

How to Hear God's Voice When Life Falls Apart

Note: C.S. Lewis famously said, "Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain."

Not always.

It was cancer or lymphoma, that's what the doctor said. I was told in no uncertain terms that there was no third option.

Cancer.

A cancer diagnosis is awful enough, but I'd lost my sister to this ravaging disease just six weeks before and my mom six years before that.

As you can imagine, my mind raced and swirled.

Had the heat-seeking missile of death now locked in on me? What had I done to deserve this? How would we tell the kids?

God, are you mad at me? Are you kidding, after all I've done for you?

The more I screamed at Him, the louder the silence that greeted me in return.

I needed answers. I needed to hear Him, to feel his presence and know that he is good, even if life wasn't. Surely, he would speak. But how exactly do we hear the voice of God?

It's hard enough to get a sense of what he's saying when life is all rainbows and butterflies, but when life stinks as badly as a week-old tuna sandwich it seems harder than ever. So I prayed and listened, but all I got was silence.

Maybe you're praying for an answer to a really big question,

too. A yes or no, a go or stay, a here or there question burns through you. Or perhaps, like me, what you need to hear more than anything else is that you're loved and not invisible. It's a hard place to be, isn't it?

Our God is a relational God and we know his plans are better than ours, so we want to follow his will. And yet it's hard when we can't hear what that will is. We desperately want to do the right thing and know his truth, but how on earth are we meant to if we can't hear what he's saying?

We're left directionless, frustrated, and, if you're anything like me, a little angry and resentful.

Hello God, I'm trying to do my best here, but life's fallen apart. The least you could do is speak to me.

Eventually, I did hear him.

In the mindless daydreaming of my morning-clearing the breakfast things and walking the dog—my brain was free to hear. It was less of a revelation and more of a realization. He was there, I was loved and he wasn't leaving me.

As J.I. Packer says, "God ... guides our minds as we think things out in his presence."

I'm a left-brained science major who overthinks and analyzes anything and everything, but I've been learning to turn off my logical, ever-churning left brain to free up my more creative, intuitive right brain because it's there I hear God's still small voice. I've learned we must use both sides of our brain to tune into the voice of God and I've discovered this four-step plan that really helps.

A 4-Step Plan to Hearing God's Voice

By the way, if you doubt you can hear God's voice, I want to remind you that he is the Shepherd, he calls you by name, and you, as one of his sheep, *can* hear his voice (John 10). We so

often miss his voice with all the other noise around us but it is there; we just need to learn how to tune into it.

Hearing his voice requires us to use both sides of our brain: the logical, analytical and rational left side *and* the intangible, creative right side.

1. **Ask.** Using our left (logical) side of our brain, we ask God to speak to us, confident he will. There's no need for fancy prayers—a simple “Please God, speak to me” is just fine. Let's not be afraid to ask. We are loved, forgiven and enough. God wants to talk to us.
2. **Listen.** Now we must turn our left brain off and use our right, more intuitive brain to listen. God speaks through his Holy Spirit to the eyes of our hearts (Eph. 1:18), which we access through our right brains. The key to listening with our right brain is to engage in activities that help us switch off our left brain and switch on our right brain. Worship, journaling, prayer and reciting Scripture—all these help us tune in to what he might be saying.
3. **Acknowledge.** Still using our right brains and shutting out all our attempts to evaluate what we think we may be hearing, we must acknowledge the thought, Scripture or picture that's popped into our head and write it down. God doesn't always speak so clearly that there is no room for doubt, so we must step out in faith and go with it.
4. **Test.** Now we get to turn our left brains back on and test what we think we might have heard. Does it sound biblical, like something God would say, and are other believers saying similar things to you?

I've found learning to hear God's voice is one of the most fulfilling yet tricky parts of my faith, and yet it's one of the most needed when life falls apart. We wish we could know

for sure what he is saying, and yet, although God doesn't always speak with such certainty that there is no room for doubt or faith, we can learn to tune out the world and tune in to our Father's voice.{eoa}

Niki Hardy is a pastor's wife, speaker, and teller of really bad jokes who believes life doesn't have to be pain-free to be full. Preorder her book *Breathe Again: How to Live Well When Life Falls Apart* and get her free 10-Day Audio Devotion as well as the first chapter sent to your inbox, along with other preorder gifts. You can connect with Niki at [and on Instagram @](#).

For the original article, visit [.](#)