

# How is your Hearing?

Keith A. Butler

I'm not asking about your natural ability to discern decibels, but I am inquiring about your capacity to hear the Word of God. In the physical realm, hearing affects mental capability. Scientists have traced an increase in mental decline in elderly patients whose hearing is poor. One study demonstrated the odds of dementia increasing by two to five times for those with hearing loss over those with good hearing. **The natural realm often mirrors the spiritual, and how people hear the Word of God makes a significant difference in how the Word works in their lives.**

Partner, the Word of God is a two-edged sword. One side of the sword is the blessing; the other side is the curse. There's no middle ground. How you hear God's Word and what you do with it will determine on which side you land! Moses discussed this at length in the *28th chapter of Deuteronomy*.

#### Deuteronomy 28:1-2

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the

LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.

The phrase *hearken diligently* is *shama* in Hebrew. It means *to hear intelligently (often with the implication of attention, obedience, etc.) attentively, call together, carefully, certainly, consent, consider, be content, declare, diligently, discern, give ear, hear, hearken, indeed, listen, obedient, obey, perceive*.

Wow! There is a lot in that one little phrase, isn't there? **Partner, do you hear the Word of God carefully with attention and obedience? Do you perceive what the Holy Spirit is telling you through the written Word of God?** If so, then expect the blessings of God to be a regular part of your life! We

shouldn't be shocked when God's blessings come upon us and overtake us.

When we diligently hearken to His Word, God's blessings follow! Take the time to read all of the blessings that come when you receive God's Word with a humble, perceptive heart and do what it says. As a matter of fact, I suggest you read the following verses aloud and insert your name where it says, "you, thee, or thou." You may say, "*but I don't have cattle and sheep!*"

**Granted, you are probably not a farmer or a rancher, but God's promises apply to all of your assets including businesses, investments, and even your household budget!**

#### **Deuteronomy 28:3-14**

Blessed shalt thou [insert your name] be in the city, and blessed shalt thou [your name] be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy [my] body, and the fruit of thy [my] ground, and the fruit of thy [my] cattle, the increase of thy [my] kine, and the flocks of thy[my] sheep. Blessed shall be thy [my] basket and thy [my] store. Blessed shalt thou [your name] be when thou [ your name] comest in, and blessed shalt [your name]thou be when thou [your name] goest out. The LORD shall cause thine [my] enemies that rise up against thee [me] to be smitten before thy [my] face: they shall come out against thee [me] one way, and flee before thee [me] seven ways.

The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee [me] in thy storehouses, and in all that thou [I] settest thine[my] hand unto; and he shall bless thee [me] in the land which the LORD thy [my] God giveth thee [me]. The LORD shall establish thee [us] an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee [me], if thou [I] shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways.

And all people of the earth shall see that thou [I] art [am] called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee [me]. And the LORD shall make thee [me] plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy [my] body, and in the fruit of thy[my] cattle, and in the fruit of thy [my] ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy [my] fathers to give thee. The LORD shall open unto thee [me] his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy [my] land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine [my] hand: and thou [I] shalt lend unto many nations, and thou [I] shalt not borrow.

And the LORD shall make thee [me] the head, and not the tail; and thou [I] shalt be above only, and thou [I] shalt not be beneath; if that thou [I] hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I [God's Words] command thee this day, to observe and to do them: And thou [I] shalt not go aside from any of the words which I [God's Words] command thee [me] this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

Glory to God, Partner! Harkening unto the Word of God pays big dividends! However, not hearkening also pays big, but not in a good way! More verses in *Deuteronomy 28* are dedicated to describing the curse than the blessing. I can't quote them all for you in this letter, but here are several: "*But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.*"

*Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me. The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it. The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish. And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed. The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before*

**people think that they have no control over their destiny, but that is not what God's Word says! We don't live in a "Que sera, sera" (whatever will be, will be) world! God gives us free will and choice! Partner, your future is determined by your choices.**

Jesus, in the most vital of His parables, described the fundamental principle of seed, time, and harvest. In other words, what you do today will bring returns tomorrow.

#### **Mark 4:10-13**

**And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are**



*thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth" (Deuteronomy 28:15-25).*

Partner, I do not want you to put your name in the curse verses because I believe you are one who chooses to listen to God's Word! However, God always leaves the choice up to you! **Choose to listen and receive the blessings! Some**

**done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?**

Those who diligently hear God's Word will receive more revelation; those who don't accept God's Word will flounder more and more as they search for truth.

**Mark 4:23-25**

If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

Many would say, *"Well, that doesn't seem fair! Those who have will get more, and those who don't have will lose what little they have?"* Jesus' explanation of this apparent inequity can be found at the end of Matthew's account of the same parable.

**Matthew 13:14-19**

And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

The word *gross* means *thick*. An individual with a thick heart has a difficult time letting the Word of God penetrate his or her soul. The first group into which seed was sown in this parable, the wayside believers, are those whose hearts are so thick the Word of God cannot take root. Satan doesn't even have to fight them to take it away. The enemy doesn't have to use affliction,

persecution, or the cares of this world because the Word never even permeated the heart of the casual hearer; this is not the case with the diligent hearer.

**However, we can often have soft, receptive hearts when it comes to some topics in God's Word, but have thick, hard hearts when it comes to others.** May I be honest with you and share a personal testimony about a time when God showed me that my heart needed to change about an issue?

Several years after I graduated from Bible school and had been pastoring a while, I was praying at the church. I wasn't praying about any particular thing, I was simply praying at the altar, seeking God, and His plans, purposes, and pursuits. The Lord spoke something to me that never would have occurred to me on my own. I would never have acted or thought the way He was about to direct me. Nobody I knew was that way or had the priorities God was about to outline for me. It was a complete shock to me! My head couldn't understand it at first, but I knew it was the Word of God. I had a choice to make. Would I receive it or reject it?

**Partner, understanding often comes after you decide to receive God's Word.** God is a Spirit, and He communicates through your spirit. Sometimes it takes the mind a while to catch up!

The Word of the Lord to me that day shook me to the core. It made me examine my priorities with everything in my thinking. What was it? God clearly told me that His first priority is life—who gets to live and who gets to die.

Shortly after the Lord issued the promise of blessing for obedience to His Word and the curse for disobedience in the *28th chapter of Deuteronomy*, God told His people, *"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I*

*have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19).*

I didn't fully understand what God was saying, but if I rejected what the Holy Ghost was teaching me, my heart would have gotten thicker and thicker until the light of the Word of God would have been snuffed out in my heart, my life, and my ministry. I could have dismissed God's Word about His priority of life. I could have tried to fight God's Word with what I had heard all my life, what I thought about things, and what others expected of me, but I didn't. I humbly and diligently received that Word from the Lord.

As time went on, He taught me more and more, just as Jesus said He would in *Mark 4:23-25*; since I received His Word, He gave me more! Praise God! He is faithful to His Word!

**Most Christians live a mixed bag of both blessings and curses because they pick and choose which part of God's Word they will diligently hear and obey.** Don't be a mixed bag; hearken diligently to all of God's Word and live on the blessing side! Your life is nothing more than the result of a series of decisions. Decide today to receive God's Word on every topic, even those that you have strong opinions about.

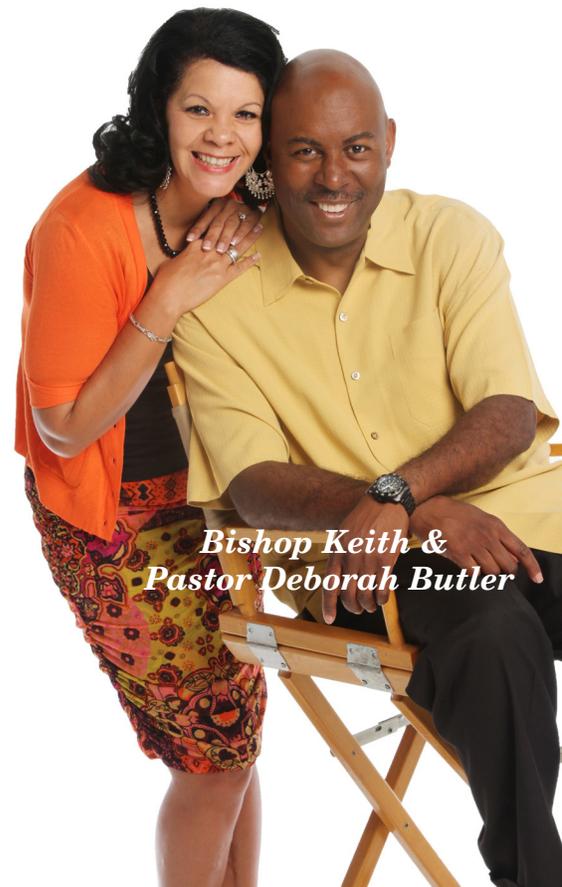
*Partner, Pastor Deborah and I pray for you daily. You are important to us. More importantly, you are important to our Lord! You are always on our minds and in our hearts. Thank you for your continued support!*

*If you have a specific prayer request and would like prayer, please call us at our KBM Partner Care Center at 248.353.3476, ext. 256. Or, if you would like to email your prayer request, you may do so by sending it to [partners@keithbutler.org](mailto:partners@keithbutler.org). You may also submit your prayer request through our website at [www.keithbutler.org](http://www.keithbutler.org).*

Partner, don't hear God's Word through a filter of "but I think..." Hear it with an open heart. Let your prayer be this: "*Order my steps in thy word” (Psalm 119:133)*. Then look out! The blessings will overflow as you hear and obey His Word passionately, promptly, and purposefully!

In the Master's Love and Service,

*Keith G. Butler*



***Bishop Keith &  
Pastor Deborah Butler***