

We Don't Need to Hear Voices from God—Loud or Still

This may sound shocking for some people, but it is literally true.

I think that there is too much carelessness in the language that many people use to describe the guidance that we get from God. When I started going to Pentecostal churches, people freely said things like “God spoke to me or told me such and such”. I wondered if I was missing something because I wasn't hearing audible voices. When I would inquire further, they would admit that it was not necessarily an audible voice, but a prompting of the Spirit as they would call it, or something like that. I played around with this concept for a while until I decided that it didn't work for me. I would start stressing out as to whether a thought that came to me was from God or not; and if I didn't obey it, was I disobeying God. I didn't believe that God would put me through this stress considering that I was supposed to be anxious for nothing (Philippians 4:6). I always took this verse literally when I learned of it. The stress seemed counterproductive to the peace that passes all understanding. I stopped pursuing any notion of listening for a still small voice because I wouldn't even know what to listen for. I probably would never be able to come to a conclusion as to the source of it. In the occult, people listen for still small voices from their spirit guides. I wonder if the whole idea originates from the dark side. I figured that the Lord had better things for me to do than to go this route. I noticed that in the Bible, the guidance of the Lord also comes in other ways that seemed to make more sense.

A life of faith appears to be contrary to the expectation of only hearing voices for guidance. Trusting in God is the best

way to ensure a good outcome for ourselves because when do this, we allow God to control the outcome; and then “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28). When we worry about the uncertainties of life, we hinder God’s participation in them. When we are at rest in the Lord and leave uncertainty in His hands, He controls the outcome for our good. He does a much better job than we can.

Also, we need Christ’s own wisdom and power imparted to us by our trust in Him in order for us to handle the uncertainty in our lives; therefore, we need to stay connected to Him regardless of what the situation looks like. This is the best that we can do for ourselves, considering that we humans are not privy to all of the forces, spiritual or otherwise, that affect us. God has the resources and knowledge for directing them towards our benefit—we don’t. We need to keep Him on our side by living in His secret place so that we can remain in His bubble of protection and guidance. We do this by being humble towards Christ because He alone is the Word incarnate who has righteousness by His faith in the Father to receive all the graces for Himself, and then He can impart them to us through His Spirit. We can have grace only insofar as we have Christ’s Spirit within us so that He can share it with us. This is how Christ is the only mediator between the Father and us. Christ does not share from a distance. He shares from within us when He inhabits us.

The people in the Bible that heard voices didn’t seem to have trouble figuring out whether they had heard anything. When God began speaking to Samuel the prophet in 1Samuel 3:1-10, He unquestionably spoke in an audible voice because at first Samuel thought that Eli the priest was calling him. After the third time, Eli figured out that God was talking directly to Samuel, and he told Samuel to respond to God after that. There are many other examples in the Bible of people hearing God’s voice or the voice of an angel.

I believe that when we are in Christ and Christ is in us, we automatically do what God wants us to do without having to listen for anything. Philippians 2:13 tells us "For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure". An Old Testament example is in 2Samuel 7:3:"And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee". See also 1Samuel 10:6-7. This doesn't sound like we have to listen for anything, loud or still, in order to do what God wants us to do. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way." (Psalms 37:23).

In the New Testament, we have the mind of Christ when Christ is in us. This gives us a spiritual discernment that is not available otherwise: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1Corinthians 2:14). There is also wisdom from our salvation to help us along: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1Corinthians 1:30). God also brings things to our remembrance: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26), and "But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost" (Mark 13:11).

I do believe that today God audibly speaks to some people, but I have not been one of them. I don't even like to use the figurative language used in some circles that seems to imply that God speaks to them audibly. It feels like spiritual one-upmanship. At times, people may be using this language because they do not have the mind of Christ with its spiritual

discernment. When I pray for guidance in a specific situation, I assume that it will happen below my radar; but I don't want to limit God if He chooses otherwise because there are examples in the New Testament of other ways that God communicates with us.

I can't think of anywhere in the New Testament where it is indisputable that God spoke in an audible voice as He did with Samuel near the ark of God; although it does say in Acts 8:26 that "the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert". The angel Gabriel definitely spoke to Mary about the birth of Jesus. There are many examples of God speaking in visions, trances, and dreams. There is also the manifestation of the Spirit for our benefit in 1Corinthians 12:7-11 which is directed at us from other Christians; but this would generally occur at a gathering of Christians. The constant subtle guidance of the Spirit would be for our day to day life.

Colossians 3:15 tell us to "let the peace of God rule [umpire] in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful". We make better decisions when we are at peace in the Spirit instead of when we are in the flesh with our worry, anger, lust, or unforgiveness. I don't need to "listen" for a voice that is not literally there and that probably won't be there. If I literally hear an audible voice, I will first try to figure out the source, and then respond as I see fit. Only in this case will I use the language of audibly hearing from God.

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