



Christian Marriage Today



HEARING THE VOICE OF GOD

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Welcome to the online Bible study lesson – Hearing the Voice of God. We are excited that you desire to hear and know the voice of your Heavenly Father. For it is His voice that will provide you with the daily guidance you'll need as you walk through the journey of marriage. We pray you will be blessed as you apply yourself to learning how to hear the voice of God more clearly.

Memory Verse: *"He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God. John 8:47"*

Hearing from God is not as mystical as it may sound. Rather, it is a privilege that all children of God have. As the scripture above states, if you belong to God, you will hear what He says. However, before you can understand how to hear the voice of God, we think it is essential for you to understand how God **does not** speak.

God does not speak contrary to His word.

In other words, God is not going to speak something to you that goes against what He has already spoken in times past. For example, the Ten Commandments say that we should not murder. Well, God is never going to speak to you or anyone else and tell them to murder someone. He is never going

to tell you to withhold forgiveness because He already said in His word that you must forgive others.

Numbers 23:19 puts it this way, “God is not a man that He should lie, or the son of man that He should repent...” All that means is that God means what He says. He’s not going to lie, revise, or recant words that He has spoken.

Use this as a guide. When you think God is speaking to you, or if someone else tells you that God spoke to him or her, if it contradicts His word or His nature, you can safely conclude that it’s not God speaking.

HOW DOES GOD SPEAK?

God spoke to man in an audible voice in the Old Testament beginning with Adam. Accounts of God speaking to man continued with Noah, Moses, and beyond. In the New Testament, God spoke through Jesus, visions, and dreams. Today, God continues to speak in a variety of ways.

How does God speak? First you should know that God is not limited in how he speaks, God is sovereign. Sovereign simply means that God can do whatever He wants to do. So, be careful not to confine Him to a box.

These are some of the ways in which God speaks to you. For the purposes of this lesson, our focus will be only on #9:

1. **Circumstances** – God is always at work around you and uses events and situations in your life to reveal His purpose and plan to you. When you find yourself in a challenging situation, ask God to help you see it from His perspective. *See 2 Kings 6:15-17*
2. **Angels** – An immortal Heavenly being seen in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament. Angels were used as messengers from God. Many Christians today have also seen angles. *See Zechariah 4:4, Genesis, 16:9, Matthew 28:5, Luke 1:11, Act 8:26,*
3. **Visions** – These are images, scenes, or events supernaturally seen that convey a message regarding present or future events. Visions occur when a person is fully awake. *See Genesis 15:1, Acts 9:12, Acts 10:10-17, Acts 16:9, Joel 2:28*

4. **Dreams** – These are images, scenes, or events seen while we are sleeping that give insight to present or future events. (**NOTE:** Not all dreams are God inspired.) *See Genesis 42:9, Joel 2:28, Matthew 2:12*
5. **Prophets** – Those chosen to speak the thoughts of God to people on behalf of God. The office of Prophet was active in the Old Testament, New Testament, and is active today according to *Ephesians 4:11*.
6. **Miraculous Signs** – Things that happen that only God could have done. Miracles are seen all throughout the Old and New Testament, and are still seen today.
7. **The Word of God** – The Bible is the inspired Word of God. God’s road map and directions for our lives. Anytime we need to know God’s heart on a matter, we can go to the Bible to hear a word from Him. *See 2 Timothy 3:16*
8. **Audible Voice** – In the Old Testament it was common for God to speak in an audible voice. Today some believers have also experienced God speaking to them in this manner. *See Genesis 8:15, Exodus 6:2, Matthew 3:17*
9. **The Holy Spirit** – Jesus promised to send us the Holy Spirit before He was crucified. The Holy Spirit comforts, leads, guides, and reminds us. If you are born again, you were given the Holy Spirit when you accepted Christ. *See John 14:26*
10. **Other People** – Sometimes God will use ordinary people to speak a word into our lives or to confirm something He has already spoken to us.

ASSIGNMENT #1

- Memorize the memory verse and write it on the line below:



- Name five ways in which God speaks:
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

4. _____
5. _____

- What is one way to determine when God is **not** speaking?
- Why is it important for you to hear God's voice?
- When was the Holy Spirit made available to believers?
- **(T or F)** God only spoke in Bible times; God no longer speaks to Christians.

If you had difficulty completing the above task, reread the information and scriptures until you feel confident enough to move on.

HEARING GOD THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” (John 14:26)

The Holy Spirit communicates the heart of God to us. It is through the working of the Holy Spirit that we are being transformed daily and given the mind of Christ.

Today when someone says, “God spoke to me”, they are more than likely referring to impressions, or flowing thoughts given by the Holy Spirit.

As we said previously, if you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then you were given the Holy Spirit the moment you believed. If you have never prayed and asked Jesus into your heart, but have just assumed that you are saved because you go to church, you are not. The Bible says that we must confess with our mouths and believe in our hearts, so let's pause right here and give anyone who has not already accepted Christ the opportunity to do so. Otherwise, trying to hear from God is pointless.

Pray this prayer to receive salvation:

“Dear God, I come to you today acknowledging that I am a sinner and asking for your forgiveness. I acknowledge and believe that Jesus is your son. He was born sinless, was crucified for my sins, rose on the third day, and is now sitting at your right hand. Today Jesus I ask you to come into my heart and to be my savior. Thank you for forgiving me. Thank you for saving me. Thank you for giving me your Holy Spirit to lead me into all truth. Thank you for saving me, in Jesus name, Amen.

If you just accepted Christ as your savior, we say congratulations and welcome to the Body of Christ! All of Heaven is rejoicing, and we rejoice as well.

Now let's continue with our studies. We said earlier that the Holy Spirit uses impressions, and flowing thoughts to convey the heart of the Father to us. But what do we mean by impressions, and flowing thoughts?

What are Impressions? Have you ever felt a tug, or a press in your spirit to do or not to do something but could not explain why you felt the way you did? Maybe you had planned to take a flight, but for no explainable reason felt that the time you had planned to go was not a good time. Or maybe you were driving home from work and for no reason felt you should take a different route home.

If you read the story on our website of how Wanda and I met, she mentions that she felt an urgency in her spirit to move to Georgia, but she had no logical explanation as to why she felt that way. Well, the Holy Spirit was leading her. Likewise, when you feel like you're being pulled in your spirit in a particular direction, or being steered away from a particular direction, that is the Holy Spirit leading and guiding you. Don't ignore it or chalk it up to you being “weird”. Instead follow the leading of the Spirit.

The Bible says that we are to be led by the Spirit. Romans 8:14 says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. The Bible also tells us that the Holy Spirit led Jesus himself.

In Luke 4:1 it reads, “ Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Now, the Holy Spirit did not take Jesus by the hand and lead Him into the wilderness, it was more than likely a pull or tug felt in His spirit.

Do you have a clear understanding of what we mean by impressions? This is a sensation of being pulled or pressed in your spirit to do something, or not to do something. Impressions from the Holy Spirit are not based on logic or reason. In

fact, when one looks at them with a natural eye, they normally make absolutely no sense and have no logical explanation.

The reason it seldom makes sense is because you only have a portion of the facts; this is because you are mortal, you cannot see the future. But the Holy Spirit operates outside of the physical realm and therefore He can see everything you can't. So if you feel like you're being led by the Spirit to do, not do, or even say something that makes no sense to you, just be obedient and do it. Although His job is to lead you; He will not force you to follow.

What are flowing thoughts? The Holy Spirit also speaks to us through our thoughts. Flowing thoughts are thoughts that literally just pop into your head from what seems to be out of nowhere. Maybe you're cooking dinner and all of a sudden the name of a friend pops into your head. You haven't seen or spoken to this person in years. It's likely the Holy Spirit wants you to intercede for that person in prayer. Or perhaps you were praying and a phrase, or scripture came to your mind. These are called flowing thoughts.

Flowing thoughts have the following characteristics:

- They are illuminating
- They are spontaneous
- They are gentle
- They are sometimes beyond anything you could have thought of on your own.
- They elicit a response of excitement, or astonishment.

ASSIGNMENT #2

- According to John 14:26 what are two things the Holy Spirit does for us?
- _____, _____
- Fill In the blank. For as many as are led by the _____ of _____, they are the _____ of _____. Romans 8:14
- In your own words, what are impressions?
- _____

- _____
- What are flowing thoughts?
- _____
- What are three characteristics of flowing thoughts?
- _____, _____, _____
- When you feel the Holy Spirit is leading you to do, or say something you should _____.

HEARING AND RECOGNIZING GOD'S VOICE

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me...” John 10:27

Have you ever had a clogged drain in your kitchen or bathroom? The clog may have resulted from any number of things. But when the drain was clogged, water was not allowed to flow freely through the pipe. Well, think of hearing God's voice in the same manner. Imagine for a moment that your spirit is the pipe, and God's voice is the water. If your spirit is clogged, God's voice will be prevented from flowing freely, and you will not hear Him.

What is it that clogs your spirit and prevents you from hearing God's voice? Focusing too much on the cares of this world. Matthew 13:22 compares the worlds' cares to thorns that choke us spiritually and prevent us from being fruitful.

This happens when you invest more time and attention to earthly things rather than spiritual things. You spend more time watching television than you do reading your Bible. You spend more time rationalizing and analyzing than you do trusting in God. Daily you give-in to whatever your flesh wants to do, feel, or think, never bringing yourself under the control of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible says that although we live in this world, we are not of this world. Which is why it is more important to feed our spiritual man than it is to nurture our natural man. Listen to what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:14:

“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned”

In other words, you can only discern the things of God through your spirit. Your natural man will not be able to discern or understand the things of God.

When you unclog your pipes by focusing more on the things of God and walking in His spirit, then and only then will the Holy Spirit be able to flow freely. Then and only then will you be able to hear the voice of God.

How will you recognize His voice when you do hear it? Recognition comes with relationship. Think of a new born baby who gradually begins to recognize the voice of her mother. That recognition would not be possible if there were no relationship between the mother and the child. In other words, the child is only able to distinguish the mother's voice because the child has been spending time in the presence of her mother.

Well, the same is true for you as a child of God. The only way you will recognize the voice of your Heavenly Father is by spending time in His presence and becoming familiar with Him.

He is omniscient so He knows your voice, but you on the other hand will not know His voice if you neglect to spend intimate time with Him. James 4:8 says, "Draw close to God and He will draw close to you."

What are some ways that you can draw closer to God and know him intimately?

- Prayer
- Meditating on God
- Worship
- Praise
- Reading and Reflecting on His Word

That's right, if you purpose to spend more time developing your relationship with Christ, you will get to know him deeply. He will speak to you and you will recognize His voice when He speaks.

ASSIGNMENT #3

- Examine yourself and list those things that you feel are clogging your spiritual pipes and keeping you from hearing God's voice:
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- What can you personally do to eliminate or diminish the amount of time you spend doing those things you listed above?

- List the five things we recommended for drawing closer to God and getting to know Him intimately:
 - _____, _____, _____,
_____, _____
- From the list above list two of those five activities that you can do on a daily basis. Then, write the time you can commit to doing them:
 - _____ = _____ AM / PM
 - _____ = _____ AM / PM
- Over the next several weeks begin to practice listening for the voice of God. First, choose a quiet location in your home where you will not be disturbed. Take a note pad with you. Get comfortable and then perhaps begin setting the atmosphere by singing a song of worship. Next, pray this:
 - "Father, first I want to confess my sin and ask you to cleanse my heart. (You should confess any sin that comes to your mind). Father, I desire to know your will, hear your voice, and follow your direction. Therefore, I pray

and ask that you will open my spiritual ears so that I may hear from you, and follow you. In Jesus name, Amen.”

- Now, sit quietly and listen.
- Use your note pad or the lines below to write any thoughts that pop into you mind. As you continue doing what you have learned in this study, hearing God’s voice will become easier.
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Reminders about flowing thoughts:

- They are illuminating
- They are spontaneous
- They are gentle
- They are sometimes beyond anything you could have thought of on your own.
- They elicit a response of excitement, or astonishment.
- They do not contradict the character of God or the Word of God
- They are not negative
- They are not analytical
- They are loving and helpful