

5 Timely Tips for Hearing God's Voice—The 1 Samuel 3:10 Way

We communicate with the people we care about. There's no relationship without communication. It's the same with you and God. It hurts when it feels as though God is silent. God's voice doesn't usually come to us in the same way human voices do. So how can you listen for God's voice while trying to survive in our very natural world?

God's friends we read about in the Bible frequently struggled to listen for God's voice. Just like you and me, when God seemed silent, they asked, sometimes screamed, *Why?* David prayed, "Why are you so far from delivering me, and from my roaring words of distress? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not answer; and at night, but I have no rest" (Ps. 22:1-2). "To you, O Lord, will I cry; my Rock, do not be silent to me; lest if You were silent to me, then I would become like those who go down to the pit" (Ps. 28:1).

As Aslan in the Chronicles of Narnia, God can and does show up and speak anywhere and anytime He chooses. Sometimes it's with a roar, sometimes it's with words that only you and no one else can hear and sometimes it's with a silent presence you only become fully aware of later.

But there are clearly things you and I can do that help as we listen for God's voice.

- **Believe God wants to speak to you.**

God is a communicator. God, who at various times and in diverse ways spoke long ago to the fathers through the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom

He has appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the world (Heb. 1:1-2). And not only does He communicate with His people in general; He communicates with you personally. "For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. 57:15).

Choosing to believe that God wants to communicate with you will make a huge difference in your ability to hear Him. If you struggle with that, try borrowing a little of the faith that thousands, millions, of people over thousands of years have affirmed, that God does communicate with us. And you can hear Him.

- **Choose to actively listen.**

Think of your closest personal relationships. It's likely there are many times when your spouse, child, friend has tried to tell you something and you didn't hear. You were not listening. Even if your ears hear the words they say or your eyes see the behaviors, unless your mind and heart are open to listening you will not receive the message they are trying to send. When I talk to couples who are struggling to communicate one of the most important skills I help them with is listening to understand.

It's the same with God. If you try to listen for God's voice while trying to form a rebuttal in your mind, asking Him to prove Himself before you will follow, or trying to get Him to do what you want, you will never understand. God is patient, and is well able to work with you through your doubt. But you will only truly hear Him when you listen with an open heart, seeking to understand.

Be like Samuel: "The Lord came and stood, and He called as at other times, 'Samuel, Samuel.' Then Samuel said, 'Speak, for

Your servant listens'" (! Sam. 3:10).

- **Determine to follow whatever He says.**

Some people refuse to follow through when they have heard God tell them something, and then wonder why they cannot hear His voice again. Beware of only being willing to hear God say what you want Him to say. "Therefore, the Lord said: Because this people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is tradition by the precept of men" (Isa. 29:13).

If it's been a while since you heard God's voice, be sure you are doing the last thing you heard Him say. Just keep on doing the last thing He told you until He tells you something else. Your obedience in little things will prepare you to trust Him, hear His voice, and be obedient in bigger things.

- **Get quiet often.**

God does not often add His voice to a cacophony of sound—in the world, in the church, or in your own mind. "And after the fire came a gentle whisper" (1 Kings 19:12, NIV). In the King James version, "a still small voice." You hear Him when your heart and mind become still, when the other voices shouting their messages become silent. "Be still, and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10).

How do you do that? Choose to get quiet. Yes, God can speak anywhere, but to hear Him best, get in a location where the messages around you are still—your own closet, a quiet place in nature, a chapel. If your heart is overflowing with emotions let them flow out in God's presence. Yell, cry, beg or whatever you need to do. Dump it all. And then don't run away. Stay there, and be still. Just be. Let your own voice and the messages in your head be silent. And keep coming back

over and over again. I guarantee that if you do this repeatedly, God will speak to you.

- **Choose to move closer.**

In human relationships, you have the choice to build the wall between you and another person higher and thicker, or to work actively to dismantle it brick by brick. It's the same with God. We do not make the first move; God does that. But you still have the primary choice in the matter. You can choose to move closer. You may not see how God has made the first move until you make that choice.

These five steps are part of choosing to move closer. And when you do sense any small part of God's voice, treasure it. Value it. Believe it. Follow it. That will help you move closer still and hear His voice even more clearly next time.

God wants to communicate with you. It's like the old cliché, "Can you hear me now?" As you listen, He will speak.

Your Turn: How well are you listening for God's voice? Can you see any ways in which you can listen better? Leave a comment below. {eoa}

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