



*Hearing the
Voice of*

GOD

“Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe.” Hebrews 1:1-2 NLT

God is always speaking. He is very vocal and loves to communicate with us, but oftentimes we cannot hear Him. Not because He isn't speaking to us, but because we haven't discerned How He speaks to us specifically. His pattern of speaking to person A may differ from that of person B. but He is always communicating with us.

The Bible tells us that God speaks in many ways, and we know that whatever He says is always for good. His words guide, guard, correct, transform, shape us and align us to His agenda for our lives. Therefore, it's critical that we learn to hear Him. This series we are looking at some of the ways God speaks and we pray that this will help us discern how God speaks to us and encourage us to dig into deeper conversations with Him.

Stay connected.



Day 1

The Bible

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.” 2 Timothy 3:16 NLT

The primary way God speaks to us is through His word, the Bible. It acts as a means of communication through which God prepares and equips us to do every good work, guides, guards, blesses, corrects, protects us and helps us learn how to identify His voice in a time when many other voices are trying to get our attention. There is a direct correlation between hearing God and spending time in the word of God.

“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Hebrews 4:12

The Bible isn't just written text, it is spirit and life. If we open our Bibles each time with an expectation for God to speak to us, He will. As we honour His word, we create an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to speak to, transform and show us things we could never have figured out on our own. Imagine reading a book and having the author of the book by our side, explaining the meaning of, inspiration behind and intention of everything he's written and how it applies to our current circumstances. That's what happens when we read our Bible. This is why we can read a specific verse of scripture over and over and get a different revelation each time.

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15

When we go further to study and meditate on what we have read, we're opening the door for a deeper conversation with the Holy Spirit which is where maturity comes in. The more diligent we are in handling the word of God, the less prone we will be to deception, spiritual childishness and the more God can trust us with the deeper things of His kingdom.

Prayer: Lord help me to have the mindset that each time I open my Bible is an opportunity to hear You speak to me. Help me as I become more intentional about hearing You.

Day 2

The Inward Witness

'For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.' I Corinthians 2:11

'But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.' I Corinthians 6:17

When we receive Christ as our Saviour, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in and lives within us. This is the same Spirit who knows the mind of God and communicates God's thoughts and agenda to us. Because believers have access to God's spirit who communicates to our spirits, there is something called the 'inner witness' which simply put is a 'knowing'. There are times we just know that this is what God is saying about a particular thing at a point in time. But it's important that we don't rely solely on this as the only way to hear God, as it is dependent on the state of our heart at the time we're hearing what we believe is God.

'But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.' Hebrews 5:14

The same way we practice walking before we can run, is the same way we need to practice learning to hear from God by depending on the inner witness. There are times that because our consciences are hardened due to sin, unforgiveness, unaddressed bad habits etc. that we may convince ourselves that it's God speaking whereas it may not be. Which is why we must test what we believe we're hearing to see if it lines up with God's word. God will never contradict His word so if we're sensing something that goes against His principles as clearly laid out in the Bible, then that's an automatic check to us that it may not actually be God we're hearing. And even if it appears to align, there's nothing wrong with approaching God in prayer to confirm that we're on the right track.

'Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground...' Hosea 10:12

Fasting tones down the activities of the flesh making it easier for us to sense more accurately what the Holy Spirit is saying to our spirit. Prayer keeps the channel of communication with the Holy Spirit open so that we're able to connect with Him easily. When we combine the two, it becomes easier for us to pay attention to the voice of the inner witness.

Prayer: Lord help me understand how to practice hearing from You.

Day 3 The Still, Small Voice

“and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave...” I Kings 19:12-13

The voice of God is still and small, meaning we have to lean in to hear it. In practical terms this means always being attentive to what God may be saying at any time; keeping a clear conscience so that guilt and sin don't block our ears from hearing; and creating a time where we can focus on God alone, rather than try and fit Him into our busy schedules.

“And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand...” I Kings 17:1

“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” Psalms 91:1

The noise of the world and the flesh is loud and urgent, so the smallness of the voice God means that it's easy for us to miss it if we join the world in focusing on the spectacular and dramatic which gets more attention, but God is more interested in the day to day consistency of fellowship because that's where intimacy is built. Elijah had built a relationship with God which is why he recognised His voice outside of all the drama.

Many times we may not pick God's voice because we're too busy doing all the talking. When we pray, do we pause long enough to give God the chance to speak to us, or do we just say “Amen” and move on? When we read our Bible do we consciously ask the Holy Spirit to show us what a particular scripture means and listen for His guidance? When we go about our daily activities do we intentionally keep communicating with God in our hearts through the day or is fellowship relegated only to “quiet time”?

Because we are God's temple, being in His presence 24/7/365 is a possibility we can take advantage of should we choose to. Living like this means we're always going to be at an advantage because we receive His constant guidance and instructions, and we can respond to life's issues victoriously.

Prayer: Lord help me to cultivate Your presence so I can focus on You despite the noise of the world.

Day 4

The Loud, Audible Voice

"The voice of the Lord is powerful; The voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars... The voice of the Lord divides the flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness... The voice of the Lord makes the deer give birth, And strips the forests bare..." Psalms 29:4-5, 7-9

God's voice is so powerful it causes the earth to shake and directly impacts all elements of nature. His loud voice is so overwhelming that if left unfiltered by the Holy Spirit our natural frame may not be able to bear it. This is why the Holy Spirit helps us process the audible voice of God so that we can actually hear with our natural ears as though someone was speaking to us.

'Now the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears."' 1 Samuel 3:10

'Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?'" Acts 9:4

God may choose to use this method to get our attention for something, but it isn't His primary method. For most of us, the number of times in our lifetime we will hear the audible voice of God could be fairly limited, so it can't be a way we depend on for daily direction.

'And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.' 2 Corinthians 11:14

Just because we hear an audible voice doesn't necessarily mean that the voice came from God. Remember the devil comes to steal, kill and destroy and is also a master of disguise who specializes in mimicking and perverting whatever God does. So we need to be mindful of the fact that he can also use an audible voice to speak. As such, we must always go back to test what we heard against the word of God. Did what we hear align with what the Bible says about God's character, His principles and His expectations of a believer? If it doesn't line up, then it wasn't the voice of God.

Prayer: Lord I ask for the grace to be highly discerning and to form the habit of testing everything I sense or hear against your word, so I don't fall into deception.

Day 5 Dreams

“In a dream, in a vision of the night, When deep sleep falls upon men, While slumbering on their beds, Then He opens the ears of men, And seals their instruction.” Job 33:15-16

The busyness of the day May make it difficult for us hear God so another way God can choose to speak to us is through dreams. Spirits don't sleep, as such when our bodies are asleep our spirits are still alert. This is why it is possible for our spirits to pick up what God may be saying and bring it to our consciousness when our bodies are asleep.

“For a dream comes through much activity...” Ecclesiastes 5:3

“lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.” 2 Corinthians 2:11

A strong note of warning: not all dreams are from God. In fact dreams come as a result of many things ranging from our thoughts and concerns to what we may have eaten that day. The enemy also uses dreams as a means of deception by presenting things in a manner to look like it came from God. This is why sometimes a person may see the face of someone they know or have an encounter and automatically assume God is showing them something whereas that could be far from the truth.

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God...” I John 4:1

Many have gone into error by assuming that a dream they had came from God and based on that dream they took steps that derailed them and others. Whatever God shows us in a dream is usually a form of advance information to prepare us for what is to come, or to show us what is going on behind the scenes and He expects us to come back to Him to get the strategy for the next steps. Regardless of what we may see or encounter in a dream we must always test every spirit and ask: does what I see align with God's word? Then we should ask the Holy Spirit in the place of prayer: is this dream from You or another source? Finally, we should ask: what should I do about it?

Prayer: Lord give me ears to hear and identify when you are speaking by whatever means You choose and help me not to fall into any form of deception.

Day 6

What Next?

'...Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.'
Hebrews 3:15

We have identified that God's primary method for speaking to us is through the Bible. Noting that it gives us an insight into God's principles, character and desires for us. When we have this as a foundation, it is easier to identify when God is speaking to us and when it's our mind or other negative influences.

'My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.' John 10:27

Hearing God isn't a one-off activity. Jesus made it clear that we're supposed to constantly listen to His voice, which means He is always speaking – giving direction, instruction, correction, encouragement, whatever it is we need at the time. Our hearing God should be a direct reflection of our relationship with Him and He is always on the move which means we should always be on the lookout for what God is saying to us now.

Beyond listening, we should also obey whatever it is we were told to do – because it's highly unlikely God will tell us something new if we haven't done anything with the last thing He told us. This means our revelation is based on our last obedience. So if we feel we aren't hearing from God, we may need to reflect on how faithful we have been to obey past instructions/directions regardless of if they seem to be big or small.

".. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace..." Matthew 11:28-30

God cannot be constrained to speaking to us in one defined manner, but there's usually a preferred manner by which He communicates to each of us individually. As we develop our walk with Him, we can recognize our 'rhythm' with Him and discern whenever there are changes in that rhythm. In any relationship constant two-way communication is vital for that relationship to thrive. Which means that if we really want to know God's voice and hear from Him often, it helps to be interested in the things that matter to Him so He can speak to us about them and we are constantly dialoging. Not from a place of duty, but from a place of love and because we are genuinely interested in pleasing Him.

Prayer: Lord, let the things that matter to You matter to me so I can constantly partner with You in discussing and addressing them.

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