

Kootenai Communicator

February
2020

The monthly newsletter of Kootenai Community Church, Kootenai, Idaho

Important Dates <<<

22 Bridal Shower, Taryn Osman
(Joseph Adams)
29 Kootenai Thunder Pancake
Breakfast Fundraiser

*Expounding the Scriptures, Exhorting the Saints,
Exalting the Savior*

Don't Change the Channel

By Jim Osman, Pastor/Teacher

In the months prior to the release of Pastor Jim's forthcoming book titled *God Doesn't Whisper*, we are publishing chapters here. This new book critiques the widely popular belief in modern evangelicalism that God gives personal and private revelation outside of Scripture. It is a widespread belief that God whispers new and fresh words to us through promptings, nudgings, a "still, small voice," and various other means.

This month features the first half of chapter 3 titled "Don't Change the Channel" from the introduction of the book.

Please don't write me off just yet!

As precious to you as this methodology might be, you shouldn't fear a close examination of it to determine whether it is actually biblical. What do you have to lose? If being led by nudgings, voices, and signs is a biblical methodology, then you have nothing to fear from a close and reasoned scrutiny of the practices and the passages that are often pressed into service to support Hearing the Voice of God (HVG) theology. If they are not biblical, then you have so much more to gain! You will gain an understanding of how God does speak and how He has equipped you to make tough decisions. You can be set free from a frustrating, confusing, morass of subjective and uncertain "signs" which distract from the clear Word of God.

There Is a Lot at Stake

There is a lot at stake with this issue, not the least of which is a proper understanding of how God speaks to and

guides His people. The ramifications of getting that wrong are enormous. On this I can agree with HVG advocates—getting this right is at the heart of our Christian life and experience. This issue draws something of a dividing line across the landscape of Christian theology.

How Does God Communicate? Has God spoken, once for all, in the pages of inspired Scripture, or does God continue to communicate through various lesser means? Are the various methods presented in the previous chapter, in some sense, "God's voice"?

Is Scripture sufficient and unique? HVG teachers speak very highly of Scripture, affirming that it is in a category by itself. Most would never claim that promptings, impressions, and signs are equal in authority to Scripture, however, their practices suggest they do not truly believe Scripture is *sufficient* for the Christian.

Is God trying to communicate? Is it necessary to learn the discipline of "hearing the voice of God"? Do I need to quiet myself, ridding my life of distractions, busyness, and activity so I can listen for "the still, small voice"?

Is the ability to hear God's voice a mark of Christian maturity?

Is hearing from God outside Scripture essential to a loving and intimate relationship with God? No Christian wants to miss out on a full experience of an intimate relationship with Christ. None want their affections for Christ to be distant, detached and dispassionate.

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What will happen if I fail to hear God's communications? Do I run the risk of being disobedient to God's will if I cannot discern His whispered instructions? HVG teachers advocate a view of God's will that threatens dire consequences. There is a lot at stake.

How Might You Feel?

I am sympathetic to how you might feel at this point. We haven't even started a biblical evaluation of the details of the HVG model and already you might feel attacked at the very heart of your Christian faith. If you have spent years "hearing from God" and reading His direction and guidance into your circumstances, then my critique of those experiences might sound like an aggressive personal attack.

I have felt your pain. For the first few years of my Christian life, I believed that God revealed His will through signs, promptings, and inaudible voices outside of Scripture. Although the crisis I faced at the end of my first year of college started me on a journey of doubting that paradigm, letting go of my traditions did not come easily.

Initially, I was angry. I felt I had been lied to. I wouldn't say those who taught me HVG theology were being intentionally deceptive. I believe they, like Charles Stanley, Henry Blackaby, Bill Hybels, etc., were well-meaning. I also believe they were gravely wrong on this issue. I struggled to make that distinction. I felt deceived by close friends and classmates.

How could I not see it? Why wasn't I mature enough, spiritual enough, and discerning enough to see through this? How could I be that wrong? I wasn't sure with whom to be more angry—myself or others whom I had looked up to.

I also felt that my relationship with God was threatened. If your "conversational intimacy" with God has consisted of trying to hear His whispers, then a claim that *God Doesn't Whisper* would threaten that intimacy. Like I was, maybe you're not sure what "intimacy" with God might look like without straining to hear His voice. You fear being stranded in a one-sided conversation (prayer) with only the Bible as a source for guidance and comfort.

You may have grown to rely upon the tokens of God's whispers to such a degree that you wonder how God would be involved in your life sans private whispers from Heaven. They are tokens of God's love, attention, and personal care—constant reminders that you belong to the Good Shepherd Who gives attention to every detail of your life.

Finally, I felt abandoned. Though I would never want to disparage Scripture in any way, I was not convinced that it was really *sufficient* for *all* I needed. "What if God speaks in Scripture and Scripture alone?" Can you live your entire Christian life with nothing but Scripture as your guide? Does the thought of being alone in this world with only the Word of God for guidance terrify you? It is a very real fear that cripples many people. Initially the thought of going through a

week without seeking personal divine guidance felt like being stranded on an island without food and water.

But What About ... ?

As you begin to examine HVG methodology in light of Scripture, you will inevitably start playing the "What About" game. It sounds like this: "*What about* the times I sensed Divine leading, followed it, and it turned out well?"

"*What about* that time you felt God telling you to make cookies for the neighbor lady? When you brought the cookies over, you found out she had just received bad news that morning from the doctor. Your thoughtful act of baking cookies gave you an opportunity to comfort her, pray with her, and share the gospel. If that wasn't God whispering, what was it?"

"*What about* that time you decided to take a different route to work only to find out later there had been an accident on your normal route? Was that God speaking to you? If not, then what was it?"

"*What about* that time you were leaving the house but felt an overwhelming uneasiness. Uncertain what it was, you felt a need to go back inside. There you discovered you had left a pot on the kitchen stove. That likely would have caused a fire if you had not heeded the impulses of your heart. What was that, if not the voice of God?"

We have all had these experiences, *believer* and *unbeliever alike*. What do we make of them? Are these the "whispers of God"? Is this divine revelation? If these are not supernatural, divine communications of the Holy Spirit intended to direct our steps moment by moment, then what are these experiences?

I will try to answer these fears, concerns, and questions in due course.

Am I Robbing You?

Have I just described you? Do you fear that my desire is to rob you of joy and end your intimacy with God? Believe me, that is not my intention! I am not trying to replace a near and personal God with One distant and detached. In fact, I believe the exact opposite is the case. I want you to understand that God is very involved in your life, in fact, more involved, in far more specific ways, than you might at first perceive.

If it is true that God does not whisper to us in our thoughts and impressions, then I am not taking anything from you by pointing that out. Divorcing someone from their error does not rob them of anything. It frees them to enjoy the blessings of knowing truth and walking in it.

Imagine you *believe* you have a million dollars in your savings account. Now for the sake of this illustration, you don't really have it, you just *believe* you do. Further, imagine you are *living* as if it is true. That

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**Sunday
School
begins
at 9:30
a.m.**

THERE'S A NEW SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS! *For those age 18 to 30-ish*

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. - 1 John 5:13

The class will start off with a review of the five solae of the Reformation. Sola is the Latin word for "alone." These five solae (or "solas") are five key points that were defended during the Reformation and are an efficient way of summarizing orthodox Christian faith.

Here is our plan to study these five points. The goal is to tackle each sola briefly in one Sunday.

January 5: *Sola Scriptura* - Scripture Alone. The Bible is inspired by God, the very Word of God, and is our ultimate authority. Scripture alone can inform our theology and bind our conscience.

January 12: *Sola Gratia* - Grace Alone. We are saved by the grace of God alone. In our sinful state, we are not capable, apart from the regenerating work of Christ, to make a move toward reconciliation with Him, including responding in faith to the gospel.

January 19: *Sola Fide* - Faith Alone. We are justified before God by grace alone through faith alone, not on the basis of any merit, work, identity, or affiliation.

January 26: *Solus Christus* - Christ Alone. Our faith is in Christ alone. We are saved solely by the work of the historical Jesus Christ, our resurrected Lord whose sinless life and substitutionary atonement are necessary and sufficient for our justification.

February 2: *Soli Deo Gloria* - The Glory of God Alone. The ultimate purpose of all things, including every aspect of our lives, is the glory of God.

Beginning February 9, if the Lord wills it so, we will begin a study of 1 John. This is a great book for understanding important elements of Christian theology, especially Christology. John writes as a loving shepherd and apostle of the church, expressing his desire that the children of God would grow in maturity and assurance of their faith. It contains high theology and very practical direction for Christian living.

If you would like to attend this class, we are planning to meet in the little room next to Jim's office, just to the left down the hall, first door on the right. Classes are from 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

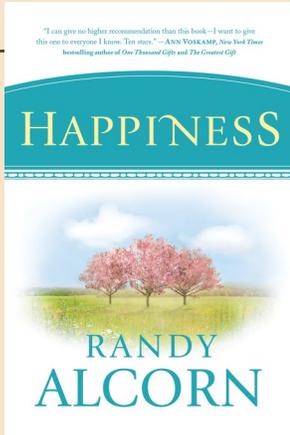
If you would like to continue to attend the other Adult Sunday School class taught by Cornel and Jess, that is also a great choice! I listen to the podcasts and find those classes to be very edifying as well.

If you are not attending Sunday School, I pray you would start off the year taking advantage of the opportunity to grow in your faith as you learn from God's word and get some of your questions answered.

Soli Deo Gloria,
Dave Rich



>>>Garden of Readin'



Happiness
by Randy Alcorn

Many believers are taught that God wants us to be holy but not happy, and that joy and happiness are fundamentally different. In this book, Alcorn dispels misconceptions about happiness and provides biblical evidence that God is happy and wants believers to be happy, too. It may even change the way you think about joy and happiness. (Located in the Christian Living section of the KCC library.)

Please contact Jenny Leo (610-2520) about donations or any library-related matter.

Women's Ministry <<<

Thursday Night
Women's Bible Study

We will begin a new book in February, so if you have considered joining, now is the time. We will be studying the book of Proverbs, using a study guide called *A Woman's Wisdom* by Lydia Brownback. Contact Lisa Slippy for more information. 208-265-4997



Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. Proverbs 3:3-4



Student Ministries <<<

February Dates!

5 Guys' and Girls' Bible Studies, 7:30-9 p.m.

12 Youth Group @ KCC, 7-9 p.m.

19 Guys' and Girls' Bible Studies, 7:30-9 p.m.

26 Youth Group @ KCC, 7-9 p.m.

Location Information

Guys' Study - meet at Matt and Shelli Cowell's home

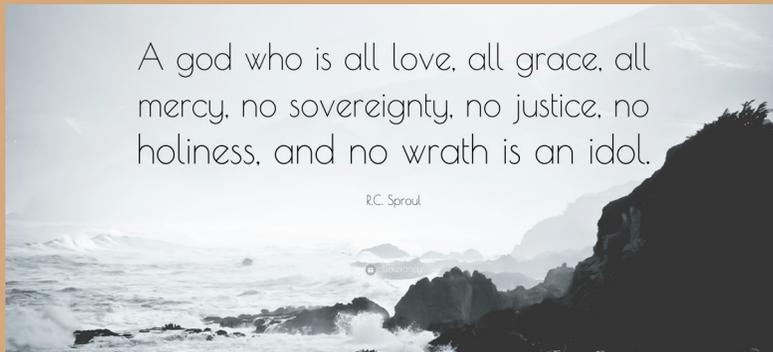
Girls' Study - meet at Anna Bottcher's home

Youth Group - meet at the church

- Jesus -
LOVES
me

A god who is all love, all grace, all mercy, no sovereignty, no justice, no holiness, and no wrath is an idol.

R.C. Sproul



>>> Kootenai Thunder

kootenaithunder.com

For the most current information, please check our website and Facebook page.

JV/VARSITY BASKETBALL UPDATE

Thunder Varsity/JV teams are winding down their seasons. The JV boys' tournament is January 31 - February 1 at the Warehouse in Spokane. Varsity tournament will be February 6-8 this year at Oaks Classical Christian Academy in Spokane Valley.

JUNIOR HIGH BASKETBALL UPDATE

Junior High girls and boys basketball begins January 28! This is open for grades 6-8. If you're interested, please contact Tracy Jensen.

Coaches

Boys -Tyler Howk/Levi Favor

Girls -Madisen Jensen/Nikki Favor.

The schedule is posted on our website. Parent meeting is January 28, at 5:30 p.m. at Cocolalla Lake Bible Camp.

SCHOLARSHIP DONATIONS:

There is a scholarship fund for families that are unable to afford the player fee. If you would like to donate specifically to that, contact Diedre Osman.

Kootenai Thunder Sports presents

Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, Feb. 29
9:00-10:30 a.m.

At Kootenai Community Church

Serving pancakes, sausage, juice and coffee

Adults \$7

Children \$5
(12 and under)

\$5/person for families of 5 or more in the same household

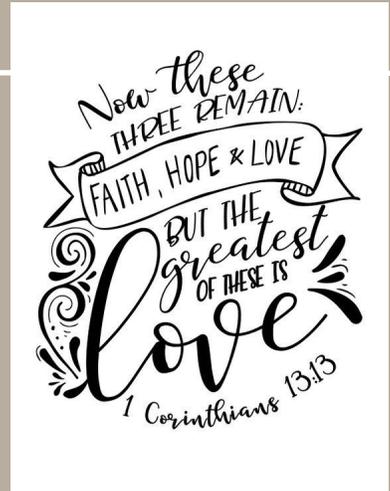


TICKETS TO BE PURCHASED FROM PLAYERS OR CONTACT DIEDRE OSMAN

>>>College and Career Ministries

College and Career Ministries Led by Brad and Jenny Stevens

The College and Career group will begin meeting regularly again on Tuesday, February 18, at 6:00 p.m. We will continue with 2 Timothy, Chapter 1. Location will be determined based on the weather; contact Jenny Stevens at 208-625-9865 for more information.



Church News <<<

Lost and Found

A Lost and Found box is in the foyer next to the Welcome Table. If you are missing anything, come and check it out. Unclaimed items will be donated after 90 days.



NURSERY MINISTRY

If you would like to help in the nursery during the worship service about once every 6 weeks, please contact Kris Bryan at 208-495-4098.



EMERGENCY EMAIL LIST

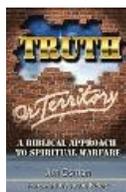
Winter is here and if you would like to be on the emergency email list, please talk to Marcia. Recently we had to cancel service at the last minute due to snow. In the future, you would receive an email letting you know of cancellations.

PARKING Reminder: During snow events, do not park next to the building on the west side. When snow slides off the roof, it can potentially damage your vehicle. Also, during the winter season, the entrances on the west side will remain locked. Please use the main entrance on the south end. We will try to keep the doors cleared on the west side for emergency egress.

>>>Kootenai Classifieds

Place your ad here next month! Email the details to lisaslippy@gmail.com by the 15th of the month!

Books written by Jim Osman are available for purchase in the church foyer.



1950 PLYMOUTH DELUXE 4-DOOR SEDAN

Runs. Well taken care of. Good upholstery. Asking \$8,500.

Call John (530-913-4416)

deeply held belief gives you tremendous comfort and causes you a great sense of well-being. You don't worry about retirement! You don't need to watch your spending or plan for future expenses. You have planned a luxurious vacation for later this year, and you have purchased quite a few expensive Christmas gifts for the family. Convinced you possess a nice little nest egg, you are considering early retirement, expecting to live easily off the interest on the money in savings.

One day you stop in at your bank to make a sizable withdrawal. After a brief conversation with the teller, the Branch Manager approaches you with a perplexed look on his face.

"Good morning!" he cheerfully greets you.

"Good morning."

He pauses for a bit and then hesitantly says, "I just need to inform you that the money you requested is not in this account. Were you perhaps thinking of a different account?"

"No," you insist, "This is the only account I have. I have one account and it has a million dollars in it."

Slowly, but with persistence, he hands you a freshly printed statement with your balance on it. This is the ultimate proof of your account balance and it reads \$546.37.

"What did you do with my million dollars?" you ask, growing impatient and angry.

"It was never there. You don't have a million dollars. This account has never had more than \$5,000 in it at any given time," the Branch Manager gently replies.

Certain you had a million dollars, you were living as if you did. You may feel like the banker took a million dollars from you, but he didn't. You never had the small fortune to begin with. He didn't hurt you by pointing that out. He actually did you a favor by divorcing you of a false notion that was putting you in peril. The Bank Manager is not your enemy for telling you the truth.

If you think you should be hearing God's voice echoing through your thoughts as you receive direct messages and mental telegrams from Heaven, then I hope you will sit down and take a look at the bank statement with me. Together, let's ask the question that should concern us most: Does Scripture teach that this is true? If Scripture doesn't teach that you can receive heavenly messages via stray thoughts, then I won't be taking anything from you by pointing this out. You never had the ability to begin with.

Here is my challenge to you: If we do not find the practice of hearing the voice of God taught in Scripture, then are you willing to jettison those beliefs and practices? Are you willing to conform your thinking and theology to what Scripture says, or will you hold fast to a view of hearing from God that is not taught in Scripture? If the biblical texts often quoted to support HVG theology do not, in fact, teach those practices,

then we have a biblical responsibility to reject that which is false, no matter how good it makes us feel.

How Dare You BBQ My Sacred Cow!

Haddon Robinson once said, "Sacred cows make the best hamburger, but the meat can be hard to swallow."¹ Experience tells me this is true. I have eaten a few burgers made from my own sacred cows. For instance, I once held tightly to a view of spiritual warfare that I later found to be completely unbiblical. Watching that cow get tossed into the grinder ended up liberating me from bondage to superstition and false doctrine. I have watched my sacred cows of Bible translations, pet doctrines, opinions, politics, and even my favorite sports team go through the grinder. The meat is hard to swallow but it satisfies the hunger.

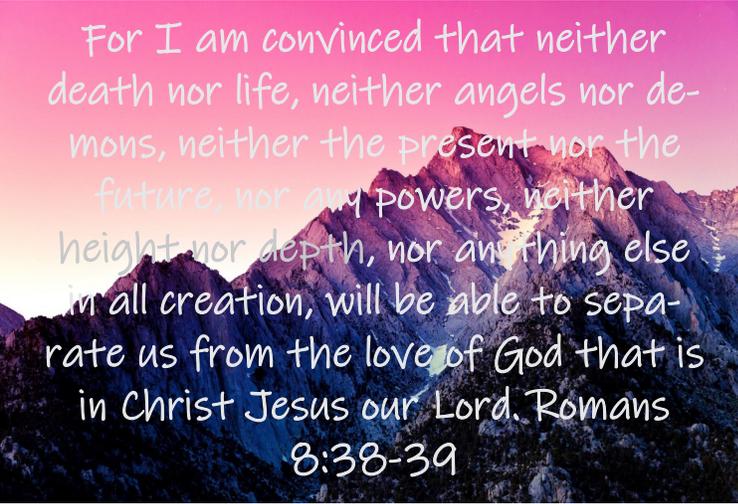
There are few cows as sacred in modern evangelicalism as the notion that God is communicating to His children apart from Scripture through visions, dreams, nudgings, promptings, impressions, confirmations, signs, an inner peace, and the "still small voice." There are also few cows as dangerous to the life and spiritual welfare of the believer as this one. For 1800 years of church history this notion was viewed as aberrant and even heretical. Today it is accepted and promoted as something that is essential to the life of the believer. What was once viewed as an attack on the authority and sufficiency of Scripture is now taught from pulpits, in books, and on Christian TV and radio.

That was once my sacred cow. It was painful to watch it go through the grinder, but I wouldn't have it any other way. That particular sacred cow kept me shackled to superstition and a hopelessly confusing morass of mixed messages. I pray the Lord will use this book to set you free in the very same way. Years later, I am still enjoying the hamburger!

The second half of this chapter will be featured in the March newsletter.

¹Friesen and Maxson, *Decision Making and the Will of God*, 6.

For more on this subject, see my book *Truth or Territory: A Biblical Approach to Spiritual Warfare*.



For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 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. Romans 8:38-39



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Is it biblical to say God "loves you" to believers and nonbelievers alike?

Historically and theologically, we distinguish among three types of divine love. There is God's love of benevolence, where God has a kind spirit to the whole world. His benevolent will and love fall on everybody.

There is also the sense in which the love of God is defined in terms of God's love of beneficence, which refers not just simply to His attitude toward the world, but how He displays that goodness universally. "The rain falls upon the just as well as on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). So that universal dimension of the love of God is manifest.

When we're talking about the love of God in popular language, we call it God's love of complacency. The love of complacency is not used in the way in which we use the term complacency in our age, in our culture. Our use of complacency means smugness and self-satisfaction. However, when the Scriptures indicate the love of complacency, it is that special love that God has for His Son and all of those who are in His Son and who are adopted into His family.

If we talk about the love of God in terms of the love of complacency, and we talk about it universally, that's blasphemy. Because God does not love the whole world with the love of complacency. The Scriptures tell us that there are many ways in which God is at enmity with the world. He hates the world and those who are swift to shed blood. We have to take that into account.

When I hear preachers stand up and say that God loves everybody unconditionally, I want to scream and say, "Wait a minute, then why does He call us to repent? Why does He call us to come to the cross? Why does He call us to come to Christ?" If God loves everybody unconditionally, then you can do whatever you want and believe whatever you think, but that's just not true. He's placed an absolute condition by which He requires. He doesn't just invite people to come to His Son; He commands all men everywhere to repent of their sins and to come to Christ. If you want to enjoy the love of complacency, you have to be in Christ. ~R.C. Sproul

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/qas/gods-love-for-believers-and-nonbelievers/>