

Ordinary People – Part #6 Sensitivity to the Spirit

Acts 9:10-18 - Ananias Baptizes Saul –

¹⁰ Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “***Here I am, Lord.***” ¹¹ So the Lord *said* to him, “Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for *one* called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. ¹² And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting *his* hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.” ¹³ Then Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.” ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.” ¹⁷ And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ Immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.

God desires men and women who are sensitive to His Spirit.

- In **Ananias** He found a man ***who was in touch and in tune*** with the Lord.

Prayer is **vital** to a person’s relationship **with God**.

- It is both **the gateway to a relationship with God** and ***how the relationship is exercised, developed, and maintained.***
- One must have a **measure of faith** and **sensitivity to God** for us to contact God through prayer.
- We also must ***continue to pray and be in touch with God*** to maintain our spiritual sensitivity.
- Each is dependent upon the other and each contributes to the other.

Prayer and sensitivity to God **are inseparable partners** in one’s relationship with God.

I. ANANIAS—IN TOUCH WITH GOD - God can call on His people around the world to accomplish His work.

Thank the Lord for *the faithfulness of His people.*

- As a result of *Ananias' faithfulness when God needed him,* Saul had someone to minister to him.
- Though *Ananias was an ordinary man* and just *one of many disciples* in Damascus, he became **an important cog in the wheel of God's plans.**

Contrary to what some people may think, God still speaks to people.

Acts 13:2 - While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

God is still in touch with His people and can talk to them at any time He chooses.

- *Ananias was not startled by God's voice.*
- When **God called Ananias by name**, he responded by saying,
- **"Behold, I am here, Lord" (Acts 9:10).**
- He was not frightened or startled.
- Evidently, **Ananias was accustomed to hearing the voice of the Lord.**
- At least he was so sensitive to the Lord that if he was **not accustomed to hearing God's voice, he was not surprised when** God did speak to him.

This lack of surprise underscores the relationship that Ananias had with God.

- He obviously was comfortable in the presence of God to the extent that **conversation with God was not unusual.**
- It is interesting that **many people are startled** even by those whom they know when they **are not** expecting them.
- But it seems that **Ananias was expecting God; God did not startle him.**
- This would seem to indicate *the measure of Ananias' relationship with God* through *regular and consistent prayer.*

When God addressed Ananias, *he did not hesitate to answer* but said immediately, **"Behold, I am here, Lord" (Acts 9:10).**

- **His immediate and positive response reflected** his good relationship with God and *his availability to God.*
- It appears that **he had heard the voice of the Lord before**, for He immediately *identified the voice correctly.*

II. ANANIAS—IN TUNE WITH GOD’S WORK AND WILL - Ananias was very much in tune with God’s work and His will.

2 Peter 3:9 - The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long suffering toward us, ***not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.***

- **Knowing** that it was ***not God’s will that any perish.***
- He knew **what God was wanting to do**: to save Saul.

His fear did not stem from his lack of knowledge concerning God’s overall scheme of salvation or from his insensibility to the needs of the lost.

- Ananias **was in tune** with God’s work and His will.

It would be great ***if God always called on us*** to do the things that we enjoy doing. Every person **discovers** that in life he must sometimes **go to areas that do not interest him** and **take on assignments that he does not like** and **that may be dangerous,** but such is life.

God sometimes calls on His servants to do things that are not enjoyable.

- This was the case when ***God called upon Ananias to go*** to the infamous Saul of Tarsus.

Ananias was not hesitant to answer the Lord

- And let Him know that **he was available,**
- He **was hesitant** to accept the assignment -
- **Because of Saul’s reputation of terror.**
- **Ananias allowed previous information about Saul to create prejudice toward the assignment.**

Apparently, news of Saul’s atrocities against the church **had spread and was common knowledge** among believers.

Ananias also was aware of Saul’s authority from the chief priests to bind all the disciples of Jesus.

Everything Ananias had heard about the persecutor Saul was bad. Ananias was frightened.

Obviously, **Ananias was frightened** at the prospect of having to witness to Saul.

- Perhaps he was thinking, **Lord, anyone but Saul**.
- He had heard enough about Saul that had caused fear to seize him.

It is not sinful to be frightened, but quite human - In the same way that Ananias revealed his human side, **how often do we witness the weakness of our flesh?**

- It is not unusual that **Ananias was frightened in his flesh**,
- But **he did not allow fear to be his last response**.
- **The Holy Spirit within us may not always be the first to answer**,
- **But He should have the final say**.

When Moses died, Israel needed leadership to take them into Canaan.

When **God called Joshua** to be that leader, many people experienced fear.

But God said, Joshua 1:9 - Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

God reassured Joshua saying, Joshua 1:5 - No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.

Ananias could have said no. God commanded Ananias to go, but he could have refused.

- To refuse to do the will of God is to fail Him.
- But God will not force His will upon a person.

- Mankind has the power to choose his actions
- **Ananias had a choice** whether to go to Saul.
- Thankfully, Ananias responded positively.

Ananias was sensitive to the Spirit and the will of God.

Ananias' positive response to God came after his initial alarm.

- **Many Christians** may initially respond to the call of God negatively
- Often based on their preconceived ideas and prejudices,
- But after prayer and consideration they often will say yes to God.

Ananias went to Saul. God's man in Damascus trusted what God had to say concerning Saul.

Through the guidance of God, Ananias was able to overlook Saul's past and look at his potential.

Acts 9:17-18 And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.

The first three words Acts 9:17 are the essence of: **Ananias' compliance to God's command:**

"And Ananias went." - By his obedience to God Ananias watched Saul be healed of temporary blindness, baptized in water in the name of the Lord, and filled with the Holy Spirit.

III. GOD DESIRES SENSITIVE SERVANTS - If we are to be servants of the Lord, we must be in touch with the Lord.

An effective servant must understand his master's commands.

- **They may be** hand signals, head nods, or coded words, but whatever they are, the servant is able to know what his master wants.

The servant of the Lord is no exception.

- **To be an effective servant**, he must be able to understand the directions of the Master.
- **To hear and understand the voice of God** is not always easy, but He always assists those who sincerely seek His will.
- **If we are in touch with Him**, we will know what He wants, even if it takes a while for us to understand His signal.

Prayer. As **it is impossible for the servant** of any master to understand what the master wants without previous communication:

It is impossible for a Christian to know what God wants without prayer.

Prayer is communication with God.

Every person of God should be a person of prayer.

- Through prayer **we establish a relationship with God** that allows us *to be sensitive to God*.
- **By being sensitive to God *a person is open to the directions of God*.**
- There can be no wonder **why the Bible emphasizes the necessity of prayer**.

Listening to and recognizing the voice of God.

John 12:28-30 - 28 Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.”

29 Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to Him.” 30 Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake.

This scripture reveals a classic example of ignorance of God’s voice.

- ***When the people heard God’s voice***, some said *that it thundered*.
- **Others thought** that it was *the voice of an angel*.
- ***Had they been in tune with God***,
- **They would have known** *it was the Lord who was speaking*.

Knowing the heartbeat of God - Maintaining a proper relationship with God through prayer allows us to know His purpose on earth and to know the things that please Him.

The apostle Paul spoke of a Christian having the mind of Christ:

1 Corinthians 2:16 - For “who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?” **But we have the mind of Christ**.

A Christian who is **in harmony with God** will care deeply *about what He desires*.

- **Salvation is** a foremost *priority to God*; **it is not God’s will** *that any person should perish*.
- **God’s servant will share** His desire *to rescue the perishing*.

Trusting God to obey - ***When a person is living in a vibrant relationship with God, it is not difficult for that person to trust God and obey Him.***

Jesus said:

John 14:15 - ***Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit*** - “If you love me, keep my commands.

CLOSE:

Anyone living for God with all their heart will find that trusting God is almost automatic.

- God is not distant or removed from His servants.
- *Neither should His servants be distant or oblivious to God.*
- We are not disconnected and detached from Him,
- But *connected by the Holy Spirit* that *dwells within us*.
- We share a relationship with Him that involves regular prayer and living according to His will and purpose.

The maintenance of such a relationship requires sensitivity on our part.

- To serve our Master, we must know Him—what He wants, His will, and how He feels about the important issues of life.
- We should share God's view of the lost—a desire to *see all people saved*.

2 Peter 3:9 - The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (*God is "not willing that any should perish"*)

Ananias was such a servant.

- He apparently was a man of God who also was a man of prayer.
- He was sensitive to God,
- So, when God called him to go minister to Saul of Tarsus,
- He immediately was aware of what God wanted to do through him.

Ananias' reluctance stemmed not from his unwillingness to do God's will, but from his knowledge of Saul's reputation.

- Nevertheless, he obeyed the call of the Spirit and went to Saul.

How important is prayer in a Christian's life???

Prayer in our daily life is vital to having a genuine relationship with God.

Without prayer it would be impossible to be sensitive enough to know the will and desire of God in this life.