

2 Keys to Easily Discern God's Voice vs. the Enemy's Voice

We all feel it—this world is inundated with noise.

Both on and off the Internet, the countless voices that vie for our attention make it a challenge to know what to let in versus what to shut out. Consequently, this chaos of the natural world often makes it even more difficult to discern the voices in the spiritual world. It's no wonder well-meaning people frequently confuse the enemy as God.

While properly vetting the voices around you can take much time and intention, it's not hard to know who's behind what you hear in your mind. I'll show you how.

How God and the Devil Speak Today

Christians should know that God speaks to each of us through His Holy Spirit, who is heard through different situations. Sometimes the Spirit speaks through the Scriptures. Other times, the Spirit speaks through a person or an event. Still, other times, the Spirit drops words into our minds.

But so does the devil. I've seen him cherry-pick Scriptures that lead people to destructive conclusions. We all know his ability to use the mouths and actions of others. And while he can't read our minds, he can interject thoughts into them (see 2 Corinthians 10:5).

Still, while both God and the enemy speak through similar means, they come to completely different conclusions that make it easy to tell them apart. This is where understanding what Jesus said about the Holy Spirit makes all the difference.

The Two Keys to Discern God's Voice

To comfort His disciples about His departure, Jesus assured: “When the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you” (John 14:26, NLT).

In this single sentence lies the two keys to discern God’s voice versus the enemy’s voice. The first is Jesus’ name for the Holy Spirit.

Key No. 1: The Name of the Holy Spirit

Jesus referred to the Spirit as, “the Advocate.” Today, “advocate” means helper or “someone who publicly supports someone.” On the surface, that’s explanatory enough. The Holy Spirit is both helper and supporter. But the Greek word for “advocate” provides a far better picture of how the Holy Spirit speaks and works in our lives. It’s *parakletos*, which represents legal counsel.

You see, in Bible times, *parakletos* was a rare word that was hardly used in their culture. But when it was, it essentially meant, “one who pleads another’s case before a judge.” In modern terms, it’s appropriate to think of the Holy Spirit as your defense attorney.

The implications of this are huge. Chiefly, a defense attorney never works to prove your guilt. And the Holy Spirit doesn’t either. This becomes especially apparent as you understand the second key Jesus gave, which is the Advocate’s character.

Key No. 2: The Character of the Holy Spirit

In the Spirit’s defense of you, He’s not like a sharp-tongued, unsympathetic attorney who just wants another win. No, Jesus described Him as “my representative.” This means that everything the Spirit does or speaks in your life is an extension of Jesus’ ministry and character.

It would take a book to explore every way He expressed Himself

while here on earth. But in short, “Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil” (Acts 10:38). With every page turn of the gospels, we see that Jesus goes out of His way to touch the untouchables, speak to the unspeakables, forgive the unforgiveables and offer hope to the broken. He never once speaks condemning, shaming or belittling to any struggler.

As Jesus’ representative, the Holy Spirit is just as good, helpful, healing and positive in His communication with you.

Putting It All Together

The two simple keys we just explored reveal the Holy Spirit in a way that flies in the face of how many imagine Him today. He’s not the teacher or parent who follows their child with a ruler, ready to slap their hand when they misbehave. He’s not God’s “sin police,” hiding on some side road, waiting to clock you for speeding and then fine you into submission.

No, for believers, the Holy Spirit is the God who is on your side, always working to prove your innocence in Christ. Every way He communicates with you will reflect that.

So, what does the Spirit’s name and character mean for what you hear? It means you can be sure that any voice that brings up your faults, failures and imperfections to accuse or threaten is not the voice of God. It means you should shut out even a whisper that provokes condemnation, fear of retaliation or threat of punishment. After all, an advocate doesn’t beat people up; an advocate helps people up.

[Perhaps you wonder, “What about conviction of sin?” “How does the Spirit work on unbelievers?” or “How do the gifts of the Holy Spirit relate to this?” As Jesus said, “There is so much more I want to tell you” (John 16:12). And I explore more in my full teaching, “The Misunderstood Ministry of the Holy Spirit.” {eoa}

Kyle Winkler () is the creator of the popular *Shut Up, Devil!* mobile app. His newest book, *Shut Up, Devil: Silencing the 10 Lies behind Every Battle You Face*, releases on April 12, 2022. Kyle holds a Master of Divinity in biblical studies from Regent University. Connect with him on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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