

Hearing the Voice of God

In John 10, God teaches through emphasized repetition! Four times in John 10, He states in some way “My sheep hear My voice.”

John 10:27 – *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”*

Introduction: I believe God speaks to everyone, but that does not mean everyone will discern when or how God is trying to communicate with them.

In the Bible, we find God speaking to people in many different ways. Sometimes He speaks in ways that seem very odd to us and quite dramatic.

In the natural, we use multiple ways of communicating ourselves. Besides audibly, we can communicate through braille, sign language, body language, text messaging, video conferencing, and the list goes on. If we have multiple ways of communication, why is it so odd to think that God can talk to His people in different ways?

The most effective way to hear God is “Spirit to spirit.”

The Inner Man, Our Human Spirit

Spirit to spirit Communication

- 1) His Spirit communicates with our human spirit. (Romans 8:16 – *“The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”*)
- 2) We are able to pray with our minds and with our spirit. (1 Corinthians 14:15 – *“What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also.”*)
- 3) We have an abiding anointing that discerns truth. (1 John 2:27 – *“But the anointing that you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as His anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in Him.”*)

Six Common Ways to Hear God’s Voice

- 1) The Bible

The Bible is the first place to go to hear God and the first place we go to discern what God might be saying to us personally.

If we are going to understand what God is saying by His Spirit, we must understand what God has already said in His word.

- a) The Power of God’s Word

- i) The Apostle Paul wrote 2 letters to his son in the faith, Timothy. He wanted to make sure he understood that the Bible is inspired; Paul says it is “God-breathed.”

2 Timothy 3:16, 17 – “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

- ii) The Apostle Peter wrote: *“knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (1 Peter 1:20, 21).*

b) Two Ways God speaks to us personally through the Bible

- i) An “inspired word” during a study
- ii) A “reminded word” at a specific time

(1) Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit will be the great reminder of His voice.

(2) John 14:25, 26 – *“These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. **26** But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”*

2) Impressions

- a) An impression is an internal sense in which you feel, think, or know something regarding a person or a situation.

b) Biblical Example: Paul’s Voyage by Sea to Rome (Acts 27).

*Acts 27:9-11 – “Since much time had passed, and the voyage was now dangerous because even the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, **10** saying, ‘Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives.’ **11** But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul said.”*

- c) These impressions often just feel like a strong gut feeling. The more we act on them, the more we learn to discern what is God and what are just our own feelings.

3) Our Thoughts

- a) Often times, God sends a thought into our minds that triggers us into action.

- i) Typically I’ll be spending some time in prayer and what seems like a random thought will pop into my mind.

“Mary is having a hard time...”

- ii) Sometimes it seems like this is my own thought, but when I act on it, often I find that it was indeed the Holy Spirit dropping that thought in my mind.

- b) The Bible tells us we can discern the voice of the Spirit because we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16).
 - i) God speaks into our thoughts a lot more than we realize.
 - ii) Note: Not every thought is a direct word from God but we should ask God to speak into our thoughts more and more, especially when we are praying for someone.
- c) Caution: Sometimes “Satan” and/or your “self” will attempt to speak into our thoughts.
 - i) Satan
 - (1) 2 Corinthians 10:4, 5 – *“For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ...”*
 - (2) Ephesians 6:16 – *“In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one.”*
 - ii) Self
 - (1) Your flesh (or outer man) always seems to think contrary to your inner man and the Spirit of God.
 - (2) Galatians 5:17 – *“For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.”*

4) Visions

- a) We can define a vision as a “spiritual sight given by the Holy Spirit that is meant to reveal God’s heart about something, or someone, including oneself.”
- b) Biblical Visions
 - i) Acts 2:17 – *“And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.”*
 - ii) Peter’s Vision – Acts 10:9-16

v.9 “The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth (noon) hour to pray. **10** And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance **11** and saw the Heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. **12** In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. **13** And there came a voice to him: ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ **14** But Peter said, ‘By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.’ **15** And the voice came to him again a second time, ‘What God has made clean, do not call common.’ **16** This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to Heaven.”

The Four Horsemen Vision

Four Opposing Spirits

- (1) The Spirit of Disease
- (2) The Spirit of Poverty
- (3) The Spirit of Unbelief
- (4) The Spirit of Mockery

Ephesians 6:12 – *“Our struggle is not against flesh and blood but...”*

- According to Scripture, many sicknesses and diseases are directly attributed to the activity of demons (Acts 10:38 – *“... healing all those who were oppressed by the Devil”*).
- In the bible, the only reason for failure ever noted is unbelief. Unbelief even prevented Jesus from doing many miracles in His hometown. (Matthew 13:58 – *“He did not do many miracles because of their unbelief.”*)
- A mocking spirit seems to be operating more and more these days and it empowers the spirit of unbelief.

God was showing me how to war in prayer for our congregation!

5) Dreams

- a) Dreams are very similar to visions except they come to you while you are sleeping and not awake.
- b) Think about this. The average person will spend one third of their lifetime sleeping. It seems to me that often God wants to use that time to impart things into our spirits.

Three Main Purposes for Dreams

i) Directional Dreams

- (1) Shortly after Jesus was born, God gave a directional dream to Joseph:

Matthew 2:13 – “... an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the Child, to destroy Him.”

ii) Correctional Dreams

- (1) If other ways of communicating with us is not working sometimes, God will send a dream to us to bring correction.
- (2) Job 33:14-18 – *“For God speaks in one way, and in two, though man does not perceive it. **15** In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on men,*

while they slumber on their beds, 16 then He opens the ears of men and terrifies them with warnings, 17 that He may turn man aside from his deed...”

iii) Prophetic Dreams

Sometimes God gives us prophetic dreams which He intends for us to share with another person for their edification.

Caution: Dreams and visions are not mediums of God’s voice a person usually pursues. They just happen.

A great deal of wisdom must be used in deciphering the message that God wishes to communicate. However, I believe that if God has given you the vision or dream, He will give you a clear understanding of it.

So, when a dream is not clear and needs interpretation, please know that only God can give the interpretation.

And, don’t get caught up in every little specific detail of a dream.

6) Other People

a) As we grow into accountability and submission to one another, we find that God will use trusted voices of people to speak His counsel and will to us.

i) When we refuse to allow people to speak into our lives, it is usually a sign that we are not allowing God to speak to us in any way.

ii) Religious pride can really be a hindrance to hearing God’s voice. When we think we already have everything figured out, we find ourselves operating in the same spirit of our enemy, Lucifer.

b) Three Ways God uses Others to Speak to Us

i) Teaching

When the teaching gift is operating through a person who is truly connected to God, it can be so powerful that it is life changing.

ii) Counseling

There is wisdom in seeking the godly counsel of mature and skilled counselors.

Proverbs 24:6 – “For by wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory.”

iii) Personal Prophecies

Prophecy is both a gift and a function of the New Testament church.

Acts 2:17,18 – *“And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy... 18 even on My male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.”*

New Testament prophecy is given to strengthen, encourage, and comfort God’s church as we minister to one another.

1 Corinthians 14:3 NIV – *“But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort.”*

* *Resource: “Hearing God”, Benjamin Dixon*