

# Hear!

## **Hearing the Voice of God, Following the Word of God, Experiencing the Will of God**

What does it mean to hear God? We read of Him speaking to several people in Scripture. Does He still speak today? What does it mean to know He has spoken? Hearing God is not about weird voices and strange statements. It is not about telling people what to do—God told me to tell you so and so. It is about having a heart that knows God, that hears Him and obeys what He says, that recognizes Him and worships Him for Who He is—as God.

At the beginning of his reign as king, God spoke to Solomon in a dream and said, “Ask what you wish me to give you” (1 Kings 3:5). He admitted his inexperience and need for wisdom, “I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in” (1 Kings 3:7). Then, he asked for “an understanding heart” (1 Kings 3:9). Literally, the Hebrew phrase is “a hearing heart,” a heart that hears God and hears people.

What did God think of this request? Solomon’s request for “discernment to understand justice” or literally, “hearing” to make just decisions was indeed very “pleasing in His sight,” so much so that God gave Solomon “a wise and discerning heart” (1 Kings 3:10, 12)

To hear God, we need a cleansed heart and an available, obedient heart, not an obstinate heart as we read of in Romans 10:21.

- 1) First, one’s Desire (assuming one is surrendered to God and His Will).
- 2) Second, one’s Opportunity (what is available to do or not do, where to go or not go, etc.).
- 3) Third, the element of ‘No Red Flags’ (Are there any “red flags” giving warning signals, a “Balaam’s donkey” stopping, blocking progress, even speaking (Numbers 22:23-35)?

Stop, don’t go that way if there is any check of the Spirit, any lack of peace from the Spirit as the Divine Referee in life—Colossians 3:15).

Hearing God is about acknowledging God for who He is as God and worshiping Him. It is about activating faith, actions that reveal a right relationship seen in obeying Him, not about strange revelations.

Some make rash statements about “God told me...” but what they say does not line up with the clear revelation of the Word of God. Others declare God never speaks; we must simply do the best we can and hope for the best.

Hindrances and Helps to Hearing God—Many speak of the “promptings” of God or the urges of His Spirit, working in the mind, active in “the spirit,” the inner man or inner self often noted in Scripture. Is this valid? What can we learn of these truths?

What is a prompting from God? What does it communicate? How do we know it is from God? How do we know it is not from our own deceived hearts or from a thought dart of the Evil One?

- We must know the Word of God and the Ways of God to clearly discern the Will of God

#### HINDRANCES TO HEARING GOD

1. Not believing God speaks—If a person does not believe God speaks, then he or she will ignore what God could be clearly speaking.
2. Not knowing How God speaks—How does God speak? First, God speaks by His Word and by His Spirit, Second, God speaks in line with His nature. Psalm 85:8 states, “I will hear what God the LORD will say; For He will speak peace to His people, to His godly ones...” James 3:17 states that the “wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable...” The fruit of the Holy Spirit is “peace” (Galatians 5:22). God speaks in a peaceful way, not rashly nor harshly nor in a confusing way. He is never the author of confusion. (I Corinthians 14:33).
3. Not knowing how Willing the Lord is to speak—Jesus said to the “weary,” “Come to Me... take My yoke... learn from Me... for I am gentle and humble of heart” (Matthew 11:28-30). He is open to speak, to lead anyone who will listen with a learner’s heart, ready to obey.
4. Lack of Surrender to the Lord.
5. Not aware of counterfeit guidance—There are many supernatural beings around. The “thief,” the devil and demons seek to “steal, and kill, and destroy” as Jesus warned (John 10:10).

6. Deafness to God's Voice because of disobedience to God's Word and God's will
7. Greed, stinginess, unwillingness to give, also known by the Hebraism an "evil eye," results in spiritual darkness, the inability to see or understand spiritual reality. Jesus noted this as the problem in Matthew 6:22-23
8. Pride—Pride says 'I can handle life myself, I do not need help or guidance.'  
- James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5
9. Undealt-with sin
10. Un-crucified self-agendas

### HELPS TO HEARING GOD...

What can help us walk the right way? What can help us hear God? Here are some specific Helps to Hearing God...

1. Spend Time in the Word of God
2. Spend Time in Prayer—This includes speaking to God *and* listening to Him.
3. Sometimes we need to spend time in Fasting with Prayer along with Time in the Word.
4. One help in hearing God is praying with others, especially "with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:22).
5. Reading the Biographies of those who have walked with God helps us hear.

Methods for discerning the Will of God is practical and marked by the heartbeat of one who walked with God.

1. I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state that it has not will of its own in regard to a given matter.
2. Having done this, I do not leave the result to feeling or simple impressions.
3. I seek the will of the Spirit of God through or in connection with the Word of God.

4. Next I take into account providential circumstances.
5. I ask God in prayer to reveal His will to me aright.
6. Through prayer to God, the study of the Word and reflection

## On Meditation and Prayer

Using the Scriptures to strengthen and guide us in prayer, discovering that in meditating on the Word of God, God speaks, encourages, rebukes, leads and guides in prayer.

## How Does God Speak?

Here are some ways we read of in Scripture. (HOW GOD SPEAKS AND HOW COUNTERFEITS CONTRADICT)

1. God speaks through the Word of God—We have mentioned this, specifically these actions: Read, Meditate, Memorize, Sing, Speak, Write the Word of God.  
- What is the *counterfeit* to this? (Read Matthew 4:6)
- 2 . God Can Speak Audibly
3. Dreams/Visions—In Scripture, God spoke from time to time in dreams and visions, communicating His will for that person (or people)
4. Impressions/Promptings—While some speak of ‘promptings’ from the Lord, we must ever maintain caution in this area.
5. God speaks through Others
6. God speaks through those speaking the Word of God, including sermons, teachings, testimonies, and songs.
7. Husband/Wife/Parents in family decisions.
8. Consistency is the Key in Learning to Hear God.
9. God speaks peace. Psalm 85:8 makes note of this fact.

10. Unanimity. God speaks with unanimity of the involved, assigned parties in decision making.

11. God speaks through natural phenomena—God speaks in a variety of ways through natural phenomena. Psalm 19:1-6

12. God speaks through supernatural timing in natural phenomena—As we encounter various weather phenomena, weather related events, and other planet earth situations, it is important to note the timing of these matters.

Disregarding and/or blind to the supernatural timing of natural phenomena— Several connections may exist between certain natural phenomena, but many either do not see or willfully ignore or disregard any possible connections. There is no room in their 'theology' for such a God or such occurrences.

## LET'S GET STARTED HEARING GOD... THE BEST WAY TO HEAR GOD

So, knowing these truths and testimonies of others in Scripture and in the history of the church, how are we to walk *hearing God* day by day? If someone wants to talk to you, he tries to get your attention, to speak face to face if possible. You must respond, perhaps move closer or face in that direction. The same is true in order to hear God.

From the Start—First, we must make sure our ears are clear—the ears of the heart— We need to direct attention to the Lord, to seek His Face, to hear Him clearly.

God has spoken clearly in Creation (Genesis 1-2; Romans 1:20), in each conscience (Romans 2:14-15), in the commands of God's law (Romans 2:12-13, 18), and most fully in Christ (Romans 3:21- 28; Hebrews 1:1-3).

Clearly hearing Him comes through His Word. When we truly "hear" what He is saying, we can also pray His Word—we can have an ongoing "Word-conversation" by the power and ability of the Holy Spirit as He works in us and with us.

Consider how people in Scripture heard God, talked with Him, and walked with Him. God called him to leave his home and travel to Canaan, giving him promises of God's blessing (Genesis 11:31; 12:1-3; Acts 7:2-4). In the land of Canaan, God appeared to him and Abram responded in prayer and worship (Genesis 12:7-9). Abram did what he knew to do and said what he knew to say. God kept teaching and training him and Abram learned more and more about listening and hearing God, talking and walking with Him. God does the same with us—it is a growth process.

In Genesis 15:1-6, God spoke to Abram, declaring He would be his shield and reward, his protection and provision. Then, Abram brought up a greater concern—no son, thus no heir of his own. God assured him he would have a son as his heir. Abram believed God; he trusted Him and as Romans 4:17 states. He believed God could bring something out of nothing in his life, life out of death, fruitfulness out of barrenness.

Years later, when Abraham's grandson Jacob faced a desperate circumstance, he prayed about this desperate situation (Genesis 32:9-12). He prayed based on the Word the Lord had promised him at Bethel 20 years before (Genesis 28:13-15), in Haran a few weeks before (Genesis 31:3; 32:9), and what He had promised Abraham years before (Genesis 22:17; 32:12). He prayed those promises and God answered that prayer (Genesis 33:1-11).

We see this pattern over and over again—God speaks on our level. We respond. He speaks more and reveals more. We respond in a closer, fuller way—we grow in knowing Him and hearing Him.

Another example. Serving in Babylon's government, Daniel became burdened about Jerusalem and the end of the Israelite captivity in Babylon. After reading the Lord's promises about the captivity in the scroll of the prophet Jeremiah, Daniel turned his attention to seek the Lord (Daniel 9:2-3). He read Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10 and prayed Daniel 9:4-20 based on the word he had read in Jeremiah.

Over 80 years later, Nehemiah became greatly burdened over Jerusalem, especially after hearing the latest reports from his brother Hanani (Nehemiah 1:1-3). He began to pray. How did he pray? He prayed the Word of God from his heart.

What about Jesus? Isaiah 50:4 gives a prophecy about the coming Messiah, specifically of His daily "Quiet Time" and prayer time with the Lord.

Jesus proved obedient to all the Father taught Him and all He commanded Him, including His death on the Cross (Isaiah 50:5-7; Philippians 2:5-11).

From His childhood, Jesus had an ongoing conversation with His Father. We read evidence of this in His Temple conversations with the Jewish leaders at age twelve (Luke 2:41-50). He knew His Father, the things of His Father, the Word of His Father (the Scriptures), and obviously meditated deeply on that Word.

Jesus also prayed the Word of God. That was His 'prayer vocabulary.' For example, in Matthew 11:25-26, Jesus prayed in the light of passages such as Exodus 20:11, Psalm 8, and Nehemiah 9.

“Sacrifice and offering You have not desired, but a body You have prepared for Me; in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have taken no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written of Me) to do Your will, O God.’”

That is a quote from Psalm 40:6-8 and it expresses the heart of Jesus and the heart of the Father.

On the cross, Jesus prayed Psalm 22:1 and Psalm 31:5. His heart and mind were saturated with the Word of God. Think about this— Jesus never said anything wrong, no deceitful words, no lies, no complaining, nothing in error. His words were “gracious” and “are spirit and are life,” always true (John 8:31-47). Yet, as pure as His words were, when Jesus prayed, He used the words of Scripture.

In the early church, the first disciples also used the Scriptures in prayer. We find a clear example of this in the prayer gathering in Acts 4:24-31, quoting from Exodus 20, Nehemiah 9, and Psalm 2, because they were saturated with the Scriptures.

## SO WHAT ABOUT US?

How can we hear God more clearly day by day?

First, Talk to the Lord first every day. Have a Jesus-focused attitude.

Second, Listen everyday. Think through this statement: we must stop long enough, to listen closely enough, to hear clearly enough, to obey fully enough, to do the will of God surely enough.

Third, Read and Heed the Word of God. More time and concentration in the Word equals clearer hearing and understanding the heart of God.

Fourth, if life is as some say—10% what happens to us and 90% attitude—then, make sure you are Jesus focused, Word fixed, and Spirit filled for the day and all it brings.

Fifth, Start Now. Pick a passage or book and read it. Read it again. Ask God to speak. Listen. Look for connections. His heart will *always* agree with His Word and His Word *always* expresses His heart. Remember this: to know more and more of the fullness of God's heart, one must know more and more of His Word—"the whole purpose of God," Paul called it (Acts 20:27).

## HERE'S A STARTING POINT...

1. Read Psalms, Proverbs, one of the Gospels. Read the passage or book again. Read it again. Pause and think.
2. Pray for anyone God brings to mind. That Scripture may be just the right medicine that person needs in prayer, or it may be that it's just the right medicine for you!
3. Obey anything the Lord shows you as you read—the Lord may point out some specifics for your life.
4. Repeat. Rejoice. Remember what God has said. Be refreshed. Refresh others as the Lord opens the doors to speak what He has shown you. Be like the "well-watered garden" of Isaiah 58:11 or like "a shade from the heat" as the Lord is in Isaiah 25:4 (see also Isaiah 32:2). Be like refreshing "cold water to a weary soul" as in Proverbs 25:25.
5. Hear God and be changed as you walk and talk with Him!