

James Goll: How to Activate Your Spiritual Senses

When we surrender our senses to our Creator, He enhances them.

Each of us needs to become a discerner—no matter what our personal background or specific gift or function in the body of Messiah. Although some believers are especially gifted as prophets, every follower of Jesus receives the gifts of revelation and discernment. And every believer needs to use them! In fact, without discernment and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, we cannot progress in our use of any of the gifts and callings. But when we do, the sky is the limit!

As a kid growing up in a small town in Missouri, I loved watching programs on our little black-and-white television set. I would watch them for as long as I was allowed, and the picture never seemed dull, lifeless or lacking in clarity. But when we upgraded to a color TV, suddenly the programs came alive to me in a new way. We went from everything being black and white to omni-vision over night!

Early on my Christian life looked a lot like our old black-and-white television. The programming and reception were not too bad, and I thought things were going along fine. Then everything shifted unexpectedly, and I have never wanted to go back. It is actually rather exciting! Here is what happened.

For some time, I had been getting various brief mental snapshots, and I would notice for a millisecond and think, *"Where did that come from? What was that?"* It was as if my senses were waking up. Occasionally, I seemed to be able to look deep into a person's being and discern or know something that would never appear to my natural eye only.

I remember the first time it occurred. I met a particular church leader, and it was as if I could see diamonds

glistening inside his mind, while at the same time I knew what that image meant. I thought about how we all have the mind of Messiah Jesus (see 1 Cor. 2:16), and I could tell that this man had God's spirit of wisdom to an exceptional degree. I also felt that this godly wisdom would be used to benefit both the church and secular government. Eventually as things unfolded in this man's life, it all became totally true. My knower knew and my feeler felt a measure of the destiny upon this man's life.

It was like beginning to see in color instead of in black and white. Or, to use the analogy from Hebrews 5:14, it was like growing out of being a baby who drinks only milk, and sampling solid food instead. I began to believe that God had more for me, and I started to paying more attention to the new "solid foods" He was sending my way—sampling their taste, smell, texture and appearance, and noticing how they made me feel. I compared my experiences to those of others whom I read about in the Bible or that I heard about in modern-day heroes and heroines of the faith. I wanted to know what was from God and what was from my own imagination or some other source.

Purposely Offer Your Senses

Each of us has been equipped with five natural senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. I believe there is also a sixth sense called "knowing," and as New Testament believers, that we can now have the very "mind of Christ." (There is also something called "common sense," of which I wish some of us would get more, but that is not what this teaching is about!)

The first step in beginning to discern God's communication with us entails purposely offering or presenting our senses to Him. Unless we do this—on an ongoing basis—we will not be able to grow into full maturity of Messiah Jesus. If we do not give ourselves to Him intentionally, it will be very difficult to know what He wants us to know and therefore difficult to follow Him obediently.

When we surrender our senses to our Creator, He enhances them. Divine input gets “downloaded” less sluggishly than before. As we practice connecting with Him, He increases our capacity for more. What used to seem impossible becomes achievable. More than that, it is just plain fun. Hearing from God is a perpetual source of pure joy.

Some people call this “activating your senses,” and it is that. But you cannot activate your senses on your own; you must activate them by presenting them to the One who created them and activate them for His purposes, in love.

As your senses are activated, you might start receiving “snapshot visions” in your mind’s eye, as I did. You might feel God’s emotions of anger or compassion. A word or a phrase might come to your mind. Or you might sense or even smell that something is “off.” *Huh? you think. What could this mean?*

The process of figuring out these communications from God consists of trial and error, just like learning to ride a bicycle. As a father, I remember helping all four of my kids learn to ride a bike, running alongside them with my hand on their back until they could stay up on their own for a few yards. They were so excited when they could finally do it, and when they fell down, I would help them back up.

Likewise, to practice using your senses to discern good and evil will involve some falls. You will not be able to get everything right every time. You might step out boldly, thinking that you are obeying God, only to lose your train of thought, make an incorrect assumption or get embarrassed. Just remember: God loves it every time you step out and practice. And practice pays off!

Even in their maturity, people who are spiritual giants and who move in a high level of anointing for healing make mistakes. They miss it, and that is okay because it keeps them humble. If they are the “real deal,” they will never give up.

They will keep practicing, and they will keep cooperating with the Holy Spirit, activating their senses and reaching for the next possibility.

Present Yourself to God

You can declare freedom to your own body, soul and spirit. You can speak to your sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell, saying, "Senses, become unlocked in the name of Jesus. I declare that you are no longer captive to the patterns of the past; instead, I present you to the one true and holy God for reclamation and purification."

Your physical sense of hearing will become enhanced with a spiritual sense of hearing, and you will begin to hear things from a divine dimension that you have never heard before. Your ordinary sense of sight will become enriched with a spiritual sight by which, as God directs, you will be enabled to see beyond the limits of human vision. Depending on your unique mix of God-given capabilities, your other senses will wake up and take notice of messages they could not perceive before. A whole new world will open up to you.

Prayer of a Discerning Heart

I invite you to join me in a prayer of surrender to the Holy Spirit as we expect our senses to become activated and sharpened for Jesus' sake: *Here I am, Lord. All that I am and all that I hope to be, I surrender to You. I present to You my body, soul and spirit with all of their natural and supernatural senses. May they be useful to You as instruments for accomplishing Your will on earth.*

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