

# Doctrine of Receptivity

by Pastor Bill Reed

In the “*Doctrine of Doctrines*” we discussed the importance of the intake of Bible doctrine, so that we could experience the vital transformation that comes from a renewing of the mind. A closely related doctrine is the “*Doctrine of Receptivity*.”

This categorical study will reveal to the believer, what the Bible teaches concerning how to hear, what to hear, and the necessary heart attitude in which To hear. We pray that this study brings you into a deeper fellowship with Jesus Christ and His word.

**“Who can receive the things of God? Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things we also speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.”** (1 Corinthians 2: 9-14 )

This verse clearly teaches that the “**natural man**” cannot receive the things of God. This is because the natural is not born again of the Spirit. Only those who are born again have the potential to receive spiritual insight from God's Word. It should be noted here, that the Bible clearly teaches that there are two types of born again believers, those who are operating in the Spirit, these are called spiritual, in 1 Corinthians 2:15. This group will receive properly from Bible doctrine. The second type of born again believer, is referred to in 1 Corinthians 3:1 as “**carnal**.” You must be careful to notice that the Apostle Paul refers to them as “**babes in Christ**.” These truly are born again, although they are being controlled by the old sin nature. This is obviously a result of their free volition, since Christ's death on the cross has set us free from the power of sin, and death. (Romans 6 1-23) The spiritual man can receive the doctrine of God's word, and will, with the result being transformation into Christ-likeness, and the divine production of fruit. (Galatians 5: 22-23) The carnal man has the same potential as the spiritual man, but will not receive the “meat” of God's word because they lack meekness, which is the essential ingredient of proper receptivity.

## The Proper Mental Attitude for Receptivity

- **“Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”**  
(James 1:21)
- **“The meek will he teach his way.”** (Psalm 25: 9)
- **“The meek shall eat and be satisfied.”** (Psalm 22:26)

**Hebrew word:** “*anaw*” -- submission to the will of another and dependence on them.

**Greek word:** “*prautes*” – relates to our attitude before God, and not with our relation between men.

This has nothing to do with natural disposition, rather it is worked in the spirit of man, by God, through manifold tests. As God tempers our rebellious nature, we begin to accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing, or resisting. This term in no way infers weakness, but on the contrary, it reveals great inner strength to resist the natural inclinations of the old sin nature and yield to the Spirit of God in submission; while all the world around us operates in rebellion, and self will. When we receive the word of God in the attitude of meekness, it becomes “engrafted” in our souls (James 1:21). The word engrafted in the Greek language is, “*emphutos*”, which means implanted.

In Matthew 13:8-23, we read of the parable of the sower, who went out and sowed the seed of God's word. Verse twenty-three says “**he that received seed in the good ground -- beareth fruit.**” The good ground in this parable represents the human spirit of the man or woman which is operating in meekness. Jesus told us to “**take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest for your souls.**” in Matthew 11:29. His “yoke” was his total trust and submission to His Father which is revealed in John 5:30, and best translated in the New American Standard Bible; it says “**On my own initiative, I can do nothing.**”

### **Hearing, as it Relates to Receptivity**

Oswald Chambers, the great preacher of the early twentieth century, said this about hearing, “God spoke to Jesus once and the people said it thundered. Jesus did not think it thundered; his ears were trained by the disposition of his soul to know his Father's voice.”

This is similar to the incident when Saul of Tarsus fell from his horse in Acts chapter nine. When he told of this event later in his life in acts 22:7-9, he says, “**I fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, 'Saul, Saul, why persecuted thou me?' and I answered, 'Who art Thou, Lord?' And He said unto me, 'I AM Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecuted.'**” **And they that were with me saw indeed the light, were afraid; but they heard not the voice of Him that spoke to me.**”

As you noticed in the above paragraph, the word heard is underlined, both of these are from the Greek word, “*akouo*”, and yet they differ greatly in their application. When the construction of the phrase is in the genitive case, it denotes sense perception, or in other words, they heard a sound. But when its in the accusative case, it means not only was the sound heard with the ear, but it was understood with the mind. Therefore, we know that although all those with Jesus, and all those with Saul heard a sound, Jesus and Saul *heard with clarity* what was spoken to them.

As we learn to operate in meekness as Jesus did, we too will begin to hear the voice of God speak to us. There are many today who attend church services regularly, who cannot hear the voice of God. In the messages, they hear words but the meaning never is precise, all because meekness is lacking. Our prayer should always be, “**not my will, but thy will be done.**”

In Hebrews 5:11, we see a common problem, that of being, “**dull of hearing.**” The Greek word for dull, is “*nothros*”, meaning slow or sluggish. This was their condition because they neglected the things of God, and were drawn back into their worldly interests, as their priority. They were falling away from spirituality into carnality.

The very trials of their faith, that God had desired, would bring them to a position of meekness, and dependence upon him, causing them to fall away. But it must be said, that it was their free volition that went negative to the plan of God, that was the problem. If they would have responded by mixing faith with the promises, (Hebrews 4:2), then it would have resulted in divine promotion for them. (1 Peter 5:5-6)

### **Having a Divine Disposition**

A man or woman cannot imitate the divine disposition of meekness that characterized the human life of Jesus Christ. And they cannot manufacture the fellowship with the Holy Spirit that is the result of meekness before God. Only through brokenness can this treasure, the divine disposition, be manifested. Remember, **“we have this treasure in earthen vessels,”** and only as we respond in faith to the trials and tribulations in this life, trusting, and yielding to the Holy Spirit, ( Romans 6:13-16), in total surrender, will the divine disposition of meekness be manifested towards God.

Then, once meekness becomes the ruling disposition, the inner ear of our human spirit opens wide to receive the divine Word of God. This becomes implanted in our souls, and the cleansing, healing, and transformation begins. We go beyond maintaining an outward appearance of life, to manifesting the abundant life of Christ. Please remember, only by denying ourselves, will our ears be open to hear the precise plan of God for our lives. Only when self-preservation is done away with, and we begin to esteem the things of God above our own, will the voice of God be heard in clarity, above the din of this world's many voices.