

Perception and Communication

It isn't how it's said; it's how it's heard.

We pay a lot attention to how someone says something and make decisions about what was meant, what it says about us, and the motives of who is speaking. The converse is more useful when communicating with another. How we perceive what is said is the message regardless of the message being sent.

As a Christian Counselor working with couples I can tell you that perception drives communication. One of them will often start with a story about what happened or what had been said. Soon after, the other interrupts saying, "No, that's not how it went." They go back and forth, each telling their perception. Sound familiar?

I may ask the couple to stand and look out the same window and just observe what is outside. After 10 seconds or so I ask each to report what they saw. Of course, each of them saw some similarities. However, each also saw the view differently. This is because of our perception. The couple both looked out the same window at the same scene and perceived differently. We have the same discussion and perceive what was said differently.

Do you want to hear what God is telling you?

God communicates to us clearly with the Bible. It's not how it's said; it's how it's heard. Have you had the experience of reading scripture and deciding the message it sends to you? Then, a month or even a year or decade later you read the same passage of scripture and you get something additional or different from it? This has repeatedly happened to me reading the Parable of Prodigal Son. I perceive what God is telling me as I relate to different characters in the parable or sometimes it depends on my mood or mindset. He says the same thing every time. It's how I hear it that changes. It's perception. There are a lot of variables!

To hear what God is telling you when reading the Bible add the tips on the next page to your list of ways to clearly hear the Father speaking to you.

- PRAY before you begin. Lord, I surrender my time, my mind, body, and soul to You. Tell me what You want me to hear and perceive, and lean not to my own understanding. Open the eyes of my heart, open my soul to hear, and open my perception to see and hear only You. I lay aside everything else and ask You to block anything that would come against this intimate time with You. Holy Spirit, come. In the name of Jesus, Amen
- READ SLOWLY. We tend to breeze through scripture we are familiar with. It is not as important to read a lot as it is to get a lot. Read word by word, asking God, “What do You want me to perceive from this?”
- SOAK it in by giving yourself the gift of time to simply sit quietly in His holy presence after reading. Do it without clock-watching. If you know you have limited time set an alarm so you don’t have to keep track of anything except listening to what the Holy Spirit says.
- GIVE IT A TITLE. Think of a title for what you heard in your time with Him and jot it alongside the verses you read. One of my Prodigal Son messages was, “Be more loving.” Another time it was, “Forgive quicker.” In the future, you will see what new perceptions may come the next time He uses the passage you read to communicate with you..