

Breaking Down the Biggest Barrier to Hearing God's Voice

Part and parcel to any relationship is communication—sending *and* receiving, talking *and* listening.

Our relationships with God are no different. It's of no debate that God wants to hear our voices. But Jesus revealed that God also wants us to hear His. "My sheep hear My voice," He assured (John 10:27, ESV).

"My Sheep Hear My Voice"

Unless you live on a farm, most today are far removed from what it actually means for sheep to know their master's voice. In a recent online Bible study on Hearing God, I played a short video clip that profoundly illustrates what happens.

If you watched the video, you saw that the strangers couldn't even provoke the sheep to look at them. They were completely ignored! When the master called out, however, the sheep's ears perked up and they all began to draw near.

Hearing God Like Sheep

Hearing like sheep is the image Jesus gave for how God's voice is supposed to be recognized in our lives too. We should be so in tune with Him that we're able to easily discern what's His voice and what's not. And when we hear Him call to us, we should trust Him so completely that we quickly follow.

Hearing God is the bedrock of our spiritual authority and power.

When we know God's voice, we know where to go, what to do and what not to listen to. Hearing God is paramount to an intimate

relationship with Him and all that comes with it: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness and self-control (Gal. 5:22–23). It's also the bedrock of our spiritual authority and power. That's why one of the enemy's chief goals is to keep you from hearing God. And to do so, he sets up barriers. The biggest of these is the belief that "God can't love me." Let's explore this now.

The No. 1 Barrier Belief to Hearing

For some, the notion that "God can't love me" stems from past sins they've never been able to forgive themselves of. Accordingly, it's thought, "If I can't forgive myself, then God definitely can't either." For others, present sins and struggles make them feel shamed, condemned or too dirty to be in God's presence.

Yet for others, the inability to uphold some religious standard (such as an ideal amount of Bible reading or giving) brings about intense feelings of disapproval. Whatever the case, the fear of letting God down in some way often keeps people hiding from God, rather than communing with Him.

How to Break Down the Barrier

The only way to break down the barrier of the belief that "God can't love me" is with truth. So here's some truth: As a Christian, the power of sin to separate you from God is destroyed; Jesus crucified it on the cross. This is why Paul implores to "consider yourselves to be dead to sin" (Rom. 6:11a).

The devil knows this, which is why his only recourse is to follow up failures with accusations that deceive you into *believing* God is mad at you. That's all he's got!

Of course, sin is serious; we should seek to please God and do as He desires. But when we fall short, it's important that we instantly remember that He still loves us. In fact, the moment

just after a failure is when we need to go to God all the more. This vulnerable time is the most critical time to hear His forgiveness *and* what He says to help avoid falling in the future.

Remember: As a believer, your access to God is dependent upon Jesus' finished work, not upon anything you do or fail to do. When the enemy uses reminders of sin and struggle to keep you from drawing near to God, remind yourself that you are declared "the righteousness of God" and loved by Him in a way that nobody and no battle can separate (see 2 Cor 5:21; Rom. 8:38).

[For more on how to break through this and two other big barriers to hearing God, tune in to the replay of my online Bible study.]

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