Hearing God's Voice: Learning to Recognize the Holy Spirit with Taylor Welch

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MjQyNXorJU

Taylor Welch is an entrepreneur, business educator, and host of *The Deep End*, where he explores faith, spiritual growth, and everyday life. This episode focuses on developing a personal relationship with God and learning to recognize His guidance.

1. Hearing God Begins with Relationship

- **God's counsel belongs in everyday life**—work, relationships, parenting, decisions, and personal growth.
- Asking for wisdom can be a natural expression of relationship with a loving Father. A child does not dishonor a good parent by asking for help.
- Gifts are meant to be used. Receiving God's wisdom and abilities includes learning how to put them into practice.
- **Other people can encourage our relationship with God, but they cannot live it for us.**
- Depending continually on a spouse, teacher, or prophetic person can become a substitute for asking and listening personally.

Personal turning point: After years of relying on his wife Lindsay's discernment, Taylor describes receiving the message through her*: "No access. Tell Taylor to ask Him for himself."* The invitation was to develop his own capacity to listen.

Scripture: Luke 11:9–13; Deuteronomy 8:18.

2. Recognizing the Character Behind the Voice

- Hearing God does not always involve an audible voice. Guidance may come through an inward thought, scriptural insight, impression, picture, conversation, or growing awareness.
- Familiarity develops through repeated interaction—much as we recognize a friend's voice, tone, and manner.
- The episode uses "frequency" to describe the recognizable quality of an impression: its character and the response it produces.
- God's correction can be direct and challenging while still carrying love, hope, and an invitation to change.
- **Correction addresses what needs to change without reducing a person to what is wrong.**

Scripture: John 10:27; John 14:26; Galatians 5:22–23; 1 John 4:1.

3. Three Tests for an Impression

Test	Questions to Ask	Key Emphasis
Consistency with Scripture	Does this contradict Scripture or the character of Jesus?	Personal guidance should remain accountable to revealed truth.
Character and fruit	Does this encourage love, humility, peace, honesty, and trust—or feed pride, greed, contempt, and condemnation?	Examine what the impression produces over time.
Relevant counsel	Does this address the actual situation or reveal an underlying issue?	Helpful counsel reaches beyond vague encouragement to something meaningful and applicable.

- An impression can be specific without being divine. Specificity alone does not establish its source.
- Feelings can help us notice a response, but **a strong feeling or sense of certainty does not settle discernment**.
- Peace can accompany difficult obedience; discomfort can accompany truthful correction.
- Scripture, prayer, mature counsel, and the fruit that follows help test what we believe we have heard.

Example: Submitting Your Personality: *"It's time for you to submit your personality to my personality."*

- "That's just my personality" can become an excuse for resisting growth.
- Drive and competence can produce visible progress alongside anxiety, exhaustion, and strained relationships.
- **The manner of growth matters as much as the appearance of success.**
- Surrender invites God to reshape motives, habits, pace, and responses.

Reflection: Where have I defended a familiar pattern instead of allowing God to transform it?

4. Three Obstacles to Listening

Fear

- Fear can dominate attention until the problem becomes louder than the promise.
- Worry encourages constant prediction, control, and rehearsing possible loss.
- Bring the actual concern into prayer rather than disguising it with spiritual language.
- **Peace does not require understanding every detail of the outcome.**

Practice: Name the fear, picture placing the concern in God's care, and ask what faithful action is available today.

Scripture: 1 Peter 5:7; Philippians 4:6–7; 1 John 4:18.

Unforgiveness

- Resentment can keep old injuries active in present decisions and relationships.
- Forgiveness includes releasing retaliation and becoming willing to seek another person's good.
- **Forgiveness does not automatically restore trust, access, or a former relationship.**
- Boundaries and accountability can remain necessary.
- Continuing grief or a trauma response does not, by itself, prove that forgiveness has failed.

Practice: Ask, "Whose suffering am I still tempted to celebrate? What am I ready to release into God's hands?"

Scripture: Matthew 18:21–35; Ephesians 4:31–32.

Self-Reliance and Resistance to Surrender

- It is possible to ask God to bless a plan without asking whether the plan should change.
- Surrender grows from trust in the Father's goodness.
- Listening includes willingness to receive an inconvenient answer.
- Spiritual insight is meant to serve love and obedience, rather than establish spiritual importance.

Practice: Before reacting or deciding, pause: *"What do You want me to know? What do You want me to do?"*

Scripture for further study: John 5:19; Proverbs 3:5–6; James 1:22.

5. Bring Emotions into the Conversation

Three common responses to difficult feelings:

Response	What It Can Look Like	Invitation
Suppression	Burying pain, staying productive, insisting everything is fine	Acknowledge what is present.
Expression	Naming grief, anger, disappointment, or fear honestly	Bring the feeling into prayer and safe conversation.
Escape	Using activity, distraction, or achievement to avoid pain	Notice what the distraction keeps you from facing.

- Honest prayer makes room for disappointment: **"I know You are good, but this is how it felt."**
- Feelings can be expressed without treating every interpretation attached to them as fact.
- Children need room to name hurt and receive comfort. Parents model humility when they acknowledge mistakes and apologize.
- Unprocessed pain can influence how we interpret other people and situations.
- **Ask what belongs to the present situation and what an older wound may be contributing.**

6. Three Keys to Developing Discernment

Persistence

- Continue making room for prayer when nothing dramatic happens.
- Develop familiarity through ordinary, repeated attention.
- Avoid measuring your relationship with God against someone else's dreams, visions, or experiences.

Obedience

- Respond to what has been prayerfully tested and understood.
- Notice where you repeatedly seek new direction while avoiding an existing responsibility.
- Keep impressions open to correction, especially when they affect other people.

Trust

- Grow in confidence in the Father's goodness.
- Bring uncertainty into relationship rather than manufacturing certainty.
- Trust includes patience when an answer remains unclear.

Scripture: Luke 11:5–13; James 1:5–6.

7. God in the Details

- Ordinary activities can become places of communion: working, walking, planning, creating, and parenting.
- Small moments provide opportunities to practice attention and gratitude.
- The closing story describes a father discovering that Jesus wanted to participate in his work—his responsibilities could become shared activity with God.
- Imagination can support prayerful reflection; pictures and impressions still require discernment.
- Relationship includes enjoyment, affection, and companionship as well as instruction.

Key image: A sailing ship fitted with engines can look impressive while relying on manufactured power. The illustration, attributed in the episode to Damon Thompson, asks whether our activity is responsive to the Spirit or sustained mainly by pressure and effort.

Notable Quotes

- **“You can grow through toxicity. It will look like progress, but it is not godly progress.”**
- **“You can rationalize your way out of obedience, but you cannot rationalize your way out of the truth of the statement.”**
- **“The journey of being able to tune your ear to what Holy Spirit is saying is really the journey of subtraction.”**
- **“Everyone wants to get to the high places, but if you want to go high, you first have to go deep.”**
- **“God wants to be intimately involved in all the details.”**

A Simple Listening Practice

1. **Become present.** Set aside distractions and acknowledge God’s presence.
2. **Speak honestly.** Name the concern and the feelings surrounding it.
3. **Surrender your preference.** Make room for an answer that changes your approach.
4. **Ask simply.** “What do You want me to know about this?”
5. **Listen without forcing.** Record any scripture, thought, picture, or impression.
6. **Test and respond.** Consider Scripture, Christ’s character, wise counsel, and observable fruit.

Prayer:

Father, help me recognize Your loving guidance. Bring my fears, hurts, and habits into the light. Give me the mind of Christ, patience when I am uncertain, and courage to respond faithfully. Teach me to share ordinary life with You. Amen.