong's G498), which means not to come under proper order and arrangement. The word for submission is *hupotasso*, which means to come under proper order or arrangement, to submit to authorities. We get two applications. First, when we rebel or refuse to submit to authority, we are opposing God. When we are looking at where our thoughts are coming from, we need to consider our authorities. I see many people making plans without any regard to what their spiritual authorities have to say. We need to get under and stay under proper authority. I believe this includes parental authority, governmental authority, and spiritual authority.

(James 4:6-7) "But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." {7} Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

The second application from this is that James said that God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Are the things that we are hearing and considering springing out of pride?

God looks to the humble, and those who are contrite in heart. He is opposed to the proud. We need to choose the humble route. Humble does not mean a lack of faith. The things we are thinking about may be big plans that require faith, but they must be done on a dependence upon God, not our own abilities.

In either interpretation what Jesus says next is applicable. He said that Peter is setting his mind on the things of man, or the interests of man, rather than on the things of God. Our words that we speak need to be in alignment with God, not in opposition to Him. Our words need to be inspired by the Holy Spirit, not on the fleshly, carnal, interests or things of men.

### 3. Our Mindset – Applications for our Lives (Mark 8:33)

God wants to speak to us. Paul wrote that as many are led by the Spirit, these are the sons of God. If you are a Christian, you are to be led by the Spirit. God wants to lead us and He does that by communicating with us in many different ways.

(Rom 8:14) “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

Jesus said in John 10:3-4 that the sheep hear the voice of the Shepherd and follow Him. They follow Him because they know His voice. God wants to have relationship with us, and He wants to speak to us. We need to get to know His voice.

(John 10:3-4) “To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. {4} When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.”

God wanted to speak to little Samuel, and He called to him, but Samuel did not yet know His voice. He went to Eli three times before Eli figured out that the Lord was trying to speak to Samuel. He told him to answer the next time by saying, “Speak, for Your servant is listening.”

(1 Sam 3:7-10) “Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, nor had the word of the LORD yet been revealed to him. {8} So the LORD called Samuel again for the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli discerned that the LORD was calling the boy. {9} And Eli said to Samuel, "Go lie down, and it shall be if He calls you, that you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for Your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. {10} Then the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for Your servant is listening.”

We gather a couple of things from this passage. First, in verse seven, we find that Samuel did not yet know the Lord. When we come into a relationship with God, He puts His spirit inside of us. It is by His spirit that we have the capacity of hearing God. That does not mean that God cannot speak to unbelievers; God can do anything He wants. But, God puts His spirit inside of us so that we can know the thoughts of God. So, if we are going to hear from God, we need to know Him.

(1 Cor 2:11-12) “For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. {12} Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,”

If you have never confessed Jesus to be your Lord and Savior, I encourage you to receive Him right now. The first requirement in Romans 10:9-10 is that we must believe that Jesus is the Messiah, that He died for our sins, and that He was raised from the dead. The second requirement is to confess Him as our Lord or Master. So, to receive Him, we simply need to ask Jesus to come into our lives, and confess Him to be your Lord. When you do that, He promises to come in and seal you with His Holy Spirit.

(Rom 10:9-10) “that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; {10} for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”

The second thing that we find out about hearing God from little Samuel is that the word of the Lord had not been revealed to him yet. Learning to hear God’s voice is a process. In Mark Virkler’s book, 4 Keys to Hearing God’s Voice, his first chapter is entitled, How I Discovered the Four Keys (to hearing God’s voice). He said, “I read and memorized Scripture. I went to Bible college. I became an ordained pastor. I prayed and fasted. I obeyed the Lord’s commands to the best of my ability. Well, that didn’t help me.... I could not hear Him, see Him, or feel Him, and yet I was taught and believed that I had a relationship with Him.. It seemed more like a theology than a relationship.” He was convinced that God did want to speak to him. He read in John 5:19-20, 30 that Jesus only did the things that He heard and saw His Father doing. Mark set aside a whole year to learn to hear God’s voice. And that year, 1979, was a breakthrough year for Mark. He learned that God speaks to us through our thoughts and in many other ways.

(John 5:19-20) “Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless *it is* something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. {20} For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and *the Father* will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel.”

God took Mark to Habakkuk 2:1-2 and gave him four keys to hearing His voice. Those four keys are:

- 1) I will stand on my guard post (be still);
- 2) I will keep watch to see (fix your eyes on Jesus);
- 3) He will speak to me (tune to spontaneity);
- 4) Then the Lord answered me and said, “Record the vision.” (Write the flow of thoughts and pictures that light upon your heart and mind.)

(Hab 2:1-2) “I will stand on my guard post and station myself on the rampart; and I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me, and how I may reply when I am reproved. {2} Then the LORD answered me and said, “Record the vision and inscribe *it* on tablets, that the one who reads it may run.”

In our text today, Jesus consistently spent time with the Father. We read in Mark 1:35 that Jesus went out in the early morning while it was still dark and went to a secluded place and prayed. Jesus went up on to the rampart to watch. He went to a quiet place where He could hear from the Father. If Jesus did that, I think it is even more important for us to find a quiet place to hear from God. I think Jesus was looking to see what the Father would show Him. I think He was listening to hear what the Father might speak to Him.

(Mark 1:35) “In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left *the house*, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.”

If we are going to learn to hear God’s voice, we need to apply these same principles in our lives. Find a quiet place to spend with the Lord. Learn to watch and look with your eyes. Learn to hear what He is saying. Write down the things that you hear and see. Here are some practical things. God often speaks to us through His word. I talk to the Lord when I read. Don’t just read the Scriptures, fellowship with the Lord when you read. He will often speak to you through the word.

Paul wrote in Colossians 3:2 that we should set our minds on things above. Peter’s mind was set on the things of earth. We have to set our minds on things above. Paul wrote that the mind set on the flesh and the things of earth is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace. As I was meditating on those verses many years ago, the Lord gave me a song.

(Col 3:2) “Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.”

(Rom 8:6) “For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,”

The second and third verses of the song are,

“How do we set our minds above? What are some things that we can do? The word is one, prayer is another, but the best of all is to worship our Lord and God.”

“I’ll set my mind on things above. Renew my mind with the word of God. I’ll give thanks to You and worship with psalms and hymns and songs from my heart.”

God speaks to us out of His word. God speaks to us in prayer. God fills us with His Spirit when we pray and worship, so worship ushers in the Spirit, and so it is a wonderful way to set our mind on the Spirit.

I encourage you to also write down the thoughts and pictures that you get when you are with the Lord. I find that when I am writing, I start to flow. God often speaks to me while I am writing. I want to close with one other thing that Mark Virkler wrote. He mentions the need for guardrails along the spiritual path of hearing God’s voice. He wrote, “God has established spiritual advisors as an umbrella of protection, to help guard us from self-deception within our own hearts, as well as from the deception of satan.” Having some spiritual counselors to run things by is really important, and I highly endorse that principle. He mentions 2 Corinthians 13:1, where Paul wrote, “Every fact is to be confirmed by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” Here are the things that Mark recommends when looking for a spiritual counselor.

- 1) A close friend; one who knows the sheep, and whose sheep recognize his voice.
- 2) One who has a solid biblical orientation.
- 3) One who can sense the voice of the Spirit of God in his own heart.
- 4) One who is willing to commit himself to the sheep, who will invest his time and energy, and is willing to lay down his life for the sheep for whom he is responsible.
- 5) One who also receives counsel.
- 6) One who is ahead (or alongside) of me in the area I am seeking advice.

Here are some of the people that we should consider to be in our list of spiritual counselors: parents, spouses, employers, small group leaders, and pastors. He does not recommend that we have a spiritual adviser of the opposite sex. My recommendation is that you find people that will be frank with us, like Jesus was with Peter. “Peter, you are setting your mind on man’s interest, not the things of God.” If we want to hear God clearly, to speak with confidence about the things we are hearing, these are some great things to keep in mind.

Let’s pray.

Father God, we want to hear clearly from You. We want You to reveal Yourself to us, like you did for Peter. We also want to be corrected when we miss it, like You did for Peter. Help us to set our minds on things above. Help us to carve out a quiet time and place to be with You. Help us to learn to hear Your voice clearly. Help us to be humble and learn to receive counsel from others. Help us to be a prophetic voice in these last days. I ask these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Introduction** (Matt 16:17, Mark 8:31-33)

1. **Jesus' Mindset** (Mark 8:31-32, Mark 10:45, Ez 7:10, 1 John 2:2, John 1:29, Mark 14:36, 2 Pet 1:19, 1 Cor 2:3-5)
  
2. **Peter's Mindset** (Mark 8:32-33)
  
3. **Our Mindset – Applications for our Lives** (Rom 8:14, John 10:3-4, 1 Sam 3:7-10, 1 Cor 2:11-12, Rom 10:9-10, John 5:19-20, Hab 2:1-2, Mark 1:35, Col 3:2, Rom 8:6)