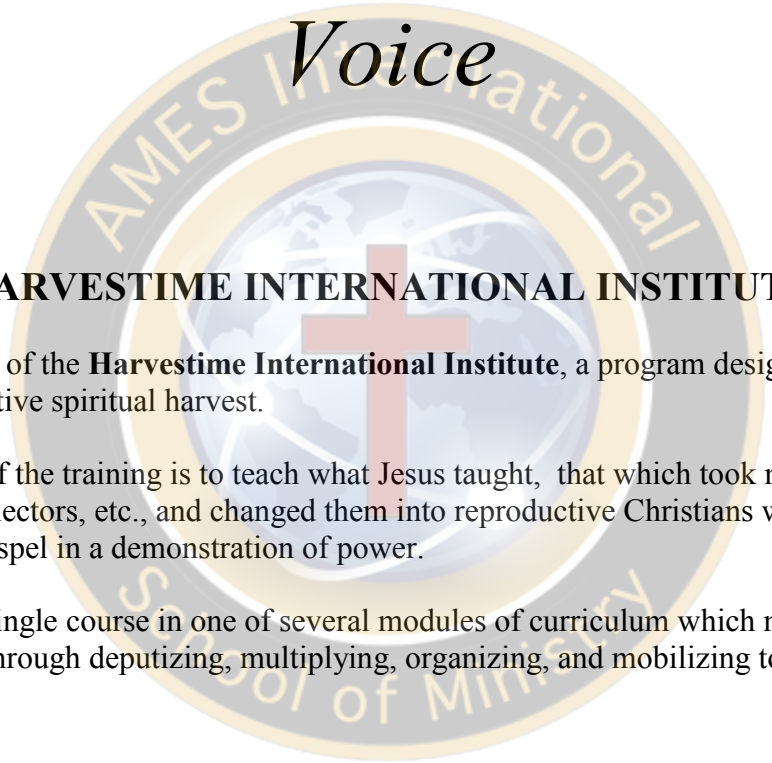
Knowing

God's

Voice



HARVESTIME INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE

This course is part of the **Harvestime International Institute**, a program designed to equip believers for effective spiritual harvest.

The basic theme of the training is to teach what Jesus taught, that which took men who were fishermen, tax collectors, etc., and changed them into reproductive Christians who reached their world with the Gospel in a demonstration of power.

This manual is a single course in one of several modules of curriculum which moves believers from visualizing through deputizing, multiplying, organizing, and mobilizing to achieve the goal of evangelizing.

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CHAPTER ONE

KNOWING THE VOICE OF GOD

OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this chapter you will be able to:

- Write the Key Verse from memory.
- Prove by Scripture that God speaks to men and women.
- Explain the relationship between knowing God's voice and determining His will.
- Distinguish between the "rhema" Word of God and the "logos" Word of God.
- Explain what is meant by the "will of God."

KEY VERSE:

> **My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.**
> **(John 10:27)**

INTRODUCTION

The title of this course, "*Knowing God's Voice,*" implies several things:

First:	That there is a God.
Second:	That He communicates with man.
Third:	That man can recognize His voice when He speaks.
Fourth:	That God has something to say.

Let us examine each of these statements:

First: This course is based upon the truth that there is a God who is revealed to man through the written record of His Word, the Holy Bible.

Second: The Bible is the inspired written record of God's communication to man. It details the ways which God spoke to man and the response of individuals and nations to the voice of God. The Bible often repeats the phrase ". . . and the Lord said" and incidents where He spoke to man. This confirms that God communicates with men and women.

For an example, read the story of Balaam in Numbers chapter 22. God spoke to Balaam, but he refused to listen. God wanted to communicate to this man so much that He actually resorted to using a donkey. Balaam was:

. . . rebuked for his iniquity; the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. (II Peter 2:16)

Third: The Bible verifies that believers can know the voice of God. Jesus said:

I am the good shepherd and know my sheep , and am known of mine. . .

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. . . (John 10:14,16,27)

Fourth: God has something important to say to mankind. We are warned:

Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith), Today if ye will hear His voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness. . .

While it is said, Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. . . (Hebrews 3:7,15)

The "temptation in the wilderness" and the "provocation" (provoking) of God mentioned in these verses refer to the disobedience of the nation of Israel.

After Israel was delivered from Egyptian captivity, they repeatedly disobeyed when God spoke to them. In these verses God warns us to respond when He speaks and not disobey as Israel did.

The phrase "today, if ye will hear His voice," confirms that God still speaks to men in present times just as He did in times past. The warning to listen confirms that what He has to say is important.

MANY VOICES

The Bible reveals that there are many voices in the world clamoring for attention:

There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. (I Corinthians 14:10)

What are these voices in the world?

THE VOICE OF MAN:

The voice of man is easy to recognize. It is the audible voice of another human being:

Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. (Acts 5:29)

Sometimes the voice of man may give wise advice, but anytime the voice of man conflicts with the voice of God, you must obey God.

THE VOICE OF SATAN:

The voice of Satan was first heard by man when he spoke to Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1,4,5). Satan's voice lies, deceives, and always attempts to lead man into sin away from God. You can easily recognize this when you read about the temptation of Jesus by Satan in Matthew 4:1-13. You can study examples of conversations Satan has with God in Job 1:7-12 and 2:1-6.

Evil spirits (demons of Satan) also have voices:

For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them. . . (Acts 8:7)

And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,

Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. (Luke 4:33-34)

Sometimes the voice of Satan is actually audible when demons use the vocal cords of a possessed man or woman. Most often, however, Satan speaks in an inaudible voice. He speaks lies, deceit, and sinful thoughts into your mind.

THE VOICE OF SELF:
The voice of self is man talking to himself. You can read examples of this in Luke 16:3 and 18:4 and in Jonah 4:8 where the prophet wished in himself to die. The Bible warns concerning the voice of self:

O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. (Jeremiah 10:23)

THE VOICE OF GOD:

Jesus said believers could know God's voice and distinguish it from other voices:

To Him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear His voice; and He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him; for they know His voice.

And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from Him; for they know not the voice of strangers. (John 10:3-5)

Believers are compared to sheep. It is the characteristic of sheep not to know where they are going. They must be led. Jesus said He was the shepherd or leader of the sheep. He said His sheep would know His voice and follow Him instead of the voices of man, self, or Satan.

HEARING THE VOICE OF GOD

Open your Bible to the book of Genesis and read chapters l-3. These chapters record the creation of the world and of the first human beings, Adam and Eve. From the time of creation, God communicated His will to mankind. He gave specific instructions to Adam and Eve. They were to name the animals, tend the Garden, have companionship with each other, and reproduce to populate the earth. Most important of all, they were to maintain intimate fellowship with God. This intimate fellowship with God enabled them to know God's voice. When God spoke, He communicated His plan to them:

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat;

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.
(Genesis 2:16-17)

By the voice of God the will of God was revealed to Adam and Eve. They could freely eat of every tree in the garden, with the exception of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Adam and Eve did not follow God's plan. They listened to the voice of Satan and ate of the forbidden tree. When they realized what they had done, they hid themselves from God:

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?
(Genesis 3:8-9)

It is sin which separates man from God. God did not remove His presence from man. Because of sin, man hid himself from the presence of God. Sin results in a hardened heart. The Bible warns:

While it is said, Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. . . (Hebrews 3:15)

God wants to communicate to man, but communication requires relationship. Sin separates man from intimate relationship to God, hardens his heart, and hinders him from knowing the voice of God.

THE VOICE AND THE WILL

Believers often ask, "What is God will for me?" What do we actually mean when we say we want to know the will of God? It means we want to know His general plan for our lives. We want His guidance in specific decisions so we can make wise choices. We desire His direction in the circumstances of life. The question we should be asking is, "How can I know the voice of God?" Knowing God's voice results in finding the will of God.

God wants you to know His will:

Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. (Ephesians 5:17)

If you know His voice then you will understand His will as He speaks it to you. Learning to receive divine guidance is learning to walk in intimate fellowship with God. The Bible says:

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4)

The word "proceedeth" speaks of a continuing function. It means something that happened in the past, is happening in the present, and will continue in the future. God speaks to communicate His will to mankind. This is why it is important to know the voice of God.

WHEN GOD SPEAKS

There are two Greek words translated as "word" in the Bible. The Greek words are "logos" and "rhema." "Logos" refers to the written Word of God. "Rhema" refers to the living or life-giving Word of God. It was said of believers in the city of Berea:

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word (rhema) with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures (logos) daily, whether those things were so. (Acts 17:11)

This verse illustrates the relationship of the "logos" and "rhema" word. The "logos" or written Word always agrees with the "rhema" or spoken, life-giving Word. This is how you can know the voice you hear is from the Lord. A "rhema" Word from God usually applies to a specific situation, meets a personal need, and provides individual guidance. Because you recognize the

Word as applying to a specific need or situation in your life, it becomes a life-giving Word to you.

A "rhema" Word may be communicated through a sermon or a verse from the Bible which suddenly strikes you with great meaning. It may be spoken to you by God through the use of spiritual gifts. It may also be spoken in your inner spirit by the Lord. (You will learn more about how God speaks through spiritual gifts and in your spirit in later chapters.)

But remember: The "rhema" Word will always agree with the written Word of God. The written Word of God is complete. Nothing is to be added to it or taken from it (Revelation 22:18-19). When God speaks through the "rhema" Word it will always be in harmony with His written Word.

TYPES OF LISTENERS

The Bible speaks of two main divisions of listeners:

> **Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. . .**
>
> **And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. . . (Matthew 7:24,26)**

A foolish listener hears the voice of God, but does not act upon it. A wise listener hears and acts upon the message of God. One listener is a "hearer of the Word" only. The other is both a "hearer and a doer."

You must not only come to know the voice of God, you must learn to respond in obedience to that voice:

> **But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.**
>
> **For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:**
>
> **For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.**
>
> **But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. (James 1:22-25)**

Jesus also told a story about seed sown in several types of soil which illustrates various types of listeners. Read the story in Matthew 13:1-9. Jesus explains the story in Matthew 13:18-23. He compares the different soils to listeners and their response to the Word of God.

SEED BY THE WAYSIDE:

Some seed fell by the wayside and was snatched up by birds before it could take root. This is an example of a man who hears the voice of God but the words do not take root in his heart. Satan snatches away God's Word.

SEED IN STONY PLACES:

Some seed fell in stony places and sprang up quickly. But when the heat of the sun came, the plant withered and died because it had no roots. This is the listener who hears God's Word and receives it with joy, but it does not really take root in his life. When circumstances get tough, he is offended and ceases to respond to God's voice.

SEED AMONG THE THORNS:
Some seed fell among thorns which choked outgrowth of the plants. This is an example of the voice of God being choked out by the cares of the world, materialism, etc.

SEED ON GOOD GROUND:

Some seed fell on good ground and brought forth a rich harvest. This is an example of the listener who receives God's Word, listens to His voice, and roots himself in that revelation. This person will mature spiritually and become a reproducing, fruitful believer.

HOW CAN YOU KNOW GOD'S VOICE?

Do you want to be able to know God's voice? Do you want to know His will for your life? In the next chapter you will learn of requirements which prepare you to hear the voice of God and discover His will for your life.

SELF-TEST

1. Write the Key Verse from memory:

_____

_____

2. What is meant by the "rhema" Word of God?

_____

3. What is meant by the "logos" Word of God?

_____

4. How is knowing God's voice related to determining His will for your life?

_____

5. Give a reference from the book of Hebrews which confirms God spoke to men in the past and still speaks today.

_____

6. What is meant by the "will of God"?

_____

_____

7. With what does the "rhema" Word of God always agree?

_____

8. What separated man from God's presence?_____

9. You must be a_____of the Word and not a_____only.

(Answers to tests are provided at the conclusion of the final chapter in this manual.)

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. There are several verses in the Bible which describe the voice of God. Look up each reference and record the words describing God's voice. The first one is done as an example for you to follow. From your own study of the Bible you can continue to add references and descriptions of the voice of God to this chart.

Reference	**Description Of God's Voice**
II Samuel 22:14	Thunder from Heaven
I Kings 19:12-13	
Psalms 18:13	
Psalms 29:3-9	
Psalms 68:33	
Daniel 10:6-9	

2. God spoke about Jesus. You can read what He said in the following passages: II Peter 1:17-18; Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11

3. What God speaks comes to pass. See Ezekiel 12:25-28.
4. Study the words of Jesus in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Observe how Jesus spoke in questions, answers, examples, parallels, parables, and sermons.

5. God not only speaks to individuals but He also speaks to nations. See Jeremiah 18:7-10.

6. Read about the results of disobeying God's voice in the following verses. Record the results of disobedience on the chart:

Reference	**Results Of Disobedience**
Exodus 15:26	
Deuteronomy 28:15-68	
I Samuel 12:15	

7. Read the following Scriptures and record what you learn about the results of obeying God's voice:

   Deuteronomy 28:1-14:_____

   I Samuel 12:14:_____

8. The entire Bible is a record of how individuals and nations responded to the voice of God. Complete the following chart as you study the response of man to God's voice. The first one is done as an example for you to follow. You may need to read verses before and after the reference given in order to obtain the information needed to complete the chart. Like the previous chart, you can continue to add references from your own study of God's Word.

Reference	**People**	**Response**	**Results**
Genesis 26:5	Abraham	Obedience	His seed and the nations of the world were blessed.
Genesis 22:18			
Deuteronomy 8:20			
Judges 2:2,4,20-23			
Judges 6:10			
I Samuel 15:1,19,22,24			
I Samuel 28:18			
Psalms 106:25			
Jeremiah 32:23			
Daniel 9:10-14			
Zephaniah 3:2			
Haggai 1:12			

CHAPTER TWO

"IF ANY MAN WILL DO. . . HE SHALL KNOW"

OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this chapter you will be able to:

- Write the Key Verses from memory.
- Define the word "prerequisite."
- List prerequisites for knowing the voice of God.
- Explain what it means to be born again.
- Recognize the importance of the Holy Spirit in to knowing God's voice.
- Demonstrate understanding of "spiritual maturity" and "transformation."

KEY VERSES:

> **I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.**
>
> **And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)**

INTRODUCTION

There are some necessary prerequisites if you are to come to know the voice of God. A prerequisite is something you must do before you can do something else. It is something required before you are able to reach a certain goal.

Your goal in this course is to come to know the voice of God. This chapter explains the prerequisites (the things required) before you can achieve this objective. Jesus said:

> **If any man will do His will, He shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. (John 7:17)**

The Key Verses of this chapter, Romans 12:1-2, list some things that are God's will for you to do. If you meet these prerequisites, then you will come to know God’s voice and His will for your life.

BORN-AGAIN EXPERIENCE

> **I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (Romans 12:1)**

As you learned in the previous chapter, sin separates you from God's presence. Because of sin, you have difficulty hearing and responding positively to the voice of God.

In the natural world you do not recognize the voice of a stranger. You recognize voices of those you know and with whom you have developed a relationship. The same is true in the spiritual world. If you are to come to know God's voice, you must first come to know God and you cannot develop an intimate relationship with Him with sin in your life.

Romans 12:1 requires that YOU make the move towards God by giving your life to Him. God has already spoken through His written Word and revealed it is His will for you to develop such a relationship:

> **The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (II Peter 3:9)**

God does not want you to spend your life in sin. He wants you to live it according to His plan:

> **That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. (I Peter 4:2)**

God is pictured standing at the door of your life desiring entrance so He can develop a relationship with you:

> **Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20)**

God's stated purpose from the beginning of the world was to bring all men into the knowledge of Christ Jesus:

> **Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself:**
>
> **That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him. (Ephesians 1:9-10)**

You are "gathered into Christ" by becoming part of the family of God. Just as you are born into a natural family, you must be "born again" spiritually into this spiritual family.

Read John chapter 3. This chapter explains in detail what it means to be born-again. To experience the new birth you must:

1. Acknowledge you are a sinner:

   For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

2. Recognize the penalty of sin is death:

God warned Adam and Eve that if they sinned, they would die. This meant both spiritual death (separation from God's presence) and physical death. When Jesus died on the cross He died in your place. He died for your sins so you could have everlasting life:

> **For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)**

If you accept His sacrifice for sin, you are no longer under the penalty of death.

3. Confess your sins, ask forgiveness, and believe that Jesus died for you:

   If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

   If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (I John 1:8-9)

   For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

When you present your life to God in this manner, you are "born-again" spiritually:

> **Therefore, if any man be in Christ He a new creature; old things have passed away; Behold, all things are become new. (II Corinthians 5:17)**

When you are born again you become part of God's spiritual family. You are no longer separated from the presence of God. When you die physically, you will live eternally with Him.

You have established a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. You have heard and responded to the truth of the Gospel. You are now in a position to learn how to recognize God's voice:

. . . Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. (John 18:37)

INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

There is another prerequisite that will help you come to know God's voice. The Bible speaks of an experience called the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. This experience results in the Holy Spirit dwelling in your life and empowering you to live a holy life which is acceptable to God.

The ministries of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer are too numerous to discuss in this lesson. The Harvestime International Network course entitled "*The Ministry Of The Holy Spirit*" is devoted to this subject and provides instructions on how to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

One of the most important ministries of the indwelling Holy Spirit is to guide the believer into God's will:

> **When He, the Spirit of truth is come (the Holy Spirit), He will guide you into all truth. . . and He will show you things to come and He shall receive of mine (God's will) and show it to you. (John 16:13-14)**

The Bible says:

> **For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (Romans 8:14)**

There is a definite relationship between being a child of God (born again) and being led by the Holy Spirit. The natural man (who is not born-again) does not receive and follow guidance of the Holy Spirit. Because he has not become a "spiritual man" through the new birth experience, He does not recognize the voice of God:

> **But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (I Corinthians 2:14)**

The following examples from the book of Acts demonstrate the leading of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers:

PHILIP:

A church deacon by the name of Philip was led by the Spirit to join a chariot he saw on a desert road to Gaza:

> **Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near and join thyself to this chariot. (Acts 8:29)**

Philip obeyed the leading of the Holy Spirit. This resulted in the salvation and water baptism of an Ethiopian man who was riding in the chariot.

PETER:

Peter was told by the Holy Spirit to go with three men who came from Caesarea. Peter said:

> **And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. (Acts 11:12)**

Peter recognized the leading of the Holy Spirit. He had no doubts when the Spirit spoke in his inner being and revealed God's will to him. He obeyed and it resulted in the first cross-cultural ministry to the Gentiles.

PAUL:

Paul often changed his evangelistic schedule at the prompting of the Holy Spirit:

> **After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered them not. (Acts 16:7)**

Paul planned to go to Mysia, but the Holy Spirit gave him different directions.

These three examples are just a few of many in the Bible which illustrate how the Holy Spirit enables you to hear God's voice. As Jesus promised, the Holy Spirit takes the will of God and reveals it to you.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY

> **And be not conformed to this world. . . (Romans 12:2)**

In the natural world when a baby is born he must attain a certain level of maturity before he begins to recognize the voice of his parents. The same is true in the spiritual world. When you are first born again you may not be able to recognize the voice of God when He speaks to you. When you first receive the Holy Spirit you may not always understand when the Spirit reveals God's will to you. But the Holy Spirit will continue to reveal God's will and guide you. As you mature spiritually, you will come to recognize this voice within your spirit.

The Bible speaks of this parallel between the natural and spiritual:

> **For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: For he is a babe.**

But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (Hebrews 5:13-14)

The "milk" and "meat" mentioned in these verses refer to the written Word of God, the Holy Bible. When you are first born again you start learning some of the simple truths (milk) of the written Word of God. As you mature, you are able to master the deeper truths (meat) of the Word of God.

As you continue to study God's written Word, your spiritual senses will mature. You will be able to exercise them to discern good and evil. This means you will be able to distinguish God's will and His way from the wrong ways of life. This is why it is important for you to study God's written Word.

As you mature spiritually, you will no longer "conform" to the world. To be conformed means to be fashioned or shaped according to a set standard. Spiritual maturity will conform you to the image of Christ rather than the image of worldly standards.
Spiritual maturity also helps you achieve emotional maturity. If you lack emotional maturity, important decisions may be made in a fit of anger or self-pity. This can have disastrous long-range results.

As you mature spiritually you will develop the "Fruit of the Holy Spirit," evidences of spiritual maturity that result in emotional maturity:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

TRANSFORMATION

. . . But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind. . . (Romans 12:2)

Spiritual maturity leads finally to transformation, another prerequisite that enables you to know the voice of God. What natural man (human nature) desires to do and what God desires for your life is different. This creates a conflict between the flesh (natural man) and the spirit (spiritual man).

Paul wrote of this conflict:

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things ye would. (Galatians 5:17)

Paul recognized there is a continuing struggle of the flesh against the Spirit in matters relating to

the fulfilling of God's will. He identified this struggle as taking place in the mind:

> **But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (Romans 7:23)**

Because of this he urged:

> **I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.**
>
> **And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)**

The word "beseech" means to plead, implore, or beg. The phrase "present your bodies a living sacrifice" indicates an unreserved surrender to God.

To offer something for a sacrifice means to give it up completely. In the Old Testament when a sacrifice was made, it was given completely to God to be burned with fire, consumed by the priest, or both, as the law indicated. The giver of the sacrifice had no further claim to it.

So must be our surrender to God. The natural man, the old self nature must die to the world and the flesh. This is what is meant by "transformation." It is being changed into another image patterned after the Lord Jesus Christ:

> **I am crucified with Christ. (Galatians 2:20)**
>
> **They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh. (Galatians 5:24)**
>
> **But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. (I Corinthians 9:27)**
>
> **Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. (Romans 6:12)**
>
> **Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (II Corinthians 7:1)**
>
> **Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin. (Romans 6:11)**

Actual physical crucifixion, as Jesus experienced, is an unnatural death. There is significance in the fact that the death prescribed for the self-nature is crucifixion. The fleshly nature of man will never die a natural death. It will not die voluntarily. It must be put to death by force just as in actual crucifixion in the natural world.

According to Romans 12:1-2, such surrender precedes the knowledge of God's will. If you want to know God's voice and His will, you must first surrender. We often want to reverse the process. We want to know His will, then decide if we will surrender to it. But Romans 12:1-2 indicates surrender comes first.

The reason we are hesitant about surrender is because we do not understand God's will is always acceptable, good, and perfect. We are afraid to surrender to God totally because we have not grasped this basic concept:

> **For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11 TLB)**

RENEWING YOUR MIND

Your mind is naturally conformed to the principles of the world around you. It happens because of your basic sin nature. It also happens through the influence of your culture.

But God says you are not to conform to the world but to be transformed. The word "transform" means to be changed or into a new image. The pattern for that image is the Lord Jesus Christ:

> **But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (II Corinthians 3:18)**

According to Romans 12:2, transformation comes through renewing your mind. This means you must get rid of worldly standards and principles and conform to the principles revealed in

God's written Word.

Your mind is transformed as you develop the mind of Christ:

> **Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 2:5)**

The word "let" indicates that you have to make a choice in order to have the mind of Christ. You must permit the transformation of the mind to happen. You have a responsibility in development of the transformed mind. It is not something done automatically for you by God:

> **Wherefore (YOU) gird up the loins of your mind. (I Peter 1:13)**

To "gird up" the mind means to clothe or protect your mental powers. To transform or gird up the mind, it is necessary to immerse it in the Word of God. Search the Bible to discover what type of mind was in Christ. (The "For Further Study" section of this chapter will help you do this.)

Your mind is transformed as God puts His laws into it:

> **. . . I will put my laws into their mind. (Hebrews 8:10)**

Use the power of the mind to cast down and bring into captivity wrong thoughts:

> **Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. (II Corinthians 10:5)**

You have the responsibility to control your thought life:

> **Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there by any praise, think on these things. (Philippians 4:8)**

Then you can say with Paul:

> **But we have the mind of Christ. (I Corinthians 2:6)**

The mind of Christ was set and determined to do the will of God.

PROVING GOD'S WILL

Study the following chart. You will discover that each prerequisite discussed in this chapter is included in Romans 12:1-2:

I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God...	You come to God through His mercy extended through the sacrifice of Jesus for your sins.
that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service...	Spiritual maturity is enabled by the working of the Holy Spirit in your life.
And be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.	You are transformed by the Word, your mind is renewed.

The new birth experience, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, spiritual maturity, and transformation of the mind--how do these relate to knowing God's will? According to Romans 12:1-2 they are prerequisites leading to knowledge of His will:

> **. . . that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:2)**

The word "prove" means to determine, confirm, and be sure of something. These prerequisites lead to assurance of the will of God.

But what exactly is meant by the "will of God"? And what are the "good, perfect, and acceptable" wills of God? Why is it important to "prove" or determine God's will?

We will explore answers to these questions in the following chapters.

SELF-TEST

1. Write the Key Verses from memory.

_____

_____

2. What does the word "prerequisite" mean?

_____

3. What are the prerequisites presented in this chapter as necessary in order to know God's will?

_____

4. What is the main ministry of the Holy Spirit as it relates to knowing God's voice?

_____

5. What does it mean to be born-again?

_____

6. Why is it necessary to be born again in order to come to know the voice of God?

_____

7. What does it mean to be spiritually mature?

_____

8. Define the word "transformed" as it was used in this chapter.

_____

9. Is this statement true or false: According to Romans 12:1-2 surrender precedes the knowledge of God's will. The statement is:_____

(Answers to tests are provided at the conclusion of the final chapter in this manual.)

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. For further study of the new birth and spiritual maturity, obtain the Harvestime International Institute course "*Foundations Of Faith.*" For further study of the Holy Spirit, obtain the Harvestime International Institute course "*The Ministry Of The Holy Spirit.*"

2. This chapter spoke of the necessity of transformation of the mind. The Scriptures indicate believers are NOT to have minds that are:

Hardened:	Daniel 5:20
Reprobate:	Romans 1:28
Carnal:	Romans 8:6
Doubtful:	Luke 12:29
Blinded:	II Corinthians 3:14; 4:14
Corrupted:	II Corinthians 11:3
Fleshly:	Ephesians 2:3; Colossians 2:18
Vain:	Ephesians 4:17
Earthly:	Philippians 3:19
Alienated by wicked works:	Colossians 1:21
Double minded:	James 1:8; 4:8
Defiled:	Titus 1:15

3. The Bible indicates the transformed mind of believers should be:

Spiritual:	Romans 8:6
Ready:	I Peter 5:2
Pure:	II Peter 3:1
Stayed:	Isaiah 26:3
Peaceful:	Philippians 4:7
Renewed:	Ephesians 4:23
Humble:	Colossians 3:12
Sober:	Titus 2:6
Sound:	II Timothy 1:7
Loving:	Matthew 22:37
Serving:	Romans 7:25
Fully persuaded:	Romans 14:5
United:	I Peter 3:8; 4:1; Romans 15:6; I Corinthians 1:10
Honest and willing:	I Chronicles 28:9
Disciplined to work:	Nehemiah 4:6