

Receiving Isn't a Mystery!

There Are Reasons Why We Do Or Don't Receive!

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Mark 10:15 "Assuredly, I say to you, **whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child** will by no means enter it."

The Kingdom of God is within you and entering it means receiving the things of grace through His promises and faith in what He's done...**as we enter we experience what Jesus said we'd experience!**

Receiving isn't a mystery as in a hit or miss and there is no rhyme or reason. One of the main ways we receive is by being like a child. This doesn't mean being childish but having the same characteristics that a child has when a child believes. A child trusts, believes, and then **rests in** what he/she is told. **A child is receptive.**

Being Receptive Is Huge!

Have you ever felt when talking with someone that you were talking to a brick wall? (I've been accused of being that someone.) We often consider someone like that to be a *concrete head* that is all mixed up and thoroughly set. I'm sure that most of us have noticed that is **a waste of time trying to convince someone in that condition of our position.** We sometimes call people **who do not receive** what we are saying: ***narrow minded,***

pig headed, stubborn, a brick wall, dogmatic, unreasonable, etc...

When someone is in this place they are **not receiving or are unable to receive**. There are reasons for this and I am addressing many of them in this booklet; but keep in mind that **this problem of not being able to receive affects us all**, in some ways, to some level, and almost all the time. **We must decide what we are going to be receptive to because we can't receive everything or we'd go mad!** The truth is, we must decide what we are going to be receptive (sensitive) to and what we are going to ignore (be hard hearted towards). We must prioritize what we listen to and take in. Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness..." In other words, make wise choices regarding the issues of life as to what we are going to be receptive to.

Entering The Kingdom Of God Is A RECEIVING ISSUE!

First, we receive Christ when we become born again. Second, we begin to grow *in our understanding* of what being born again means. Receiving then becomes the process of *growing aware and seeing things the way God sees them*. This receiving issue isn't about trying to bring into us new things from God; it is about *acknowledging the new things* that have been given to us in becoming a "new creation (II Cor. 5:17)."

There are many things that hinder our receptivity to spiritual life in us. Let me begin to list some of them...

Being Bottled Up

Sometimes people are not prepared to receive. Sometimes their heart cannot take it in. For example when people are upset, anxious, troubled, in fear, **and all bottled up**; they need someone to talk to who will listen to let them open up and let the pressure out. I think of a soda bottle that's been shook up and when we take the lid off it spews out to release the pressure inside.

Sometimes nothing is going to go in until there is room. An important part of loving someone is listening to them. **Until a person feels heard they are often not in a place to hear.**

When A Heart Is Full

When a heart is full it has no room to receive something new. A full heart is busy, involved, committed to other things; it is often **full of trusting in him/herself** (Pride)! I remember preaching to my church at one time that it wasn't that people were not committed (that they were being lazy in their commitment to the church); it was that **they were already committed to other things.** Often the things of God take the back seat to the desire of this world.

Arrogance in the heart prevents many from being able to receive. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6)! Pride blinds us to our need, to the reality of the situation; when we think we know it all, then we fall...

A Hardened Heart

This is similar to a full heart but it tends *to identify that the affections (interests) of the heart are focused somewhere else*. They love their life and family, they love entertainment, they love money, and they love their career; any thought of having to give any of these things up is not received. The **rich young ruler** is a classic case in that he wanted to know from Jesus what it would take to find salvation (Luke 18). When Jesus put it all on the line, sell all, give to the poor, and come and follow Him; the rich young ruler couldn't give these things up even for his salvation. The heart only has so much room. The *affections of the heart set on other things prevent us from receiving* what really matters.

Riches As In Personality

Having riches in this life can hinder us from receiving and entering into the kingdom.

Matt. 19:23 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "**Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.**

24 "And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Our dependence upon our personality can hinder us from trusting, believing, and resting in God's grace. If we've been popular; if we have had power and influence over others; this personal pride of accomplishment can hinder our faith to receive. If we have had great confidence in our own person, intellect, reasoning powers, and "gifts" of decision making this will hinder our trust, believing, and rest in God's grace. The fear of loss of prestige, respect, and appreciation from others is also a

hindrance. The fear of man brings a snare preventing us from embracing faith.

Pr 29:25 The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.

It is the fear of what others think or losing our reputations; or our ego taking a hit in looking silly before others that will prevent us from trusting God. The natural man often thinks of spiritual truths as foolishness (I Cor. 2:14). What if it doesn't happen? What will I look like? These things prevent us from receiving grace because we are being self centered and worried about what we look like...

We need to be willing to lose our self image, our pride, and what people think to get after the things of God. We need to stop being self occupied to become Christ occupied. The riches of this world as far as personal relationships, pride, what people value can all hinder us from receiving the things of God.

Mt 10:39 "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

A child like faith is not about these things, it trusts his/her father and mother and goes forth without guilt, condemnation, or faultfinding...

Mark 10:24 But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, **how hard it is for those who trust in riches** to enter the kingdom of God!

Other Receiving Issues

There are many including: ignorance, lack of understanding, doubt and confusion, not knowing the will of God, suffering loss and grief, unforgiveness, crisis, lack of physical needs being met, rejection, fear and torment of the soul, bitterness, anger, resentment, or losing heart and growing faint as this verse reveals...

Heb 10:36 For you have **need of endurance**, so that after you have done the will of God, **you may receive the promise**:

A Works Mentality Prevents Us From Receiving

Ga 3:2 This only I want to learn from you: Did **you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?**

The problem is that we have considered many of the things we've received in life as something we earned or deserved. We have worked to get paid; we have studied to earn a degree; we have practiced to win in sports. We have a pattern of accomplishments that derive from our own efforts; yet, everything we have in life (natural life) *we received*: talent, skill, opportunities, etc...The misconception is that we did it our way when we are only using what we've been given!

1Co 4:7 For who makes you differ *from another*? **And what do you have that you did not receive?** Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

Stages In Life Affect Our Ability To Receive...

When I was younger if you wanted to talk about retirement I had no interest and didn't see the significance. Now

that I'm older I'm ready to receive. Now that I'm older I have no interest in competing at a high level in sports any more. When I was younger the world of opportunities was apparently vast; but all of that fades as time passes.

What We Focus On: The Good Life

What we trust in, value and pay attention to; what we give our time and energy for determines our ability to receive! The cares of this world, the lust for other things and the deceitfulness of riches come in to choke the word from us (Mark 4:19). These things occupy our heart and prevent us from being receptive to God. **All of these things may even be good unto themselves; however, a good man**, who is enjoying a good life, is also not in a good position to receive the message of the kingdom. The comfortable life, the pleasures of this world get in the way of becoming like a child in faith to believe and receive...**a good man simply doesn't see the need. Sometimes it's a choice between what is good and what is best for our lives.**

Jesus said,

Mr 2:17 When Jesus heard *it*, He said to them, "**Those who are well have no need of a physician**, but those who are sick. I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Those who are well, rich, talented, popular, intelligent, powerful, who have advantages in this life will find it very hard to receive because they are committed, indulged, and full of other things...

There Is No Condemnation In Christ

The point of listing these things is to express **that being receptive is not a mystery**. There are many things that can hinder our ability to trust, believe, and rest in God's grace. This list is not exhaustive but only represents a sampling. **The most important response to such things is to possibly locate our own heart's condition and begin to turn it towards God.**

God is not trying to condemn us or bring us down in our guilt; quite to the contrary in identifying possible hindrances we can repent (turn from them) and find our way into grace. Jesus paid for all of our sins including the things listed here; however, that doesn't automatically translate into our hearts being receptive to His Word. We have a part to play and that is diligently guarding our hearts from those things that will take us away from childlike faith.

Windows Of Opportunity!

There are times like funerals, baptisms, and sometimes weddings; sometimes when the nest is empty, or a loss of job when things get shaken; that a crisis occurs that may provide a window of opportunity in a person's life that they might be willing to receive...God is not necessarily sending a crisis into our life but because life is full of tribulations they come.

Joh 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. **In the world you will have tribulation**; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Sometimes we end up in a crisis place because we have not been receptive to God's Word, His Spirit or His leading. When we walk outside of His grace things can happen (Ps. 91:1-3)...

Another Wake Up Call Is Sickness And Disease

When a person faces uncertainty, the threat of a terminal illness; there is a time of awakening and a time of receptivity. These are times when they might entertain the idea that life is more than food, clothing, sex, money, power, and pleasure...that the longing of their heart is really about knowing God.

This All Applies To Believers!

There are times when we are not receptive, not willing **or able to receive**. The problem isn't with God or His promises; it isn't a broadcast issue—God's grace is already given and broadcasting (II Pet. 1:1-3). It isn't a faith issue if we are born again because we've been given the gift of Christ's faith (Gal. 2:20). Receiving isn't the problem as in trying to get what God has for us in us. We have received when we became born again (John 1:16). The problem is taking away the hindrances in our heart and our world **that are preventing us** from trusting, believing, and resting in His grace. We have often missed God's grace because we have not acknowledged all that is in us because of Christ Jesus (Philemon 1:6). We have not been receptive because our heart has been full of unbelief. We believe the wrong things, trusting in the wrong things, and from our hearts calling God's word false.

Being Misled

When we trust in what we see, hear, feel, taste, and smell (our senses) over what the Word of God teaches, we are carnally minded. When we accept what our experiences are over what the testimony of scripture is, we are naturally minded. We are being misled to put our experience before the Word of God. The church

has many teachings that have embraced this error. We cannot let go of what we do know of God's word because of our experiences that are contrary to it. **We lose our ability to trust, believe, and rest in God's word when we let go of it because of the fallen world circumstances prevailing against it.** We live by faith not by sight and as long as we continue to live by sight we are not in a position to receive.

Ro 8:6 **For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.**

We are called to overcome by faith in the grace of God already given. This means we fix our eyes on the eternal truth of God's word despite the "facts" of this world. When we remain in faith and stay fixed in the truth our circumstances and symptoms will change. We receive when we believe. When we believe we will see. If we are still living by, "I'll believe it when I see it" we are being misled. This is the truth, "Signs follow those who believe; those who don't believe follow signs."

"Everything Happens FOR A Reason!"

When we don't receive what God has done for us **there are reasons** (as I have tried to explain); **it is not FOR a reason!** Many people will say, "Everything happens FOR a reason!" This implies strongly that God in His sovereign ways is not answering or has held back, or is waiting, or decided that something else will take place; this takes away any responsibility on our part to believe and receive. There are definitely reasons why we don't receive but most of them ***point to the condition of our heart.*** Is our heart distracted? Is it full? Is it hardened? Is it content with this world? Is our mind carnally minded?

The Responsibility Issue—This Is Huge Too!

Like it or not we have a responsibility issue in life. When things are going well we like to take responsibility and receive the praise; on the other hand, when things don't work out or go badly, no one wants the blame. ***The burden of life*** is that we are responsible for our soul. Our life reflects the choices we have made. There are certainly a lot of things we can't control but that does not absolve us of being responsible. We want our children to mature and become responsible adults. There are many times when people do not want responsibility. Many will not accept blame and fault for things they have done. Many make excuses for bad results putting the blame and fault on everyone and everything else.

Maturing faith understands our predicament that as human beings we've been given dominion (Gen. 1:26) but because of the fall we are powerless having been disconnected from God our source. In this place we are all doomed to fail, fall short, lose against the curse of the law, remain under the influence of others and demonic deception; however, **in Christ all of this changes** if we die to the old and live to the new (Rom. 6:4). In Christ we can receive again the wisdom, power, grace, and Spirit to accomplish God's will in our life and those around us—according to the power that works in us (Eph. 3:20). We must accept responsibility and face the truth that God has set before us life and death, blessing and cursing, so choose life (Deut. 30:19)! **We choose life in Jesus as we learn to RECEIVE!**

When we don't receive it isn't an accident. **There is something blocking reception.** Just like the radio or TV stations are still broadcasting, so is God's unmerited grace but something has interfered with the reception. In most cases, that interference has to do with the condition of our heart. We can change our receptivity. The teaching of Jesus about the sower and the seed is about the condition of our heart.

The Parable Of The Sower And The Seed Is All About Our Receptivity (Mark 4).

The Hard Ground Means There Is No Receptivity

It means there is no interest, no urgency, and no importance to the Word of God. Even what they had sown in their life will be taken away by the deceptions of the evil one. Their heart is after other things...the winds of doubt, unbelief, ridicule, and persecution that come for the word's sake easily steal away the truth. Just as easily as birds would eat seeds falling on hard ground.

The Shallow Ground With Stones Means There Is Some Receptivity But Other Things Are Already Central To This Person's Heart

Something else has grown deep within and any effort toward spiritual things is **very shallow**; not with the whole heart, a surface and showy type of Christian experience....and when they don't receive it is always excused, often placed back into God's sovereignty, you can never know God's will explanations. These things relieve us of any responsibility to prioritize God's Word.

The Decent Ground That Has Weeds, Thorns, And Thistles, Shows Receptivity But It Is Not Across The Board.

They are happy with Godly things but also happy with worldly things. They work for both feeling that they can “have their cake and eat it to...” Jesus said the cares of this world, the lusts for other things, and the deceitfulness of riches **come and choke the Word of God from being fruitful...**when we don't receive in this condition, we'll excuse ourselves that it's not our distractions, ***it's not our heart's affections for other things***, it's not us we love God, we are devoted...What is usually said, “It's just not God's will.” The evidence or proof of God's power is still missing...the bottom line is something else has taken God's place in our heart...

The Good Ground Just Didn't Happen.

Good ground was first hard ground, cold, insensitive to the things of God, couldn't remember scripture, and didn't comprehend spiritual things; but the ground was broken up, tilled, focus **and effort was made to make God's Word important (They cultivated Godliness)**...then when the stones of other commitments were the problem decisions were made to decrease their presence; to give up things, **to prioritize things according to God's values...**then with the weeds, thorns, and thistles grew up to choke out the word; more decisions were made, not to get so entangled with the world. These decisions decreased and simplified commitments to those cares, it decreased interests in lusts (cutting off the R rated stuff or worse), and got rid of the temptations; **putting the things of God first and getting involved with others who are committed to God...**in doing these things, in

eliminating and lessening the distractions of this world from their heart, they are in a position to **receive; and receive they do!**

They walk in grace, they invest in God's Word and Spirit, they experience power in faith from the fellowship of God's love, they see answers, deliverance, and healing in their life **more and more...** knowing that they are channels **or good ground because they made room in their heart for God above all else...** They have done their homework and are in a position of receptivity to God...

Jas 1:21 Therefore **lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness**, and **receive with meekness** the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

In Conclusion:

Receiving isn't a mystery. God hasn't decided to give His grace more to one over another. He has poured out His Spirit on ALL flesh (Acts 2:17); given His grace to whosoever will, and empowered His sons and daughters according to the focus, attention, and willingness to make God's Word Lord of their lives. God's word will promote us indiscriminately according to the power that works in us (Eph. 3:20). We decide how much **and that is determined by our own heart's receptivity**. We don't make faith it is received. We don't increase in power it is acknowledge.

What we do is provide for our own receptivity to God's Word and Spirit. There are things that hinder us from receiving and I've mentioned and addressed many of them. **Our job then is to be receivers and figuring out how to become better at receiving makes a lot of sense.** Sometimes we need to spend time in prayer so that the Holy Spirit can reveal to us those

things that we are doing that stop us from receiving or accepting what God has already done in us in Christ. Amen.

Other Booklets that relate to God's Will:

Understanding Doubt

Unbelief

Vague Christianity

Revelation Knowledge

Indicators & Location

How to Hear God's Voice

God's Will is Not a Mystery