

Do You Need a Word from God for 2023?

Read Time: 3 Minutes 40 Seconds

At the beginning of every year, I always spend time in fasting and prayer to seek God for direction. In most cases, He gives me a word that helps me navigate the coming season. Sometimes the word has been as simple as, "Keep running your race," a reference to Hebrews 12:1. In other years the Lord has given me detailed instructions.

I believe He wants to give you a word of direction for 2023. But many Christians struggle when it comes to guidance. When they pray, they strain to hear anything. They know God speaks, but either they don't believe He wants to talk to them, or they don't want to obey what He says. Many believers have never known the thrill of hearing God's gentle voice.

Do you want to hear from God more clearly? I believe there are four primary ways He communicates with us:

1. You can hear God's voice by reading the Bible. God went to a lot of trouble to give us His book. Yet today Bibles collect dust because people are too busy to read His personalized love letter to us. I know some Spirit-filled Christians who will travel many miles to a conference to receive a prophetic word, but they will not pull their Bible off a shelf and digest it.

God will never speak anything to us that contradicts His Word. That's why it's so important for you to saturate your mind with Scripture. When you read the Bible with a prayerful heart, God can cause a verse to jump off the page as a direct message to you.

2. You can hear God's voice through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not an eerie presence that

just hovers around us. He lives in every born-again Christian, and He comforts us and actively speaks to us. He does this in many ways: through dreams, visions, warnings, a sense of conviction or—most often—through what we know as the “still, small voice” (1 Kings 19:12b) of the Spirit.

I have had prophetic dreams and visions, but the most common way the Spirit speaks to me is through a deep sense of inward knowing. I will never forget a time in 1985 when God spoke to me while I was driving my car in Florida. A message came to me, not audibly but in my spirit: “You will move to Washington, D.C.” It seemed to come out of the blue, and I knew it did not originate with me. Six years later I was offered a job in the Washington, D.C., area, and I worked there for three years.

3. You can hear God’s voice through people. We are members of His body, the church, and you will hear God better when you are in fellowship with His people. God can speak to you through a pastor’s sermon, a friend’s wise counsel, a mother’s rebuke, a mentor’s phone call or a prophetic word given to you by one of God’s Spirit-filled servants. If you live in isolation, you probably won’t hear much from God.

God uses the gift of prophecy, but you should never chase after prophecies. Never treat the holy gift of prophecy like fortune telling. When God needs to speak to you in an unusual way, He has faithful messengers who will deliver it to you at the exact time you need it. Sometimes I actually ask close friends to pray for me to see if God is showing them anything to share with me from the Holy Spirit. And I have treasured every message they sent, whether it was a verse from the Bible, a word of encouragement, a vision or a sobering admonition.

4. You can hear God’s voice through circumstances. My oldest daughter wanted to attend a college in Tennessee, and we were praying about her decision. Right after we prayed, I got a

call from the president of a college in Georgia. He was inviting me to speak at the school, but in our conversation I learned that this school was willing to offer my daughter a scholarship. She ended up enrolling in that school, meeting her future husband there and working for the school for four years after graduation. God was totally involved in that phone call from Georgia!

God is sovereign. He opens doors that no man can shut. If you have been praying about getting a job at one company, and suddenly you get an offer at a different company, this may be God's sign that He has a better place for you to work. Listen carefully. Tune into His frequency. Be willing to obey Him. He promises to guide your steps if you seek Him.

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