

- I. ONE THING—The One Thing that I'd like to take away from today's class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:

II. MEDITATION

- A. Review your class notes from Tuesday.
- Take some time to think about the main ideas of the lesson. If you want to add details to your notes, you'll find the audio message on our website under the Resources tab. ([www.DivineDesignDiscipleship.com](http://www.DivineDesignDiscipleship.com)).
  - Which of the scriptures referenced were particularly meaningful to you? Write out those verses below and spend some time studying them this week.

- B. Rewrite your One Thing into a prayer, expressing your heart's desire for God to make this truth become your experience.

### III. PRINCIPLES

Use the principles found in these Scriptures to ground your thinking about and increase your ability to hear from the Lord.

#### A. God Loves Me and Speaks to Me

- Do you really believe God loves you and speaks to you personally? The Bible says He does:
  - Rom 8:38-39 NIV— For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
  - Jn 17:23 NLT-- I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.
  - Jn 14:23 TV-- Anyone who loves Me will listen to My voice and obey. The Father will love him, and We will draw close to him and make a dwelling place within him.
- Insights:

#### B. Hearing God Is a Reality in Scripture

- The Bible tells us clearly and repeatedly that God communicates with His people:
  - Hab 2:1 NIV-- I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint.
  - Ps 85:8 NLT-- I listen carefully to what God the Lord is saying, for he speaks peace to his faithful people. But let them not return to their foolish ways.
- There are many examples of God speaking to His people in Scripture. Here are just two:
  - David in 1 Chron 14:9-16-- The Philistines went and made a raid on the Valley of Rephaim. And David inquired of God, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?" The Lord said to him, "Go up, for I will deliver them into your hand." So they went up to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there. Then David said, "God has broken through my enemies by my hand like a breakthrough of water." Therefore they called the name of that place Baal Perazim. And when they left their gods there, David gave a commandment, and they were burned with fire. Then the Philistines once again made a raid on the valley. Therefore David inquired again of God, and God said to him, "You shall not go up after them; circle around them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees. <sup>15</sup> And it shall be, when you hear a sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall go out to battle, for God has gone out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines." So David did as God commanded him, and they drove back the army of the Philistines from Gibeon as far as Gezer.
  - Paul in 2 Cor 12:7-9-- lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. <sup>8</sup> Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times

that it might depart from me. <sup>9</sup> And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

- “It is helpful to recognize that God’s voice often comes as spontaneous thoughts that “drop into our minds.” We do not analyze or “think them up.” They are just there, clear and pure. People tend to hear God differently. Some **see** pictures and images from Him, others **hear** His voice as thoughts; others just know or sense something is from Him. God will bring pertinent Scripture to our minds also and it will have a special impact on us.” (Patty Metcalf)
- Insights:

### C. Characteristics of God’s Thoughts

- These are the qualities to look for when listening for God’s voice: Jm 3:17 NIV--The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.
- His thoughts are tailored to who we are. They seem to fit like a puzzle piece with our circumstances.
- We are influenced by many voices:
  1. My own understanding: Prov 3:5-6-- Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.
  2. The world: Rom 12:2 NIV-- Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.
  3. The flesh: Gal 5:17— For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.
  4. The enemy:
    - Jn 10:10 NIV-- The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.
    - 1 Jn 4:4 NAS-- You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.
  5. Father, Son and Holy Spirit:
    - Ps 85:8 KJV— I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.
    - Lk 2:26 NIV— It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah.
- Insights:

#### D. How God Speaks to Us

- The Lord uses many routes of communication with us:
  1. Written Word: 2 Tim 3:16-- All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
  2. Still, Small Voice: 1 Kg 19:12-13-- after the earthquake a fire, *but* the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. So it was, when Elijah heard *it*, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice *came* to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"
  3. Pictures, Images, Dreams, Visions: Acts 10:11,28 NIV-- He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners... He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean.
  4. In Our Thoughts: 1 Cor 2:13-16 NIV-- This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.
  5. Other People: Acts 2:36-37-- "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?"
- Insights:

#### E. Is This Really God?

- Ask yourself these questions to help you evaluate if what you've heard is from the Lord:
  1. Is it consistent with the whole counsel of God's written Word?
  2. Does it bear witness with trusted friends and advisors?
  3. Does it create fear or bring me closer to Jesus?
  4. Does it fit with my circumstances or seem out of place?
- Insights:

## F. Preparing for Communication with God

- Here are some ways you can ready your heart for listening to God:
  1. Be brutally honest with Him:
    - Is 1:18 MSG--“Come. Sit down. Let’s argue this out.”
    - Ps 139:1-2--O Lord, You have searched me and known *me*. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off
  2. Be humble:
    - Ps 141:8 NLT--I look to you for help, O Sovereign Lord. You are my refuge
    - Ps 25:9--The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way.
  3. Be expectant! Look for Him in your day:
    - Ps 62:5—My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my expectation *is* from Him.
    - Search for Him as in a treasure hunt: Jer 29:13--You will seek Me and find *Me*, when you search for Me with all your heart.
  4. Trust Him: 1 Chron 16:12 ISV—Keep remembering the awesome deeds that he has done, along with his miracles and the rulings that he has handed down
  5. Be willing to act. *Do you quench the Spirit when you sense He is telling you something or do you step out and follow how you sense He’s leading you?* Is 50:4-5 NIV-- The Sovereign Lord has given me a well-instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed. The Sovereign Lord has opened my ears; I have not been rebellious, I have not turned away.
- Need a jumpstart? Pray a “Breath Prayer,” asking for just 1 or 2 words for your situation.
- Explore these additional verses: Deut 32:4, 1 Kg 8:56, Rev 1:8
- Insights:

## G. Reflection Exercise #1

- Reflect on the 5 areas above. Which of these do I struggle with the most? Is there something I can do to better prepare my heart to be receptive to God? Ask God to show you and wait quietly in His presence to see what He says. Write down thoughts that come to your mind:

## H. Roadblocks to a Receptive Heart

- The condition of our hearts will impact our ability to hear from the Lord:
  1. Fear—Will He speak to me? I'm afraid of what He might say! Is He trustworthy? Will He come through? Does He really do this?
  2. Unyielded Heart—Am I double-minded? Your way, my way, or somewhere in between? Do I really want to hear what He says?
  3. Over-Analysis of My Thoughts—Do I run ahead of Him instead of going to Him? Am I willing to wait?
- Insights:

## I. Reflection Exercise #2

- How you see God? Our view of God affects how we look at life, our problems and crises, our choices and decisions, and more.
- Ask God to speak to you about your receptivity and openness to Him. Is there a picture or a word He wants to give you that helps you see how you are viewing Him? Quiet yourself before Him and see what He shows you. Write this down and talk to Him about it:

## J. The Biggest Roadblock

- Unforgiveness hinders our ability to listen to God.
- Sometimes we may need to forgive God. We hold Him responsible for not answering our prayers. Of course He has not sinned against us but we are looking for someone to blame.
- Subtle types of unforgiveness include:
  1. Do you feel like someone “owes” you?
  2. Do you have a body part that hurts?
    - Ask God if there is something there that He wants to speak to me about.
    - Example; author David Seamands was healed of asthma after forgiving His parents.
  3. Do you feel “kind of hurt”?
    - Have you said something is “no big deal” when deep down it is a big deal?
    - Do you find yourself being overly critical of someone?
    - Could you have picked up an offense?
    - Would you be willing to forgive the person, cancel the debt and give them to God?
- Insights:

## K. Reflection Exercise #3

- Ask God if there is anyone you need to forgive. It could be others, yourself, or even God. Forgive them and release them to God. Now ask God to bless them.

#### L. Reflection Exercise #4

- Take a few minutes and ask God if there is anything you are holding back from Him. Write it down, talk to Him about it. Ask Him what's behind it and listen for His response:

#### M. Conclusion

- Is 43:1-4 MSG— But now, God's Message, the God who made you in the first place, Jacob, the One who got you started, Israel: "Don't be afraid, I've redeemed you. I've called your name. You're mine. When you're in over your head, I'll be there with you. When you're in rough waters, you will not go down. When you're between a rock and a hard place, it won't be a dead end—Because I am God, your personal God, The Holy of Israel, your Savior. I paid a huge price for you: all of Egypt, with rich Cush and Seba thrown in! *That's* how much you mean to me! *That's* how much I love you! I'd sell off the whole world to get you back, trade the creation just for you.

#### III. PREPARATION FOR NEXT WEEK

- God has a passion to heal our broken hearts and set us free from our strongholds. He brings light to our darkness by speaking truth to us in the places where we have believed lies: Is 61:1-- The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners
- Inner healing prayer is a time of intentionally seeking healing and freedom by asking God what lies we've believed and what the truth actually is. Next week we'll have the opportunity to come before the Lord with an issue and ask Him to lead us to a place of freedom.
- To prepare for this time, ask the Lord to identify a place in you that He wants to heal. Prayerfully consider these areas (*Inner Healing Workbook*, People Resources Team, Navigators):
  1. Do you have a repetitive unwanted behavior, bondage, or compulsion?
  2. Do you struggle with a recurring painful emotion (fear, anxiety, guilt, anger, depression, hopelessness, abandonment, and other painful emotional patterns)?
  3. Have you had an overreaction to a present difficult or trying circumstance?
  4. Has the Lord identified a stronghold this year as we have progressed through our study? (See a list of potential strongholds from lesson 5, dated 10/18/16)
- Next ask the Lord when this behavior started, or when was the first time you experienced this emotion. Wait in His presence. Write down the impressions that come your way no matter how faint or unexpected they seem.
- Come with an expectant heart, knowing that the Lord will set you on a path to freedom and healing from the issue he has identified.