

How to clearly hear and recognise God's voice

The purpose of this document is to show you and help you understand that God does and wants to speak to you. It will explain why God speaks to us, how we can position ourselves to recognise his voice and what to do when he does speak.

Why does God speak to us?

Hearing God's voice is part of having a relationship with him. We as Christians need to follow him. We do this by following his commandments written in the Bible and listen intently when he speaks to us.

Here are some scriptural reasons why he speaks to us:

- So we can have a relationship with and follow him (John 10:27)
- To guide us into all truth and declare to us things to come (John 16:13)
- To teach us all things and bring to our remembrance all that he has spoken to us (John 14:26)
- To teach us what to say in certain situations (Luke 12:12)
- To direct us (Isaiah 30:21)
- To build our faith (Romans 10:17)
- To receive wisdom (James 1:5, 1 Corinthians 12:8)
- To give us instructions (Acts 8:29, Acts 9:6, Acts 9:11, Acts 10:19, Acts 13:2)
- To give us a word of knowledge (1 Corinthians 12:8)
- To give us prophecy (1 Corinthians 12:10)
- To give us an interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10)
- To discipline us and correct us (Hebrews 12:5-6)
- To show us great and mighty things (Jeremiah 33:3)

The purpose of hearing his voice is to go deeper with him. To know him. His voice will instruct you, edify you, sharpen you and show you the truth.

How does God speak to us?

God can speak to us in a number of different ways. (Joel 2:28, Job 33:14-16) He can speak through dreams and visions. He can speak with an audible voice which is heard with our physical ears. (Luke 9:35) He can speak to us through other people. (Acts 21:11) He can also speak to us with his still, small voice which is what I will be focusing on in this document. (1 Kings 19:12)

What is his still, small voice?

This is the way God wants to speak to all believers. He speaks to our soul and it's from there we hear his voice. This is not an audible voice that comes from outside us. This voice comes as a thought and our heart bears witness that it is from him. (Luke 24:32) So how do we hear him?

Expect that he would speak to you

The Lord said to me, **“Expect that I would talk to you, because I do.”** If we don't think God would talk to us, then we won't put ourselves in a position to hear from him and won't be listening intently when he does. (Job 33:14)

The Lord said to me, **“Don't doubt that I speak to you. You hear me every day. That is how relationship works.”** Hearing God's voice is part of having a relationship with him.

The Lord said to me, **“I want to speak to every believer.”** He also said, **“You have to want to hear my voice.”** We are told not to harden our hearts when we hear him speak. (Hebrews 3:15)

What does his still, small voice sound like?

I asked the Lord, **“What does your still, small voice sound like?”**

I heard, **“It is like your own but I am gentle, firm and able to correct without raising my voice.”**

The Lord's still, small voice sounds like our own thoughts. Some people hear their thoughts as an internal voice when they are thinking or reading in their mind. The Lord's voice is like our own but there are some differences that we can learn to distinguish from our own.

I find that the Lord's voice seems quieter than my own. This is why we need to learn to listen intently. If we aren't in tune with the Spirit we can easily miss it when he does speak. He does not yell or raise his voice but he is firm. If there is a voice that seems to be yelling at you. It is not the Lord.

How do we recognise God's voice?

We have a lot of thoughts that go through our mind everyday. We have to come to the understanding that not all of those thoughts are our own. Some of those thoughts are from God, some are our own and some of them are from the enemy. Our job is to know the difference.

When we hear something that we think might be God, we can learn to discern if it is or not. Firstly what you hear should never contradict the Bible. If you hear something that disagrees with scripture then you have not heard from God. What seemingly seems right is not always right. Sometimes the enemy can say something that seems right and unless you know the word of God you could fall for the trap. We need to be skilled in the word of righteousness and have our senses exercised by reason of use so that we can discern good and evil. (Hebrews 5:12-14) The Lord told me, **“Without the word you will fall victim to the enemy.”**

I asked the Lord once how to tell the difference between his thoughts and my own. He said to me, **“My thoughts come with a peace.”** When I heard these words a supernatural peace came upon me and I felt his presence very strongly. Jesus Christ is the prince of peace and he gives us a peace that surpasses all understanding. (Phillipians 4:7) This peace guards our hearts and minds. This peace will displace all anxiety. It is important to understand this peace when we are learning to discern his voice. The way we experience this peace is by walking in his ways and seeking him in the secret place. When we hear something we need to check our hearts and see if there is peace on the words we are hearing. His thoughts should never cause us to feel anxiety or fear unless we don't want to do what he is asking. (Jonah 1:3) His words are life. They feed us. (Matthew 4:4)

When the Lord was helping me learn his voice he said, **“Listen intently. Do not be swayed by the enemy. He seeks to destroy your soul.”** So I asked the Lord, how do I know when it's the enemy speaking? He told me the enemy tries to convince you through your mind by deceiving spirits. I asked the Lord how this is different to the way he speaks and he said, **“I convict your heart.”** I asked the Lord what this means and he said, **“I speak to your heart.”**

This is why it is so important to check our heart when we hear something. Remember the enemy lies, deceives, accuses and will try to convince us of his lies. The Bible tells us not to be ignorant of his devices. (2 Corinthians 2:11) If we hear a voice that is condemning us then it is not of God. Condemnation is from the enemy and makes us feel ashamed and unable to approach him. The Lord will convict our hearts and his words will draw us closer to him even if he is correcting us.

Position yourself to hear from him

The Lord said to me, **“Put yourself in a position to hear me.”** While preparing this I was asking the Lord for some other tips to help those who are learning to hear from him and he said to me:

“Give up the world.” (1 John 2:15)

And, **“You cannot be attentive to my Spirit while you are walking in the lusts of the flesh.”** (1 John 2:16) If we are still walking in the lusts of the flesh we will hear the things of the world and it will be hard to hear the things of the Spirit. (1 John 4:5-6)

I received this word from the Lord on 31 July 2019:

“Those who want to hear my voice, need to quiet down their lives. You can not be distracted by anything. I demand your full attention. Put away from you, the things that are preventing you, from spending time with me. You need to overcome your flesh. It is your flesh that is warring against your spirit. If you sow into the flesh, you will reap corruption. If you sow into the spirit, eternal life. Make this day a choice, which one you will serve? It is time to deny yourself, pick up your cross and follow me. Jesus”

So we position ourselves to hear from God by removing the distractions from our lives and spending time with him. We also need to overcome our flesh. Let's have a look at Martha and Mary to paint a picture of what we should be doing if we want to hear the Lord.

Luke 10:38-42 NKJV

Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. [39] And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. [40] But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." [41] And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. [42] But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

We see from this scripture it shows us what we need to do to hear the Lord. It says that Martha was distracted with much serving and Mary sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word. Sometimes we can become so busy and distracted we don't spend time with the Lord. If we want to hear him we need to sit at his feet and spend time with him in the secret place. (Matthew 6:6)

I want to give you an analogy of what it's like not to be able to hear God even though he is speaking to us. When my son is watching a DVD or playing a computer game I can try and talk to him and a lot of times he can't hear me. This is what it's like when God is speaking to us and we are distracted. We can't hear his voice. That's why it's so important to quiet down our lives and remove those things that are distracting us.

What do you do if you hear something but you're not sure?

As Christians our desire is to please the Lord and be obedient to what he is telling us. If we have heard something and we are not sure we should wait. (Psalm 27:14) Do not move without him. (John 15:5) If you feel rushed or pressured to act on something you have heard but you're not sure, then wait. We need to be moved by the Spirit and not by fear or compulsion.

There is a spiritual law which we find in 2 Corinthians 13 that says, **"By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."** God will always confirm his word with other witnesses. A witness is not necessarily another person, but it could. It could be a bible verse, a sign or something else that speaks to us. But God will always confirm his word. Remember what we hear should never go against scripture. If you're not sure, ask the Lord and he will show you. The Lord said this about confirmations, **"You don't have to look for them. If I am speaking and I have told you. I will show you."** So don't look for confirmations. Wait on him. This is the trust we can have in him. He knows what we are capable of and has made a way forward in every situation. Make sure you stay in his peace.

What are some practical tips for learning his voice?

- I record a lot of what I hear. When I spend time with the Lord in the morning I have a pen and paper ready to record the things I am hearing. When I go to work I take a notepad and a pen as well. I find that if I am not quick to write down the things I am hearing I could very easily forget. I feel for me this is part of being diligent to be attentive to his Spirit. This however could be different for you.
- Make sure you check the scriptures to see if what you are hearing agrees with the word of God. (It can't disagree)
- If the Lord speaks to me but I am not sure, a lot of times I will ask a follow up question. If it is the Lord speaking a lot of times I find he will answer that question. Sometimes I will get a scripture. Remember if we aren't sure we can ask him and he will show us. If you ask and you don't get anything, surrender what you heard to the Lord and wait. If nothing is confirmed then move on. His yoke is easy and his burden is light.
- Be aware that it is possible for your own mind or the enemy to answer questions that you have asked. I'm sure most people will encounter this. Don't be discouraged, it's part of the process of discerning his voice. The more we seek him and listen intently, the greater our discernment grows.

- Fasting is a powerful way to hear God more clearly. Fasting will quieten the carnal mind making it easier to hear from God. It will help you hear the things of the Spirit.
- There are many voices in the world and hearing from God is like tuning into a radio station. If we tune in correctly we will hear him clearly. If we aren't quite tuned in we will still hear white noise or even some of another station. We tune in by putting off the works of the flesh and walking in the Spirit. It is important that we spend time in the secret place in his presence.

What do we do when we know we have heard from God?

If you have heard something that requires action and you are confident it is from the Lord then be obedient. Sometimes you may not like what you are hearing (Jonah 1:3), make sure you don't harden your heart. Sometimes the Lord will ask us to do things that aren't comfortable. This is part of surrendering to him and his ways. A lot of times he corrects our attitudes and speaks to us to help us renew our minds. He also speaks words of comfort to us.

Is there anything else?

What I have written in this document is a guide to point you in the right direction. You are on a journey with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and we all need to hear from him. We need to surrender to him and his ways.

I will finish this document with word I received on 7 August 2019:

"I have spoken to many people. Most do not recognise my voice. It says in my word that my sheep hear my voice and follow me. Are you one of my sheep? You must hear my voice if you are to know me. There is no other way. There are many who think they know me but can't because they are spotted by this world. You must know me and I must know you. That is how relationship works. Expect that I would talk to you, because I do. You need to learn my voice and follow my instructions. There is no other way. Jesus"

Written by Ben Billingham (with prophetic words from the Lord)
Email: servantforchrist296@gmail.com