

*Then Peter, **turning around, saw a disciple following.** This was the disciple whom Jesus sincerely loved, the one who had also leaned on Jesus' breast at the supper and asked, "Lord, who is going to betray You?" Peter **seeing him,** said to Jesus, "Lord, **what about this man?**" Jesus said to him, "If I desire that he stay until I come, **what is that to you? You follow me.**" (John 21:20-22)*

Why was John following Peter and Jesus?

He was **passionately in love** with Jesus and wanted to **catch every word** while there was time. John was something **like Mary** who washed Jesus' feet, in that he had **come from being a hot-head** controlled by his temper, **to living in wonder** at the **relentless love** Jesus poured on Him continually. He just had to be as close to Jesus as possible every chance he had, and so he **tagged along** behind Jesus and Peter, **listening in** because he just **couldn't get enough** of Jesus.

What about this man?

*John said to him, "Teacher, we saw **someone who doesn't follow us** casting out demons in your name; and **we forbade him,** because **he doesn't follow us.**" But Jesus said, "Don't forbid him, for there is no one who will do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. (Mark 9:38-39)*

You follow me!

In very real, **practical** ways, **what does it mean** for me to **follow** Jesus like He told Peter to do? **Practice** listening to the **still small voice of the Spirit** Jesus sent to **remind me of His words** and instructions and principles of love.

*However when he, the Spirit of truth, has come, **he will guide you** into all truth, for he will not speak from himself; but whatever he hears, he will speak. **He will declare** to you things that are coming. He will **glorify me,** for he will take from what is mine, and will declare it to you. All things whatever the Father has are mine; therefore I said that he takes of mine, and will declare it to you. (John 16:13-15)*

Elijah learned to do this, but at times he **allowed** his own intense **emotions to override** that inner voice and ignore it in favor of **taking things into his own hands.**

***Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight.** In all your ways **acknowledge him,** and he will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6 NRSV)*

How can I know what voice in my head is **from Jesus** and not my own cravings or Satan's assertions?

*Beloved, **don't believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God,** because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)*

There are **principles** involved here that need to be appreciated or else we will **sooner or later blame God** as being our problem. When we **feel like God is silent or ignoring** us, it may be an **invitation to ask Him** what may be **interfering** with our ability to **listen and receive** from His Spirit. Otherwise we will **imagine that God's disposition is against us** and we have to do something to placate Him.

See, the Lord's hand is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. Rather, your iniquities have been barriers between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. (Isaiah 59:1-2 NRSV)

God is eager to have **open communication** with each one of us. If this is not your experience, **pull back from imagining He might be offended** or is giving you the cold shoulder or manipulating you by withholding love, and **ask Him directly** to show you what is the **real problem**. Be willing to be **completely honest** before God, for **only in honesty** can anyone have a thriving relationship with heaven.

Sometimes the **blockage is due to anger**, which is really linked with a **spirit of unforgiveness** towards someone. It may also be **belief in lies such as shame** that leads one to **imagine they have to earn** enough credits to merit God's attention – one of the biggest lies of the enemy. **Jesus hung out** with more **people who felt condemnation and shame** and who responded **more positively** than the pious religious folk who were confident of their righteous standing with God.