

Hearing God's Voice

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It is not uncommon for people to scoff in disbelief when someone says that God has spoken to him. In this modern age, even Christians seem to believe that the God of Abraham and Moses has suddenly become mute. What a ridiculous notion! As natural parents, we would not expect our children to know what we want them to do if we did not talk to them, so why would our heavenly Father expect such a thing?

The Bible teaches that God has a good plan for all those who will put their faith in Jesus Christ. His plan is perfect, and it will lead all who follow Him to an abundant life.

But I am convinced that most Christians never enjoy the fulfillment of God's perfect plan for their lives because they don't listen to and obey God's leading. Instead, they choose (either willfully or out of ignorance) to go their own way. More people could walk in the perfect will of God if they would learn how to hear His voice.

Hearing from God is vital to enjoying God's eternal plan, but listening to Him is our decision—no one else can make it for us. God won't force us to choose His will. However, He will do everything He can to encourage us to say yes to His direction.

God speaks to us in many ways, including through His Word, nature, people, circumstances, peace, wisdom, supernatural intervention, dreams, visions and the "inner witness." This inner witness is best described as a "knowing" deep inside, or what the Bible calls the "still, small voice." God also will

speak with an audible voice at times.

With so many options, you would think hearing God would be easy. But we have an enemy who definitely does not want us to listen to Him. And the world fills our ears with all kinds of things that drown out the voice of God and push Him far into the background.

Jesus said, "Be careful therefore how you listen. For to him who has [spiritual knowledge] will more be given; and from him who does not have [spiritual knowledge], even what he thinks and guesses and supposes that he has will be taken away" (Luke 8:18, The Amplified Bible).

When He walked on this earth, Jesus always knew the right thing to do because He did only what He saw His Father do. As our Lord, we can trust Him to lead us to the right path every day.

Psalms 48:14 says that God will be our guide even unto death! How wonderful to know that we have a guide to get us from one destination in life to the next.

Normally, when my husband, Dave, and I travel, we hire a guide to show us the best and most important sites to see. But one time we decided to explore by ourselves, so we would be free to do what we wanted on our own schedule.

We quickly discovered that our independent trips were almost a complete waste of time. We spent a large part of the day getting lost and trying to find our way again. We have learned it is wiser to follow an experienced guide than to wander aimlessly on our own.

I believe this example illustrates how many of us live our lives. We want to go our own way—so we can do what we want to do, when we want to do it—but we end up getting lost and wasting our lives. We need the Holy Spirit guiding us through every day. God is committed to guiding us, so it is obviously important to learn how to hear what He is saying.

Learning to hear from God and being led by the Holy Spirit is very exciting. His plan is always the best plan, but we are in danger of missing it if we don't learn how to listen to and obey God's voice.

God wants to lead you step by step to the good things He has in store for you. He cares about the tiniest details of your life. He cares about the desires of your heart and wants to reveal truth to you that will set you free from worry and fear.

Through Christ and the power of His Holy Spirit, God wants to speak to you on a one-on-one basis, every single day. Will you open your ears?

Joyce Meyer is the founder of Life In The Word, a worldwide teaching ministry based in Fenton, Missouri. In addition to hosting international radio and television programs, Joyce has authored 55 books, including best sellers such as *Beauty for Ashes* and *Battlefield of the Mind* (Warner Faith), which have been published in more than 26 languages. Her new book, *How to Hear From God* (Warner Faith, 2003), is available in bookstores everywhere.