

Title: Additional Material for the Biblical Basis Chapter

April 23, 2015

Greetings all,

Just a quick note to let you know that we have posted an updated version of chapter thirty-five, "Is the Immanuel Approach Biblical," which includes two pages of additional material at the very end of the chapter. For your convenience, I have also included this additional material at the end of this e-mail.

Blessings,

Dr. Lehman/Karl

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<https://www.immanuelapproach.com/supporting-lehmans-immanuel-approach-work/>

Additional new material at the end of chapter 35:

Under section VI., **Specific objections:**

D. God spoke to people *in* the Bible, but now God only speaks to us *through* the Bible:

Some critics readily agree that the Bible describes many characters who experienced interactive connections with God, and that these biblical characters received specific communication from God; but then these critics go on to argue that God no longer communicates with us directly. These critics accurately point out that some people who have claimed to hear from God have obviously been deceived, and they propose that the safest way to avoid this kind of deception and danger is to limit communication from God to only his written words that have been canonized in scripture. They believe that this is actually *God's* plan – they believe that God is aware of the danger of trying to communicate directly with fallible humans, and so now he only communicates with us through his written word in order to protect us from error.

The first part of my response to this concern is to refer the reader to passages such as the following verse in 1 Corinthians, in which Paul clearly implies that the average believer is expected to receive words from God: "Well, my brothers and sisters, let's summarize what I am saying. When you meet, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given, one will speak in an unknown language, while another will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must be useful to all and build them up in the Lord." (1 Cor 14:26).

The second part of my response to this concern is to refer the reader to Dallas Willard's

excellent book, *Hearing God*.¹ Dr. Willard spends much of the book arguing that God does still speak to us directly, and the material he presents includes strong, sound, compelling Biblical exegesis.

E. People who claim to hear from God are claiming divine revelation equal to scripture:

When those of us who are using the Immanuel approach claim to perceive God's presence, claim to have an interactive connection with God, and claim to hear from God in the context of this interactive connection, some critics misunderstand us to be saying that we are receiving divine revelation equal to scripture. And these critics are understandably alarmed by this *mistaken* perception that we claim to be adding to the canon of scripture.

The simple response to this concern is that we in the Immanuel approach community do *not* claim to be adding to the canon of scripture. We see the revelation in scripture as Revelation with a capital "R," and we fully agree that this scriptural Revelation has much more authority than the revelation with a lower case "r" that we receive in the context of the Immanuel approach. Among other reasons for its authority, the capital "R" Revelation in scripture has been tested and confirmed by the world church for thousands of years. And the lower case "r" revelation we receive in the context of the Immanuel approach certainly does not have the benefit of this same confirmation and testing.

I *do* believe that the Immanuel approach helps us establish interactive connections with the living presence of God, and that God does indeed communicate with us in this context; but I do *not* believe that we are infallible in our ability to accurately perceive what the Lord is saying to us. As mentioned earlier in chapter thirty-one, *everybody* has trouble with *minor* counterfeit and/or contamination. Nobody is able to perceive the Lord's presence or guidance with perfect, 100% accuracy. Even when we are able to establish a strong, clear interactive connection with the Lord, unconscious avoidance, subtle self deception, the complexity of the neurological processes involved, physical trauma in our fallen biological brains, psychological trauma in our fallen minds, internal dissociated parts with complex agenda, and deliberate demonic interference can all get in the way of perceiving the Lord's presence and guidance with 100% accuracy. This is why we need to remain humble with respect to any content we receive in the context of Immanuel approach sessions – we should always consider the possibility that the details of our perceptions of God's presence and the details of content we perceive to be coming from God could be at least slightly contaminated by deliberate counterfeit, and/or unconscious distortion, and/or simple honest mistakes.

Furthermore, we are not infallible in our ability to accurately interpret all aspects of the *meaning* of the content we receive from God, and we are not infallible in our judgment regarding how the content we receive from God *applies to the rest of the world*. Again, we

¹Dallas Willard, *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999).

receive revelation with a lower case “r,” and we need to be very humble with respect to this content that we perceive to be coming from God.

F. Yes, Biblical characters experienced interactive connections with God, but it was very rare: Some critics readily agree that the Bible describes people having interactive encounters with God, but then they point out that these encounters were very rare. They point out that during many periods in the biblical record, the entire nation of Israel went for many years with only a handful of recorded incidents in which people experienced the interactive presence of the Lord. And their conclusion is something along the lines of, “If people in the Bible encountered God so rarely, it seems presumptuous and hard to believe that the average Christian today can encounter God on a daily basis in the context of the Immanuel approach.”

In responding to this concern, I will once again refer the reader to *Hearing God*. Much of the book addresses exactly this question: “Can we, today – *average* Christians in the twenty first century – actually experience living, interactive communication with the Lord?” Dr. Willard’s conclusion is “Yes!” And he supports this conclusion with strong, sound, compelling Biblical exegesis. I include here one excerpt that is particularly relevant:

“If we look at the advice on how the meetings of the church were supposed to proceed, as given in 1 Corinthians 14, we see it is assumed that numerous people in the congregation are going to have some kind of communication from God which they will be sharing with the others in the group: ‘When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.’ (1 Cor 14:26).

The ancient prophecy of Joel was fulfilled in the early church: ‘Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.’ (Acts 2:17, Joel 2:28-32). The wish of Moses, ‘that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit on them’ (Num 11:29) is substantially granted in the church of Jesus Christ when it functions as its Lord intended.”²

VII. Additional resources: As I’m sure the reader has noticed, I have referenced additional resources at several points in the above discussion. I thought it might be helpful to summarize these additional resources, as well as several others, in one easy-to-find location.

The Renovare Spiritual Formation Bible: As mentioned above, the *Renovare* spiritual formation study Bible is an excellent additional resource, with study notes that highlight the “Immanuel

²Dallas Willard, *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1999).

Principle of life”³ as the central theme that unifies the entire body of scripture.

Dallas Willard’s *Hearing God*: As mentioned above, Dallas Willard’s excellent book, *Hearing God*, includes extensive, strong, sound, compelling Biblical exegesis supporting our experience that God does still speak to us directly, and that this should be a common experience for the average believer.

Patti Velotta’s *Immanuel: A Practicum*: As mentioned above, appendices three through ten of *Immanuel: A Practicum* provide extensive additional material regarding biblical support for the Immanuel approach.

Immanuel: A Practicum website: As of April 2015, Pastor Patti has one hundred and sixty-five additional word studies related to the Immanuel approach posted as free downloads on the “Bible Studies” page of the *Immanuel: A Practicum* website (www.immanuelpracticum.com).

Jim Wilder’s teaching CDs: Dr. Wilder presents a number of excellent points on the biblical support for the Immanuel approach in his audio teaching CDs, *Immanuel: Taking Healing to the World, 2011 Share Immanuel Evenings*, JIM Talks Vol 10 (on memory, healing, and synchronization), and JIM Talks Vol 12 (on Immanuel healing). These are all available from the “Resources” page of www.lifemodelworks.org.

Jerry Reddix and others who are engaging in ongoing careful study regarding the Biblical basis for the Immanuel approach (details pending).

³As mentioned above, “the Immanuel principle of life” refers to “the development of life ‘with God’ as a reality on earth, centered in the person of Jesus.”