

# HEARING GOD'S VOICE

Jesus came so that we could have a relationship with Him; not just in Heaven, but here and now. And you can't have a relationship without conversations. Imagine being in a relationship with absolutely no talking, ever. That would be frustrating, not to mention a very short relationship. But how often do we put God in this box? It's easy for us to think in our relationship with Jesus that we should talk to Him, but do we consider that maybe He really wants to talk to us, too?

While this extraordinary reality is true, like most things in our Christian walk, learning to hear God's voice more clearly takes practice. If you feel like you don't know how to hear God's voice right now, that's ok! The most important thing to remember is that although you might not know how, hearing God's voice is something you were created for. In John 10:27 Jesus said, "my sheep hear my voice, and I know them." God, the Good Shepherd, created each of us with the capacity to communicate with him. Below, you'll find a few helpful things to consider as you seek to grow in hearing God's voice more clearly:

## **FOCUS YOUR HEART AND MIND ON JESUS**

- When someone speaks to us, we turn to look and listen. It is the same with God. God is frequently speaking, but oftentimes our busy and noisy inner lives hinder us from hearing Him. When we come to Him, we turn our hearts, thoughts, and attention to Him and what He is saying.

## **SURRENDER YOUR MIND, WILL, AND EMOTIONS**

- As we do this, we come with open hands to receive and ears to hear.

## **BELIEVE AND EXPECT HIM TO SPEAK**

- Radio waves are constantly playing even though we cannot see them. In order to hear, we must tune in. In like manner, God is constantly speaking, and we must tune in by faith to hear His voice.

## **IN WHAT WAYS DOES GOD SPEAK?**

God is not limited to one form of communication. He is all-powerful; He is omnipresent; He is sovereign. All throughout Scripture, we see God speaking to His people in many different ways, and He is still speaking to us today. These are a few ways He can speak:

### **SCRIPTURE**

- Scripture is the foundation for how we know God and hear His voice. At times, the Spirit will cause a verse to stand out and bring new revelation and insight into a situation (Hebrews 4:12).

### **STILL, SMALL VOICE OR WHISPER**

- Thoughts - We have the mind of Christ and God speaks through our thoughts. For example, as you pray for your neighbors, you suddenly think to pray peace for their children (1 Corinthians 2:16).
- Mental images or pictures - God often speaks into our imagination through mental pictures, just as Jesus did what He saw the Father do. For instance, you are praying for America and you see God lighting a fire in the Midwest in your mind's eye, which leads you to pray that God's presence would fall in the Midwest like a fire (John 5:19, 8:38).
- A sense - God's Spirit is sealed in us, and will speak to our innermost being. For example, throughout the day you have an intuitive sense or feeling that you need to pray for a friend or talk to a certain person (Ephesians 1:13-14).

### **DREAMS**

- Not all dreams are from God, but sometimes we wake up with a clear sense that God was speaking (Acts 16:9).

### **OTHER**

- Be open for God to speak outside the box, such as with an audible voice (Matthew 3:17, Acts 9:4), a vision you see with your eyes (Acts 10:9-11), natural circumstances (Psalm 19:1-2), etc.

## **HOW DO I KNOW IF IT IS GOD SPEAKING, AND NOT JUST ME?**

- Does it line up with Scripture? God will not contradict His Word.
- Does it bear the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)? Is what you are hearing filled with and causing love, joy, peace, patience, etc.?
- What does it produce? Does it produce liberty, or bondage? Does it produce life, or death? Does it draw you closer to God, or push you away from God?

## **COMMIT TO TAKING THE FIRST STEP**

God loves to speak to us, especially when it comes to speaking identity over us. However, know that it is a process and a spiritual muscle for us to develop. Just like we can't go into a weight room and start benching 300lbs but must start somewhere small and work our way up, so must we do with hearing God.

A simple way to start taking the first step is by getting a journal or piece of paper and finding a quiet place to sit for 15-30 minutes. Simply ask Him, "God, what do you think of me?" Write down and share what you hear. Before you leave, ask yourself: how can I personally commit to hearing God this week? Make a commitment and stick to it. You also may want to invite others into the process with you. We don't have to fully rely on ourselves to hear God - we can invite other people into our process to keep us accountable, challenge us, and encourage us.