



How to Recognize God's Will and Timing for Your Life

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Hey, friends! Welcome to *Spirit Connection*. This week, I want to talk about a very timely message: How to recognize God's will and timing for your life. Let's jump right in.

God, we pray that You would open up our ears to hear. Give us eyes to see. Speak to us today through Your Word, through Your Holy Spirit. Let us know, Father, that You love us. Let us know that You care. We just ask for confirmation. We ask for activation, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Now, I've been hearing God for a very long time. I've not always understood what I've heard and often I've misunderstood how to respond to what God was saying. God is speaking all the time. There's not a shortage of revelation at all, but there is a shortage of understanding on what to do in order to fulfill what God is saying. The big pitfall in hearing God these days is not understanding the timing of what you're hearing. Many people over-interpret what God is saying or they over-respond or, worse yet, they do nothing at all. Tragically, it's causing us to fall into a condition that I call prophetic hopelessness.

You know, people are saying, "I don't want another prophetic word until I see the ones that I already have come to pass." And maybe you haven't had a word; I realize that not everyone has had one. But what I'm talking about right now is a condition that Proverbs 13:12 describes: "*Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life*" (NIV).

Whether you've heard God speak or not, sometimes you can feel a little hopelessness along the way. In many cases, it's not because God's not speaking or wanting to fulfill the prophetic words that He's saying, but often it's a lack of our own understanding on our part on the timing of how to respond. It's also the lack of wisdom on how to activate it and apply it to our lives. It's also the misunderstanding of timing, you know, whether it's for now or whether it's for later. And I realize, again, that maybe you've never heard the voice of God or maybe you've never been given a prophetic word, and this can cause that hope deferred condition as well. But I want to help you this week with this.

God is speaking to us all the time through the Bible, prophetic words, that still small voice inside, dreams and visions, supernatural experiences ... God is always speaking 24/7. It's just a fact that we don't always comprehend or are not always understanding it. The foundation I use in my prophetic ministry and my spiritual life is from Ephesians 1:17 (NIV).

"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better."

The goal is to know Him better, and when we're not hearing God or God seems to be not speaking as clearly as He used to, it could be for a few reasons.

Here are a couple of things I usually check. We might have gotten negative—gotten into a negative spin focusing on the enemy instead of the Lord. This will close things off. Or maybe you get too busy. Hearing God requires us to slow down and instill that peace in our lives to hear Him. We start grumbling or judging others. Jesus was very clear on this point. If we judge, we will indeed be judged. I've been talking a lot about this in my new audio, [How to Love and Not Judge](#). Judging others can close the heavens over you, but they can also open them back up once you repent and stop doing that.

Another reason that we can stop hearing God is that we haven't responded to something God wanted us to do, so we stop getting new things. If we don't respond at all to the way God speaks to us, then we'll soon become dull to it and we'll need to be very sensitive on how God speaks. The more positive focus we put on hearing God, then the more He's going to speak to us or, in reality, the more we're going to already be able to receive it. He's already speaking and sometimes we can get dull and not realize it. So, this is similar to when you buy a certain car and suddenly that's all you see around you. Have you ever bought a blue car—you know, a certain model or make—and you see it everywhere? It's the same way with starting to hear God.

One of the main ways is to respond. Write it down. Record it. Do something. Value it. Pray it through. I don't mean having to spend a lot of time, but I journal every day. I've been doing that for years and that's how I hear God very clearly. If you're not doing this yet, I recommend at least write down the things that you hear or record it on your cellphone, email yourself, text yourself. There are all kinds of ways you can do it. So, you will grow really deep when you begin to track how God speaks.

Trust God to guide you through major decisions. You know, He's our best counselor. He's already got your plan ahead of you. We just have to get in line with Him. Outside advice from people is great, wisdom can help, but be careful not to lean too heavily on the advice of others. Yes, it's great for confirmation, but you'll want to ask God. You'll have to weigh it out and get confirmation from God. I recommend never making a major decision based on one or two pieces of revelation or a vague feeling from God, or like a

dream. One or two dreams is not enough to make a major decision, like a job change or a move, or something like that. You will want to get confirmation.

Now, as I'm talking about the prophetic gift, I am a prophet. I realize that people really want to ask a prophet things. You know what, people come up to me and ask me, "You know, can you give me a prophetic word?" and I used to just fire off a word to them, but do you know what I do now? I ask them, "Well, what is it you're looking for?" Do you know what? Ninety percent, maybe even 99 percent of the time, people already have what they need to move forward. It's not another prophetic word. Now, granted, there are people who need to get out of a stuck situation. I understand that. Now, there are times that you need to hear God. But there are some people who really just start relying on the prophets or other people who hear God almost like a psychic and you have to be careful of that. I'm not saying that you're doing that but be careful. Also, go to God. I ask people, "Well, have you prayed about this yet?" Most of them haven't. Ask God first. Psalm 32:8 (NIV):

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you [and watch over you].

God is the best counselor. Ask Him. It still takes faith, though. God will speak to you, but there is always that level of trust that has to be there for you to take the next steps, always, always, always. Even with me, I tell you, God will speak and I still have to trust that still small voice and we all hear God this way.

Now, I want to take a minute and pause. I have a question here from a *Hearing God 365* student—that's my online activation school, *Hearing the Voice of God 365*. One of the students had a question that I want to get answered.

Q: "Hi, Doug. I have a question. How can I activate prophetic words over my life?"

Well, that's a great question. That's one thing that I specialize in and I talk about it all the time, everywhere I go. I'm the activation guy. You know, I'm not just going to get up and just do some teaching. Yes, I am a teacher, I'm a prophet, I'm a seer, I have all these different hats I wear in the Kingdom, but one of my biggest gifts is what I call activation. And this is where you can hear the voice of God and do something practical to activate it.

Now, here are some steps to activate it.

1. Write it down. If it's a really good prophetic word that spoke to you and you happen to get the recording get it transcribed. That will help.
2. Begin to pray through and ask God to give you some steps to take.

3. Do some research. Maybe read a book or take a class on it. That's what activation is all about. You're not going out and, you know, doing a bunch of stuff in your own flesh. You're just asking God to speak to you.

I remember years ago that God spoke to me that I would be part of doing some outreach using the prophetic gifts and dream interpretation and things like that. I got these prophetic words a long time ago, so I did that. I activated it. I wrote it down. I began to research it. I began to read books on it and I went to a course that a Christian leader had, and I began to do that. And later on, wow, I was really shocked then when I became the national dream team coordinator to lead outreaches for Streams Ministries. That just blew me away. But here's what happened: I was able to do that because I didn't only listen to all the videos and the audios and things. I made notes. I activated it so that later on I was ready. It's kind of like what David says. He was able to take down Goliath because he had killed the bears and the lions while watching his father's sheep. So, what you're doing right now is going to really impact your spiritual life later.

Now, let's look at how the apostle Paul heard God to go to Rome. I love to study gifts. I love to watch people. When I meet someone, I can see that they can hear God or whatever their spiritual gift is. If they have a gift of teaching, I ask them about how they study. If they have ... Whatever gift they have, like if they can hear the Lord, I ask them questions about it. A lot of people they just say most of the time they are not aware of how their gift operates. Most people say, "It's just God." You know, in reality God speaks to us in many ways. We can study it. By studying spiritual gifts on how God speaks, we can actually master or perfect our ability to hear Him more clearly. I know, because that's how I do it. Hebrews 5:14 (NIV):

But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

All right. Let's check this out. The apostle Paul in the New Testament. You know, he had to hear God to move from being a missionary—that's what he was, he was an evangelistic missionary, he was a church planter, he was an apostle—but God began to call him to go to Rome to fulfill his destiny to witness to Caesar. Paul wrote most of his letters, and now we now have the New Testament, while in prison in Rome. But God called him to this and there was a process of that calling. It's in the book of Acts. Initially, Paul said that he felt compelled by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem, not knowing the details. Paul had a direction or an impression. Acts 20:22–23 (NIV):

"And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me."

All right? So, Paul gets an impression and as he acted on that he began to go down towards Jerusalem. This is what the activation of a prophetic words is. This is where I got it. He acted on it and he felt God directing him to do something and take a journey.

But then on his journey to Rome he then meets a prophet named Agabus who gave Paul a really good prophetic word that was confirming his feeling. It starts out with a feeling, right? Acts 21:10–11 (NIV):

After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'"

Well, actually, the reality is that Paul was later bound by the Romans and handed over to the Jews. But Acts 21–23, you'll see that in today's church standards the people really would have gotten upset that Agabus was a false prophet and that he missed it. But do you know what? Agabus was not. He was in the ballpark. It wasn't the details. When we understand how God speaks, sometimes the details can get in the way. We don't want to get legalistic about hearing God. We don't want to, you know, like do point-to-point, pinpoint accuracy or it's wrong. Remember, we see in part, we prophecy in part, the apostle Paul said. As long as we fulfill what God is calling us to, that's what matters. Exact details can sidetrack us. But listen: Paul ends up getting this prophetic word of confirmation. Acts 21:12–14 (NIV):

When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done."

All of the other believers then realized that Paul was serious about fulfilling all of what God had him to do and they agreed it was God's will. Wow! That's really important. Acts 23:11 (NIV):

The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must now testify in Rome."

So, check it out. The next night, the Lord Himself came to Paul and told him that he would go to Rome.

Now, here are the steps that Paul took to activate his prophetic word, and this helps us in understanding God's will and timing. First, he started out with a feeling. He was compelled. It's a low level of revelation, but it's real. Then he got a sense from God to go to Jerusalem. He didn't know the details yet, but as he took the steps—what he was sensing—then a prophet confirmed it. Then, this caused Paul to be willing, then, to die if necessary. This is an extreme case of a prophetic word, but it was a great calling. And the Lord came and told him ... the Lord came in and told him to take courage and go to Rome. God's will and timing is important.

Don't expect to get a visitation from an angel or the Lord. You know, this is only for higher callings, even in the Bible. You know, sometimes Peter and the disciples in the Bible, they had a vision. One time, in Acts 12, Peter thought he was seeing a vision, he thought he was dreaming or having a vision when an angel broke him out of prison. So, it's not always that we need the Lord or an angel to come in. In fact, it's usually only if you have a higher calling and you're about to walk through the opposite. So, it's really important not to expect that. "My grace is sufficient for you," is what the Lord says, and once you understand how God speaks it doesn't matter how it comes to you. What matters is that you respond, that you love the Lord, that you use it with Ephesians 1:17, "to know him better."

So, the Lord came to him, gave him courage. An important aspect of responding to what God speaks is to understand God's will and timing. It's not always easy. There are several variables that you have to take into consideration. It is possible that you're going through a season. We have to understand seasons and situations. Now, I'm a times and seasons prophet and I often release *Daily Prophetic Words* and the weekly and the monthly words because I help people to get on the timetable with the Lord.

So, if you are in a process of learning different things, there are these different life seasons, you know? Okay. Let me give you a couple of pointers here. If you're trying to understand God's will and you're not seeing something happen, maybe you have gotten a word from Him, maybe you know you're supposed to do something, but it hasn't opened up yet for you. All right. Well, here are a few things.

One is you have to understand that there are life seasons. You might be in a learning time. So, if you're in a learning time, it may feel like God's holding you back, but actually He's training you. It's not a holding back at all. It's just the wilderness where God works things out in you. We all have to go through it. Don't resist this. If I could help you, if anything, if I could help you at all, if you can hear one thing ... it is to realize that everything that happens to you is going to be used by God. Not always ... You know, the enemy attacking you is not always God's will, but it's going to be used by God to allow you to grow and mature if you allow it. So, in this season where you're learning things, you know, it might be hard, but don't strive. God may be working out patience, love and humility in your life, most likely.

Another case could be that nothing seems to be happening, because God is waiting on you to move forward. This is the case with some people. Some people, you're in a learning time, you're in a wilderness or other people, you know, it could be that God's waiting on you. You have to pray about this and find out. This is not a one-size-fits-all. All the pieces are there, but God is silent. You'll need to do the last thing—that's what I recommend—do the last thing that God told you. This happened to me a few years ago when I realized that God had called me to launch an internet training ministry, what I do now. Once I did it ... You know, I had really stopped hearing Him, I heard Him on a daily basis, but I stopped hearing Him for bigger things. And once I went back and did this, then everything opened up again.

Here's another one: It's spiritual warfare holding you back. You know, something doesn't want you to move forward, it probably starts with an 'S', Satan. Maybe it feels like you're, you know, going against the wind. The remedy for this is to get with some others, agree in prayer, and get a breakthrough. Begin to pray on a regular basis, do some things that you need to do, get back to some basics, and get through the warfare.

Another reason why it may seem like you can't move forward is that you're in a Job season or a syndrome. You know, it's a time similar to the book of Job where everything was stripped from Job. You're going through a season of collapse. God allows this for us to, you know, really ... Ultimately with Job ... If it's a true Job season, He wants to do it to repay you back double. The remedy for this is do not quit. Do not give up. Trust the Lord in the midst of this. You know, when I was saying this, there are a lot of people who think they're in a Job season and they're not. They're in the wilderness.

So, here's another. You were recently promoted spiritually and you're now having to walk through resistance of the enemy. An example of David being anointed by Samuel and then he's chased by Saul and almost killed. It was totally opposite. Moses having a face-to-face encounter with God and the people not listening to him. Paul had an encounter with Jesus and ended up—it's in Acts 9—He ended up running in fear after that when people resisted him.

I went through one of these times, through a Job season. I lost favor. You know, this is how you know that you're promoted. Things start going opposite. I got banned from speaking in the churches I helped start. People were lying about me and misunderstood me. I got really sick. Family members got sick and died. You know, I lost my vision. I lost my outreach teams. I lost a lot during that season, but do you know what? These are just a few of the things that happened, because there was an amazing turnaround that happened as well in the midst of all this, by the way. In the midst of these trials and times, you'll see also that God visits you. You know, I had things that happened, but He also used it for me. He used it to prune and purge me of things that were of my own soul. He'll do these things.

I mean, honestly, the Lord really wants to draw you closer. You'll never get through this just once, you know? You think that the warfare and things are over one time. It's not the case. You're going to go through this. You might go through it again and again, because the deeper you go in God, the more that you're going to find in your own soul and your own life. It's not a bad thing. It's good. The difference between a Job season and the wilderness is that we go through a wilderness time when God is working things through us, quite often, and we're being tested by the enemy. But most people assume that the wilderness is a Job time. It really isn't. A Job season can actually come to you later in your spiritual life. It doesn't usually start early, but if it occurs before a promotion—it's very common, in other words—but it is not always necessary. I have people tell me all the time that they want to lose everything. I meet these people. Believe me. They want to lose everything, so that they can gain double. They try to

force themselves into a false Job season because they're trying to do it in their own strength. They try to go out and sell everything, lose everything so they can gain double, but it won't work because it wasn't the Lord who was calling them in. That's actually artificially gained promotion and it's in the category of false humility but, believe me, there are people out there who are doing that. If you're doing that, just repent, go back. You know, it's okay to have stuff. God doesn't want everybody to sell everything. You know, it's okay to have things. Just don't let the things have you.

All right. There's another reason why nothing is working for you. It's called the dark night of the soul. This term was made popular by St. John of the Cross of the 16th century. It is better known as the wilderness, but it's a time in which things aren't clear. Although, you know, there are some references in the Bible to it. I really believe Christians today put too much emphasis on the dark night of the soul. After many years of my own experiences in working with people and coaching, I found that it's more beneficial to focus on the bright day of the Spirit as opposed to the dark night of the soul. I'm not kidding you, because I've spent so much time in the dark night of the soul that I had to develop the training that people are now going through, you know, about "flip it and flip it good," "look for the positive" ... Because whatever you focus on becomes a reality, whether it is a reality you're not. Whatever you sow therefore you shall reap, so if you're sowing all this negativity or looking at the dark side, that's exactly what you're going to reap. But what the Lord wants us to do is to begin to focus on Him.

So, you can stay out of the wilderness by taking a few steps. That's what I do. Remember, I've been talking about this a lot. Change the spiritual atmosphere around you. Sow good things and eventually you will reap them. Change the spiritual atmosphere around you. If you're grumbling, that's all you're going to reap. Begin to sow the opposite. Begin to worship in the midst of it. Praise God in the midst of things. Begin to be grateful and have gratitude. Begin to drop out of the grumblers club. Go on a negative thought and talk fast. The next one would be develop the positive Kingdom lifestyle. I talk about this a lot. That's flipping the negative into the positive. I'm not talking about positive thinking here. I'm talking about ... I've done a thorough study on this and, you know, if you focus on what you lack then, you know, we're going to actually tie ourselves down to that. We need to identify our resources and what God is giving us and focus on the solutions. When you get into a negative spin on anything, do something radically positive to get out of it and you will come out of the spin and you'll need to be able to take these steps. I guarantee you, it will shorten your wilderness time. If you know someone who has been in the dark night of the soul, let him listen to this. Boy, they need to hear this and begin to take steps. I know because I wrote this stuff years ago from the wilderness. I was going to do a sermon series one time called The Postcards from the Wilderness, you know, how to get back.

So, another thing is that God wants you to learn and respond appropriately to things. So, life seasons are periods of time that we go through that bring us into spiritual maturity. You know, when you think of it, we don't grow through times of blessing. We actually grow through the times where we walk through something rough. So, if we look back, it's more difficult times that really are beneficial as far as our spiritual growth.

These are similar to seasons of the year, but they happen at any time in your life. It doesn't matter what time on the calendar. They don't have to happen in order, but spring is a time of new growth. Change has happened recently and things are starting to be renewed. There's new stuff happening. I'm in a springtime right now in my life.

Summer is the next one. It's a time of fun and blessing and it's like a mountaintop experience. We don't usually grow during these times. You can't live in summer, but it keeps us going when we get a burst of summer.

Autumn is the transition time. Things start to dry up. The old starts to go. Old habits and beliefs start to fade away and then it starts out looking pretty dismal, but it can change.

Next comes winter. Again, this doesn't have to happen in order. You can jump in and out of any of these, but winter is when everything is dormant, times are difficult, it's not easy to hear God, and things aren't clear. This is the season. It's testing and strengthening our faith. It may be known as the wilderness, as I've said before, but you can shorten it. Believe me, you can shorten this time. Remember that between the time Jesus was crucified and went back to Heaven and that time on the cross, before He showed Himself to His disciples again in John 20 and 21, that was a time—there were 50 days between that and even Pentecost; fifty days seemed like a wilderness—a wintertime. It's good to understand what season you're in.

Here are some steps for hearing God and knowing His will. You know, I just want to ask these questions.

What season of life are you in right now? Begin to notice things that stand out to you throughout the day, because God wants to speak to you. I'm convinced of it.

What is God saying through these signs or these things? Ask Him to speak to you.

What is God speaking to you right now? In other words, what has He been saying to you? What are you hearing? Anything. Ask Him. If you're not hearing, ask Him to speak to you. He will.

What do you have favor in right now?

What are things that God has specifically called you to do, and what are some small steps that you can take right now towards these things? It's really important.

Now, these are just a few questions that I use in my coaching or with myself to understand where you are right now.

I believe that God's about to do something amazing. He's going to pull people out of the wilderness. He's going to set them on a path this year. This is going to be a year of amazing turnarounds and, do you know what? It's going to be really, really good. Things

that you gave up on or that you thought that God forgot about are going to start to come back. We're going to start seeing things that emerge all of a sudden from beneath the surface. You're going to start getting these assignments from the past. You're going to start getting God speak to you about things that you had forgotten about.

I just want to pray and activate this right now because, you know, we don't have a lack of hearing God right now. We have a lack of understanding and having wisdom.

So, Father, we ask, God, that You would speak to us, that You would make it clear where we are on the map of life. Make it clear, like going into the mall and looking at the map and the little red dot that says, "You Are Here." I pray that right now. I pray also for the next steps, because I know that our spiritual life is often like a connect-the-dots drawing. So, Father, I pray that You would give us the next steps. I pray, Father, that You would make it clear right now through dreams and visions. Begin to speak to us, even through children and people around us. And, Father, I ask for the Spirit of wisdom and understanding. I pray, Father, that You would open up our understanding. Open it up. Open up what You're saying. Allow us to help others as well. So, Father, I pray for that wisdom, I pray for understanding, I pray for the release of the prophetic gifts, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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All right. I hope you have a great week. See you.

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