



Noise Pollution

Intercepting Interrupting Interference

June 22, 2025

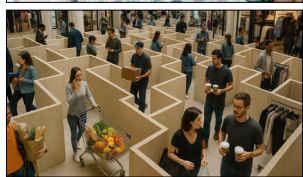
Today we're learning to hear God's guidance by cutting through the hullabaloo! Cuz, if God *loves* us *always* – and we're in *danger* of death *always* – He *must* be trying to *help* us *always*! Which means all *confusion* and *anxiety* is just a *symptom* of something *interfering* with His *assistance*. And *therefore*, the best way to test the *strength* of our *connection* is to *assess* the *source* of our *confidence*. Cuz truly living *without fear* only happens when *God's message* makes everything *clear*. So, the convicting question of the day is: **Do you have consistent clarity?**



Probably not! In fact, *certainty* is so rare that we *celebrate* whenever we have a *single* moment of clarity like it should be *life-changing*! Cuz *it is*! Those *little moments* can make *sense* of our worst worries by revealing how God's plan *uses* all our pain for a *purpose*. And when the *purpose* becomes *clear*, the *pain* becomes *bearable*. Like *exercising* or *childbirth*.



But as *great* as that is – **moments of clarity feel extraordinary, because moments of uncertainty feel ordinary.** And we need to *acknowledge* the harsh *reality* of what it *means* when we *expect* life to *confuse* us! Cuz:



Where *envy* and *self-seeking* exist, *confusion* and every evil thing are *there*. But the wisdom that is from above [aka God's clarifying truth] is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. – James 3:16-17 NKJ



Get it? In the *same* way *righteousness* is a sign of *wisdom*, *confusion* is a sign of *sin*! So, **we shouldn't accept confusion as part of life, we should seek clarity as part of our faith.** But, before we go any further, let *me* be clear: *God* is in control of *how much meaning* He wants to *reveal*. And *sometimes*, we *have to* sit in *some* sense of *uncertainty* when it serves a *specific* purpose in *His* plan. *However* – because He *knows* how *weak* we *are*, there's *always* an *accessible* *underlying* truth that we *can* cling to when we *need* to make *sense* of *something*; the way *Job* struggles, saying:

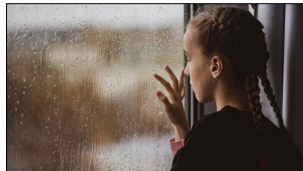
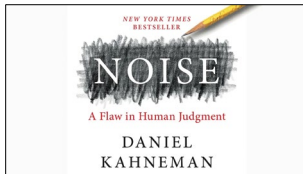


Your hands shaped me and made me. Will You now turn and destroy me? – Job 10:8 NIV

[Cuz *that's* hard to understand; but he *can* still lean on *other* understanding] Though He *slay* me, yet will I *hope* in Him ... Indeed, this *will* turn out for my deliverance – Job 13:15-16 NIV

Because, the bottom line is this: **The more of God we hear, the less of life we fear.** And with each step we *take* to faithfully follow *His* instruction, we learn new lessons through *hindsight*, which – in turn – increases the *clarity* of *God's communication* and the *level* of our *confidence*. But that *begs* the question, *why* on earth is there *still* *confusion* in the life of any *Christian* who is *truly* *pursuing* that *clarifying* communication with God?! And it *all* comes down to *one* thing: **NOISE.**

Cuz it's *everywhere, all the time* as part of our daily lives – as Daniel Kahneman delineates in his book called *Noise: A Flaw in Human Judgment*. And as the title *suggests*, noise isn't just *ubiquitous*, it's *dangerous* – cuz it *interferes* with our ability to *hear, speak, and think clearly*. In short, **noise is the random and irrelevant influence that distorts our understanding**.



And **everything from our biology and environment to our experience and emotion produces noise**. Things like uncomfortable shoes, cluttered spaces, and background conversations can *profoundly* influence our *perceptions, opinions, and decisions* – and yet, we frequently *fail* to recognize how such *little distractions* can create *big distortions* of reality.

But the truth *is*, **noise taints truth if we ignore its influence**. For example, researchers found that, when asked about their *lives*, people *rate* their overall satisfaction *lower* on rainy days than *sunny* ones – *unless reminded* about the weather *ahead* of time. And as we've discussed *before*, just a bit of *hunger* has the power to *influence* a judge's *justice*; as we see in the study that showed the chance of *parole* starts out at 65% in the *morning* – but drops to *nearly zero* just before *lunch* and only *rebounds* back to around 65% *after* the opportunity to *eat*.

So *here's* the moral of the story: **there's great power in the peripheral!** We may not notice *what's* distracting us from the *clear* communication we *want* to have with God, but we *need* to *acknowledge* that **it's our lives that interfere with God's interaction**. Cuz noise *isn't* just *audible*, it's *emotional, mental, and spiritual*. It's the *internal interference* that pulls our *heart* away from *God's voice* without us even *realizing* it. It's the *unexpected traffic*, the *extra app notification*, and the *small scheduling conflict* that all *add up* to *reduce* our *spiritual sensitivity, energy, and clarity*.

And **the first step to overcoming the influence is admitting we have too many mental tabs open**. So, how many of *you* think *you're good* at Multitasking? Well, *you're not alone* – a survey found 93% of people say *they* can multitask *as well or better* than the *average* person. But *here's* the good news: *you're all wrong!* **Multitasking is actually a myth** because **the human brain can't complete more than one cognitive task at a time**. *Instead*, it rapidly *switches* back and forth among *competing* tasks, taking *time* to store information about the *old task* before turning attention to the *new* one. And the resulting "*switch cost*" of multitasking has been *repeatedly* proven to be *slower* with more *mistakes* than focusing on a *single* task at a time. And as Peter can tell us, giving *any noise* our *attention*, can easily lead to *spiritual* multitasking failure, cuz:

Peter ... **[successfully]** walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" – Matthew 14:29-30 NIV

Now that's "*switch cost*" in the *spiritual* sense! All it took was a little *breeze* to interfere with Peter's *focus* and his *miracle of faith* transformed from a moment of *clarity* into desperate *insecurity!* Which really *stresses* the *importance* of *admitting*: **our attention is fragile**. And if you want to see how *easily* we're confused by just a *one-second* switch, *test* for yourself next time *you're* in a *crowd*.

Ever heard of the cocktail party effect? It refers to our brain's *amazing ability* to carry out a *single* conversation in the *cacophony* of a *crowded* room by prioritizing important information and *suppressing* background *noise*. However, the *second* someone nearby says *your name*, or *any word* that interests *you* – *that* becomes *more important* and all you can hear is *their* voice until you *force* your focus to *switch back* to the *first* conversation that you just *lost track of*.



So, *what's the point?* Well, all this to say, when it comes to *clear* communication with God, our **biggest obstacle *isn't* understanding, it's interrupting**. And to hear Him *better*, we need to *intercept* the interference *before* it interrupts – and there are *two* big ways to do it:

1.) Acknowledge and attack or **2.) Anticipate and avoid**.



In our *first* option, we practice *awareness* of interference so **we can shift noise's focus before it shifts ours**. That is, if the *rain* might be *distracting* from a *deep conversation* – *bring the rain into the conversation!* Cuz when we treat *distractions* as *additions*, they can actually *increase* momentum *instead of derailing* it! And Paul explains the strategy:



We demolish arguments ... against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to *make it obedient* to *Christ*. – 2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV

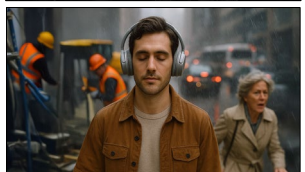
After we make our minds *sensitive* to irrational *interference*, we can *incorporate* it as a *passenger* on an *existing* train of thought – as long as *that train* is already *in motion!* And to keep it moving,

Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things ...
And the God of peace will be with you. – Philippians 4:8-9 NIV

If we keep our minds occupied with God's goodness, there's no vacancy for unrelated noise unless it's willing to *become a part* of the *godly conversation!* And *every* distraction from *rainy days* to *hunger pains* can be *repurposed* to *keep* our minds on *Christ* rather than *pull* them away!



But because *overpowering* interference takes *practice*, our *second* option offers an *easier* approach; Anticipate and avoid. *This* option is *always* available and a *good choice* whenever the noise seems too *loud* and *powerful* to deal with – cuz in *this* strategy, **we just remove ourselves from situations that naturally make noise**. If the *rain* distracts from a *deep conversation* – *stay inside!* Take *stock* of what has *historically* gotten *in the way* of your spiritual focus and *avoid* it entirely. Because we **can cultivate clarity by creating quiet**. We can deliberately design our lives to limit the opportunity for interruptions. Like we're advised in Hebrews:



Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, *fixing our eyes on Jesus* – Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV

Keeping *Christ* at the *center* of our *lives* means keeping *distractions* away from our *eyes!* Like *writers* who *pine* for an *isolated cabin* for a *moment* of clarity, **we should crave quiet to connect with Christ**.



Which is why a *church* in England recorded "*the sound of silence*" onto a CD that became a *surprise hit* back in 2012. As the pastor of St Peter's Church in Sussex *explained*, by recording 30 minutes of the *empty church's atmosphere*, they could provide a *rare treat* in our *busy and noisy world* – *silence*. Cuz in the same way *church* offers a *break* to *redirect* our focus, *silence invites people to "tune out and tune in" on their own time*. So whether it's a CD of *silence*, an early morning *escape*, or a quiet *commute* alone in a car – *we can cut down noise by cutting out peripheral pieces*. I mean, Jesus Himself, suggested *this strategy*:

When you pray, go into your room, *close the door* and pray – Matthew 6:5-7 NIV

[And He *used it Himself*:] Jesus often *withdrew to lonely places* and prayed. – Luke 5:16 NIV

One of those days Jesus *went out to a mountainside to pray* – Luke 6:12 NIV

[And another time] He *withdrew by boat* privately to a solitary place. – Matthew 14:13 NIV



Because Jesus knew *interruptions – even the tiny ones – steal; not just our time, but our focus*. And if *prayer* ever has to *compete* for our *attention* we won't just lose our *train of thought*, we'll lose *sight* of God and *all* His loving *guidance*. It's a lesson I had to learn again this week. Y'see, last Monday, I watched Hotel Rwanda and as usual, we *dimmed lights*, silenced *phones*, and made *snacks* – all to *acknowledge, attack, anticipate, and avoid* all potential distractions. And after creating all that *quiet*, something *awesome* happened; *God got through*. That story gave me *clarity* by reminding me how God uses *our love* to conquer *all*.

But then *Tuesday* came. And my daughter's car *broke down*. The *noise* came *back* as *money, schedules, and stress* and that *clarity* I'd just found began to *drown*. Until something *wonderful* happened – *I had to wait*. One hour for the *battery*. One hour for the *tow*. But it *didn't show*. So one hour on *hold*. And then another. And *another*. *Six hours* in a car, with nowhere to go like God *sent me* to my *room* to change my *attitude*. Just *me, my daughter, and the quiet*. So we *talked and listened* – *laughing and thinking about life, love, how broken this world is, and how beautiful it can be*, if we would just *pay attention*. And somewhere in all that *silence*, God *whispered* again.

Be *still*, and know that I am God – Psalms 46:10 NIV

It felt like God *forced stillness* into the middle of my *stress* just to *prove* how there's *always* an opportunity to rise *above the noise* and *hear His voice*. Cuz the truth is, *God's always speaking loud and clear – we just need to lower the volume of everything else*. We *want* to hear from God – but we won't *sit still* long enough to *listen*. So He doesn't *shout* to *compete* with our *chaos* – He *whispers* to invite us into *stillness*, cuz *the biggest threats to faith aren't always big sins but small distractions*. So if your walk feels like it's lacking consistent clarity, ask yourself this question: *Where's the noise in my life coming from?* And then, *How* could I *turn it down* to better *tune in*? Personally, I just bought some noise-canceling headphones for my morning *walks* and I gotta tell you – they may make me *dangerously* unaware of *traffic* but the *spiritual safety* is *priceless*!