

How Do I Know That God Is Talking to Me?

Yesterday I pulled out a manila file labeled “colors.” That’s the theme of the week in my Spanish class, so I have plans to bring colors to my students through various mediums.

Skittles are on the docket, because if a student tastes the rainbow, he might be more motivated to remember its colors. I also have a color by number, a color wheel, and a stack of paint swatches. For my upper level students, I have a devotional blog post about colors to translate.

We do a variety of activities, because one pass over information isn’t enough for anyone to learn well, and the same is true in the way we learn from God.

God often speaks to us in multiple layers.

For example, over a week ago I signed my very first book contract, and that is a strange new world for me. Matt keeps imagining my grand book tours on the east coast, bless his heart.

But the whole book thing sent me into a fierce heart battle over motive. I set a stopwatch, and I clocked myself lasting about four minutes with godly motives. Then off my wretched heart would go—longing for fame.

I would halt those thoughts and go through a Scripture list I’ve made up, to define my purpose in writing: To glorify the name of the Lord, to help others know Him, to shine light into a dark world, and to teach people to live by God’s commands.

Then pretty soon I was imagining myself famous again.

Oh Lord, help me.

Friday night I told Matt about my struggle, as we crawled under the covers.

"I can't seem to maintain a humble, godly motive for even two seconds!" I told him.

"You should be encouraged that you recognize your wrong motives," he said. "That's a sign the Holy Spirit is working in you. You know, it's funny because our sermon tomorrow night is about motive."

Sure enough, the sermon passage:

"For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you" (1 Thessalonians 2:2, NIV).

By the end of the singing and sermon that night, I was fully reminded that I am a sinful woman, and my motives are naturally impure. During the closing prayer, I sat in my chair and held my head in my hands.

Dear God, redeem my motives from the dark side.

The next day I was reading a book by Paul David Tripp called *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*. He writes:

"Sin makes us glory thieves. There is probably not a day when we do not plot to steal glory that rightfully belongs to the Lord ... We crave glory that does not belong to us."

Yes, I am a thief.

Then I sat down to write my next newsletter to those of you who have subscribed to my website (if you haven't subscribed, wanna join us?) I want to send you guys something valuable each month, and it's going to be a homemade micro-lesson in

how to study the Bible. As I was preparing this Bible study for the newsletter, I did the scientific thing and opened to the Psalms, closed my eyes, and let my finger fall on a verse for us to study. Don't you know my finger landed on a verse about glory and motive? (Coming to you this Sunday.)

But God wasn't done talking to me about motive yet.

Yesterday I watched a news video about a pastor in Germany who is facing fierce opposition because he is preaching that Jesus is the only way to God. But he said he also started getting thousands of encouraging emails from followers of Christ, and he started to think he was really something.

"I am really a great pastor!" he said to himself.

Then he shook his head in disgust and said he had to remind himself, "No, I am nothing. I am only a sinner. I am only a tool for Jesus Christ."

Yes, brother. Me too.

So my point is that **good teachers layer information, so that it sinks in and makes a lasting impression in the learner's thinking and lifestyle.** Like God keeps impressing on me that I need to be rescued from bad motives.

God is an excellent teacher, and when He wants us to know something, he very often will bring the same information to us from multiple directions.

On our part, we have to be excellent listeners who are attentive 24/7. Bibles open. Hearts prayerful. Reading and listening to things that are bringing us godly messages and not just entertainment. We also have to be hungry to grab the new information and believe and obey it.

What message has God been sending to you from every direction lately?