

Hearing God's Voice in Prayer

John 16:13-14

¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.

John 10:27

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

John 8:26-29

²⁶ "I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is trustworthy, and what I have heard from him I tell the world."

²⁷ They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. ²⁸ So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up^[a] the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. ²⁹ The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."

We see from the model of Jesus, that God speaks. Jesus listened to the Father and did not do anything until He received His instructions from the Father.

How much more ought we, His little lambs, listen to the voice of our Good Shepherd before we venture out into ministry, or even out of bed!

If you know the Lord, you have already heard His voice - it is that inner leading that brought you to Him in the first place. Hearing the voice of the heavenly Father is a basic right of every child of God.

God speaks to us today in many ways. The most prevalent way is through scripture. Even all of the other ways God speaks, will be confirmed in scripture. I Thessalonians 5:21, "Test everything." We need to immerse ourselves in scripture. Ask for the Holy Spirit to make His Word come alive to us as we read and meditate on Scripture.

Ten ways the Holy Spirit may speak to us today as seen in the Bible and contemporary experience

1. Mental Images

Scripture: Amos 7:7-8; Jer 1:11-14

2. Thoughts and Nudges, still small voice

Scripture: Ezekiel 7:1-2; Acts 8:29; Hebrews 3:7,14; I Kings 19:9-13

3. Words of Scripture

Scripture: Acts 11:15-16

4. Visions

Scripture: Acts 16:9-10; Joel 2:28, many times in the book of Acts

5. Dreams

Scripture: Matthew 1:20; Matthew 2:12-13

6. Consensus of a Group

Scripture: Acts 15:28

7. Audible voice

Scripture: I Samuel 3; Exodus 3:4

8. Nature

Scripture: Psalm 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands."

9. Prophetic Art

Scripture:

10. Another person, friend or spouse

Scripture: Matthew 13:13-15; I Corinthians 2:9-10

Listening Prayer Guidelines

1. Still and quiet your soul - breathe deeply, focus on Christ
2. Submit to the Lordship of Christ. Resist the enemy - take authority over the enemy by saying something like, "in the name of Jesus Christ I prohibit the enemy from speaking or interfering with this time. I refuse to listen to any voice other than the voice of the true Lord Jesus Christ."
3. Invoke His Presence - Praise, worship, and acknowledge God as the one true and Holy God. Ask that He would especially reveal Himself to you during your time of listening.
4. Ask God to search your heart - talk to Him about what He reveals and confess any known sin. Sin and unforgiveness are the greatest blockages to hearing the voice of God.

Psalm 66:18

¹⁸ If I had cherished sin in my heart,
the Lord would not have listened.

Hebrews 10:22

²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that
faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty
conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

5. Ask God to speak to you - Use the model of Samuel, "Speak Lord, for I, Your servant, am listening.
6. Wait in silence and expect God to answer you.
7. Use a pen and paper to write down the impressions He brings your way - usually this will be words, phrases, visual images, or thoughts that come into your mind through His still small voice of the indwelling Holy Spirit.
8. Test the word to discern if it is truly from the Lord.
9. Obey the guidance you receive from the Lord.

How do we know if what we "hear" is truly from God?

Discerning the Voice of God -you need a positive yes on all four. Test everything.

1. Does it give glory to Jesus Christ in the present and in the future?
2. Is it consistent with the intentions and character of God as revealed in scripture?
3. Do other people who are born again and filled with the Holy Spirit have a confirming witness?
4. Is there confirmation in objectively verifiable events or facts? Is there good fruit?

Mary Sterenberg, 2014

Seeking God's Guidance As A Group

Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance (Prov.1:5); Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground. (Psm. 143:10); Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. (Psm.25:4,5); My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. (John 10:27)

1. Open the session with prayer
2. Worship God and praise Him in song, scripture and declaration of who He is.
3. Take time for confession and cleansing from sin.
4. Pray for all voices other than the voice of the Holy Spirit to be silenced in Jesus' name. Silence the voice of the evil one, and our own flesh. You may say a prayer something like this:

Dear Heavenly Father,

I come to you in the name of Jesus Christ, Your Son, and according to James 1:5, I am seeking wisdom for _____ . In the name of Jesus, according to Matthew 28:18 and Luke 10:19-20, I take authority over satan and his fallen angels and command that they be rendered deaf, dumb and blind to my prayers and be removed from my presence. I place my own voice under subjection to the shed blood of Jesus, and command that my own thoughts be taken captive to the obedience of Christ, according to II Corinthians 10:5. I ask Father, that only Your Holy Spirit will speak to me as I wait on you for wisdom, insight and direction for _____ , and what You show me and direct me to do I will quickly obey. Amen.

5. Each person in the group goes off to a separate quiet place. Take nothing but your Bible, journal or paper and pen. Spend 20-30 minutes of solitude and silence. Ask Him the specific question which the group is discerning. Individually seek God's face and voice. Listen.

During this quiet time, God might give you a scripture verse to read, a picture in your mind, a word, a song, or even a vision. He might give you an impression in your spirit, like an "inner knowing."

Write down whatever you feel God may be saying to you. Write it down even if you question whether it might be your imagination or if it doesn't make sense to you. God gives different pieces of the puzzle to each individual, and when we come back together to share, it will likely make sense.

6. Come back together as a group and share what God has revealed to each one.
7. Pray again about what God has revealed. Ask Him to clarify the word if that is needed, or simply thank Him and praise Him for what He has done.

8. Act on what God has revealed to you. Obey.

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