
Hearing God

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Overview

In order to have a healthy relationship with another person, there has to be dialogue. How do you know a person without spending time in conversation? Does dialog consist of one way conversation where one person does all of the talking and the other does all of the listening? Or does it require each to have a turn talking and a turn listening? When only one has a chance to talk, it is like one person having the mute button turned on during a phone conversation.

God wants a relationship with us

Hebrews 10:19-22 (NIV)

19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 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. (NIV)

James 4:8

Come near to God and he will come near to you

Not only does God want a relationship, he wants a dialog with you. Every relationship requires dialog.

How often do we have a one-way conversation and not let God speak to us?

We don't hear his voice, usually because we don't know how to hear his voice. Today, I want to show you that God does speak to you. He loves you and wants to have a two-way conversation.

Let's look at the book of 1 Samuel to better understand how God reveals his voice.

Scripture

1 Samuel 3:1-21

(1) What are ways in which God speaks to us?

Verse 1

In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions.

In 1 Samuel 3:1, we learn that

God speaks to us through visions and through His Word.

What is a vision?

An experience of seeing someone or something in a dream or trance. Often times, a vision can be a vivid mental image.

Joel 2:28 & Acts 2:17

I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.

It is important to note that the difference between a vision and a dream is that a vision is given when a person is awake while a dream is given when a person is asleep.

1 Samuel 3:4 *Then the LORD called Samuel*

God sometimes speaks with an audible voice.

Acts 9:4

4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

1 Samuel 3:20

And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the Lord

God sometimes speaks through another person

God speaks directly to our hearts and minds

Hebrews 8:10

This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Handout Summary:

1. God speaks to us through visions and through His Word.
2. God sometimes speaks with an audible voice.
3. God sometimes speaks through another person
4. God speaks directly to our hearts and minds

(2) How do we tune in to God's voice?

1 Samuel 3:3

3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the Lord, where the ark of God was.

We need to be in a place of solitude where we can hear God speaking.

Samuel was obviously in a quiet place and alone. He was in a place of where he knew the presence of God would be.

Psalms 46:10

Be still and know that I am God

Jesus often went to a place of solitude to pray to the Father.

Mark 1:35

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Luke 5:16

But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Jesus tells us to pray in solitude:

Matthew 6:6

But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen

And at that still place, the Lord began to speak.

Handout Summary:

- a. Be in a place of Solitude
- b. Be Still and know that I am God

(3) How do we discern God's voice?

1 Samuel 3:4-7

4 Samuel answered, "Here I am." 5 And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down. 6 Again the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." 7 Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. 8 A third time the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

Samuel did not recognize God's voice. He heard the Lord 3 times and did not recognize it.

If you have not heard God's voice, remember Samuel, the great Prophet. He didn't recognize the Lord either.

Samuel had never really heard his voice enough to recognize it. Verse 7 tells us that “The Lord had not yet been revealed to him”.

Hearing the voice of the Lord takes practice.

When you first meet someone, you don't easily recognize his or her voice until you have heard it enough times to recognize it. The same applies with the Lord.

The Apostle Paul heard God's voice, but did not recognize it.

Acts 9:5

5 “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied.

We must rely on mature Christians to help us hear God's voice.

Eli knew this was God. Eli had heard the Lord many times.

1 Samuel 3:8

Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy.

When God speaks, He will confirm through other sources.

God spoke to Eli through a prophet in **1 Samuel 2:27-36**. God is now confirming what he spoke through Samuel.

1 Samuel 3:12-14

12 At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family—from beginning to end. 13 For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons blasphemed God, and he failed to restrain them. 14 Therefore I swore to the house of Eli, ‘The guilt of Eli's house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering.’”

Eli recognizes this was the Lord's confirmation.

1 Samuel 3:17-18

17 “What was it he said to you?” Eli asked. “Do not hide it from me. May God deal with you, be it ever so severely, if you hide from me anything he told you.” 18 So Samuel told

him everything, hiding nothing from him. Then Eli said, "He is the Lord; let him do what is good in his eyes."

God's Word is always fulfilled

The word spoken to Eli and confirmed by Samuel was carried out in 1 Samuel 4:12-22

Isaiah 40:8

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.

Matthew 24:35

35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

God's never contradicts Himself. What you hear must line up with Scripture.

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

Handout Summary:

- 1. Hearing God's Voice take practice**
- 2. We must rely on mature Christians to help us hear God's voice.**
- 3. When God speaks, He will confirm through other sources.**
- 4. God's Word is always fulfilled**
- 5. God's never contradicts Himself. What you hear must line up with Scripture.**

(4) Getting to Know The Lord

In John 10:27, Jesus says:

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

It is important to learn to recognize when God is speaking. We must become close to the Lord.

James 4:8

Come near to God and he will come near to you

After Eli's first encounter with God's voice, he spent time getting to know the Lord.

He got to the point where he became confident in knowing God's voice.

We must always be on guard when hearing God's voice.

There is another voice that often speaks to us and tries to convince us that it is God's voice speaking.

The Apostle John tells us in 1 John 4:1

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21

19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not treat prophecies with contempt 21 but test them all; hold on to what is good

We must always test the voice we hear.

How do we test the spirits? 1 John 4:2-3

This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God.

2 Corinthians 11

Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light

Sometimes demons speak through others with what appears to be prophetic words.

Acts 16:16-18

6 One day as we were going down to the place of prayer, we met a demon-possessed slave girl. She was a fortune-teller who earned a lot of money for her masters. 17 She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, and they have come to tell you how to be saved." 18 This went on day after day until Paul got so exasperated that he turned and said to the demon within her, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And instantly it left her.

Handout Summary

- a) We must become close to the Lord.
- b) We must always test the voice we hear.
- c) Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light

Conclusion

The Lord speaks to us today. It is up to us to learn to hear His small still voice (1 Kings 19:12). We must draw into Him, in a solitude place, and listen. When we do all the speaking, we cannot hear. We must get help from others in hearing the Lord until we can completely recognize how He speaks to us. When God does speak, he speaks through His Word, through an audible voice, through dreams and visions, and through others. His Word will be confirmed and it will not return void. We must always test what we hear against Scripture and remember that any Spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ is Lord is not from God. Learn to be still and hear the Lord. The Holy Spirit will reveal Him to you when you draw in to God.