

Is God Ever Silent?

I started noticing swarms of Christian books being published on what to do when God is silent. It really started the wheels turning in my head.

Was God truly ever silent? Who wants to serve a God who will not talk to them? Did He really see me down here begging for answers and just turn His head and ignore me? If so, I had to figure out why. If not, then all these books on a muted God had to deeply sadden Him. I had to know.

Five Days

More than 5 percent of the world's population is deaf or has disabling hearing loss—an estimated 360 million people. But ask any Christian, and 100 percent of us will admit to experiencing disabling spiritual deafness, a much more startling figure. Undoubtedly, you have experienced seasons when the heavens were bronze and God seemed silent. These seasons are dangerous to the heart because they can cause it to wander and waver.

That is exactly where I was headed. Proverbs 13:12 (MEV) says it best: “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.” Finally, while praying one day, I heard God's voice! But He spoke the most random phrase that had nothing to do with the answers I needed. I heard, “Five days.”

All at once—and I do mean all at once—this plan just laid itself out in front of me, accompanying the random phrase. I felt God saying that I was somehow going to read the Bible in five days, and that I was going to do it with one question in mind: “Is God ever silent?” I would do it not to study any doctrinal or historical context along the way, but just to see if God ever took an uncommunicative posture with mankind. It was as though He was going to settle this in my mind once and

for all by taking me through the totality of Scripture to see how He interacted with every now-famous Bible character. When the answers you need are big, no self-help book will do. You have to go to the Author of authors.

But aside from wondering how on earth a mom of then-five could steal away for that long, and aside from wondering how on earth a person could read the Bible in five days, there was the other question of where I could go to do this. For free. My father had just built a tiny prayer cabin in the woods on his 250-acre farm, and he agreed that I could be his first guest.

Before leaving for the farm, I did an experiment and timed myself by reading one average-sized Bible chapter to see if this goal was even feasible, because it sure seemed impossible to me. It took a little over two minutes for one chapter. Of course, some chapters are longer, but others are shorter, like Psalm 117, which is 2 verses long and contains fewer than 30 words. I then multiplied that 2 1/4 minutes by 1,189—the number of chapters within the 66 Bible books. The time came out to only 44 3/4 hours. That meant only a 9-hour reading day over 5 days, which was really no different from working a 40-hour workweek! I was thrilled at this attainable goal. Here was how it panned out in the end:

- Day 1: Read Genesis through Numbers, 153 chapters @ approximately 2 1/4 minutes each = 5 3/4 hours.
- Day 2: Read Deuteronomy through Esther, 283 chapters @ approximately 2 1/4 minutes each = 10 1/2 hours.
- Day 3: Read Job through Ezekiel, 414 chapters @ approximately 2 1/4 minutes each = 15 1/2 hours.
- Day 4: Read Daniel through Acts, 196 chapters @ approximately 2 1/4 minutes each = 7 1/2 hours.
- Day 5: Read Romans through Revelation, 143 chapters @ approximately 2 1/4 minutes each = 5 1/2 hours
- Total: 66 books (1,189 chapters) in 44 3/4 hours within 5 days.

I did not “chew” on each verse, but read continuously, stopping only to write in a journal about any passages related to God’s mouth or man’s ears. God had given me this insatiable desire to read through the Bible with one question in mind: “Is God ever silent?”

The books dealing with this topic were selling like hotcakes, and it seemed to me that they were putting words in God’s mouth out of desperation in a hearing drought. I wondered if God was frustrated at the assumption that He would zip His lip and withhold direction from us. I found that contradictory to His benevolent nature.

My hopeful hunch was that these authors were using such titles as a tease, and then leading their readers through steps on rest and perhaps repentance that would unclog their ears.

Surely no author would waste 200 pages defending the argument that God has a mute button.

Those five days changed my life. In a prayer cabin with only a wood stove, chopped wood and an oil lamp, I read through the entire Bible and answered my question without a doubt: “No—God is never silent.” I found plenty of verses that put the burden back on the shoulders of mankind, such as, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me” (Ps. 66:18).

But I found nothing to imply that God becomes deaf and mute and withholds His counsel when we are walking uprightly in Him. Psalm 50:3 even says, “Our God will come and will not keep silent.” That was answer enough for me. God will not be silent.

*Excerpted from Seeing the Voice of God. **Laura Harris Smith** founded Eastgate Creative Christian Fellowship with her husband, Pastor Chris Smith, and is the director for the Eastgate Creative Arts Conservatory, where, among other things, she mentors young writers all over the world in her online creative writing classes. An actress, playwright, poet*

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