

Why Hearing God's Voice Is an Essential Part of Your Spiritual Weight-Loss Journey

God is always speaking. We just aren't always listening. This is a truth that I've come to realize by trial and error. The problem is we want the handwriting on the wall, the voice from heaven, the dimensions of the ark. However, God does still speak in all those ways.

Even when he saw the handwriting on the wall and knew it was supernatural, King Belshazzar had no idea what the words meant. He had to call for Daniel to interpret them. They weren't pleasant words (see Dan. 5:24-28, 32.) However, that night, what God said came true.

Samuel, Samuel

We want God to speak to us audibly as He did in 1 Samuel 3. In this case, Samuel thought the voice of God was his mentor, the priest, Eli. Each time Samuel heard his name called, he ran to Eli.

Finally, on the third time, the elderly Eli figured out it was God speaking and told Samuel, "'Go and lie down again, and if someone calls again, say, 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went back to bed" (1 Sam. 3:9, NLT).

God told Samuel He was going to carry out his threats against Eli and his sons, who were blaspheming God. When Eli asked Samuel what God said, Samuel told him truthfully. God continued to speak with Samuel and Samuel shared the truth with the people. Because everything Samuel said proved to be true, he became known as a prophet (see 1 Sam. 3:19-20).

Build an Ark

God also spoke to Noah. He gave him the exact dimensions of the ark and what he was to do with the gigantic boat. Noah didn't wonder whether it was God's voice or not. He simply got busy building a boat for an event that might never happen (see Gen. 6-7).

I've heard people excuse away all the stories in the Bible of how God interacts with man and even to say that if He did do that back then, He doesn't do it today. But, I know He does, because He's done it my life.

I used to say, "If God would just give me exact details like He did Noah, I'd do anything He wants." That just isn't true. There have been plenty of times God has told me specific things that I refused to do. Each time I knew it was God, but I just didn't have the faith to act on what He said.

Quarter Lady

There's one time I will never forget. I had pulled into the medium-sized grocery store near where we live to run in for a few items I needed for supper. As I was gathering my purse, a woman knocked on my car window.

She was not shabbily dressed like the man in front of the store with a can panhandling for change. She had on jeans and a T-shirt, which were both clean. She looked like any other woman going into the store. "Do you have a quarter?" she asked.

I couldn't lie. I was sitting in my car, and in the door handle pocket, she could see I had quarters. I said, "Sure," and handed her a quarter. She headed inside the store.

Not a Winner

I rolled up the window, locked the car and went inside to get what I needed. Back at the car, I got in and put the groceries on the passenger seat. As I did, I noticed the quarter lady

sitting in the car next to me.

A bit of anger welled up inside as I saw what she was doing. She was scratching off a lottery ticket. She used my quarter to help buy the rest of a lottery ticket!

As I watched, I saw the moment her face fell. She obviously didn't win. She put her head on the steering wheel. There were tears in her eyes.

Go Talk To Her

That's when God spoke to me softly as if whispering in my ear. "Go talk to her."

"What?" I said out loud.

"Go talk to her."

"What would I say? You used my quarter to buy a lottery ticket? I'll never give you another quarter again?"

"Go. Talk. To. Her."

"Really, God? What would I say? I have to have something to say."

"Just talk to her. You know how to talk to people, right?"

"Not to her, I don't." I said under my breath as I drove away. Turning on to the street, I heard God say, "You could have prayed with her."

My Time to Cry

The words arrested me. I could do that. I could offer to pray with her. I went around and back into the lot, but quarter lady, panhandling man and her car were gone.

Now, I was the one sitting in my car crying. "God, if you give me another chance, I will talk to whoever you want me to." I

stayed for a few minutes hoping she'd return, but she didn't. Instead, I prayed God would bring someone else to talk with her, wherever she was.

My Lesson

I learned a valuable lesson that day. I am sure if I had obeyed God's voice, He would have given me the words to help the woman. I might have even found out the real reason she was looking for extra money and have been able in some way to share the love of God with her.

There was a reason God put her in my path. I will never know until I reach heaven what that was.

This not only taught me to not be afraid to talk to those God points out, but to act on what I know He is saying to me. The words of Jesus really came alive to me that day. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me," (John 10:27, MEV).

God's Voice

As a child of God, I am known by Him, and He talks to me. If I hear His voice and do what He says, then I am one of His. If I don't, I am either not His child or I am rebellious and need to repent. For me, it was the latter. I was truly sorry and repented.

God was leading me to understand that He really does speak to me. It could be in any number of ways, but I know beyond a shadow of a doubt when it is Him. I know His voice, and I also know that whatever He is leading me to do, He will give me the strength to do it.

First, though, I have to move my feet. I have to take the first step.

Clear and Plain

This has been more than true on my journey of losing more than 250 pounds. He spoke to me about living a healthier life through Scripture, friends, pastors, doctors, coaches and His very presence in my life.

He always made what He said clear and plain. Although I didn't always follow, He continued giving me the same consistent message.

Learning to hear, listen to and follow God made all the difference in my transformation. There were times I got it wrong, but God was always there to help me turn my failures into successes by learning from them. {eo}

Teresa Shields Parker is the author of five books and two study guides, including her latest, *Sweet Journey to Transformation: Practical Steps to Lose Weight and Live Healthy*, and her No. 1 best-seller, *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds*. She is also a blogger, spiritual weight loss coach (check out her coaching group, *Overcomers Academy*) and speaker at .

This article originally appeared at .