

## HEARING GOD'S VOICE

The information age in which we live is so full of rationalism, mental sciences, and analytical thought, that most people choose to mock when they hear of someone claiming to be able to actually hear the voice of God. However, no one should scoff, for several reasons. Firstly, men and women throughout the Bible heard God's voice. Also, there are some highly effective and reputable men and women of God alive today who regularly demonstrate that they hear God's voice. Finally, there is a deep hunger within us all to commune with God and hear Him speak within our hearts.

Unfortunately, many Bible-believing Christians are unable to hear God's voice. They pray, fast, study the Bible and listen for a voice within - all to no avail. There appears to be no inner voice that they can hear! But this is not so, for we can all be taught to hear God's voice. Why? Because God wants us to hear His voice! There are four keys that will open the door to two-way prayer and they are all found in **Habakkuk 2:1,2** - **I will climb up to my watchtower and stand at my guard post myself. There I will wait to see what the Lord says and how He will answer my complaint. Then the Lord said to me, "Write my answer plainly on tablets, so that a runner can carry the correct message to others."**

**Key 1** - **God's voice in your heart sounds like a flow of spontaneous thoughts.** Therefore, when you tune to God, you tune to spontaneity. You should always know it's Him! Notice, Habakkuk knew the sound of God's voice and Elijah described it as a still, small voice.

I was taught to listen for an *inner audible voice*, and surely God can and does speak that way at times. However, I have since found that for most of us, most of the time, God's inner voice comes to us as "spontaneous thoughts, promptings or impressions." For example, most of us have probably had the experience of driving down the road and having a thought (without warning) come to us to pray for a certain person. We generally acknowledge this to be the voice of God calling us to pray for that individual. My question to you is, "*What did God's voice sound like as you drove in your car? Was it an inner, audible voice, or was it a spontaneous thought that lit upon your mind?*" Most of you would say that God's voice came to you as a spontaneous thought. Isn't that right?

For this reason, maybe when we listen for God's voice, we should be listening for a flow of spontaneous thoughts. Maybe spirit-centered communication is received as "spontaneous thoughts, impressions, promptings, or even visions." And the Bible confirms. The definition of '*paga*', the Hebrew word for intercession is a *chance encounter or accidental interruption*. When God lays people on our hearts for intercession, He does it through '*paga*', a chance encounter thought, intervening and interrupting our thought processes. Therefore, when you tune to God you tune to *chance encounter* thoughts - spontaneous thoughts! When ever you are poised quietly before God, you will find that the flow of spontaneous thoughts you receive are quite definitely from God.

**Key 2** - **You must learn to still your own thoughts and emotions, so that you can sense God's flow of thoughts and impressions within you.**

Habakkuk said, *"I will stand on my guard post and station myself..."* This man knew that in order to hear God's quiet, inner, spontaneous thoughts, he had to first go to a quiet place and still his own thoughts and emotions. **Psalm 46:10** encourages us to be still, and know that He is God. There is a deep inner knowing (spontaneous flow) in the spirit that each of us can experience when we quiet our flesh and our minds.

Each of us can find several simple ways to quiet "self" so that we can more readily pick up God's spontaneous flow. Loving God by quietly worshiping Him is probably the most effective means for most of us (note **2 Kings 3:15**). It is as we become still (thoughts, will, and emotions), and are poised before God, that the divine flow is released. After you worship quietly and then become still, you open yourself up for that spontaneous flow. If thoughts come to you of things you have forgotten to do, write them down and then dismiss them. If thoughts of guilt or unworthiness come to mind, then repent thoroughly, and see yourself spotless before the presence of God.

As you fix your gaze upon Jesus (**Hebrews 12:2**), becoming quiet in His presence, and sharing with Him what is on your heart, you shall find that a two-way dialogue begins to flow. Spontaneous thoughts direct from the throne of God (to your spirit). You are then actually conversing with the King of Kings. So remember, it is very important that you become still and properly focused if you are going to receive the pure word of God. If you are not still, you will simply be receiving your own thoughts. If you are not properly focused on Jesus, you will receive an impure flow, because the intuitive flow comes out of that upon which you have fixed your eyes.

Therefore, if you fix your eyes firmly upon Jesus, the intuitive flow comes from the Lord Himself. If you fix your gaze upon some desire of your heart, the intuitive flow comes out of that desire of your heart. To have a **pure flow** you must first of all become still, and secondly, you must carefully fix your eyes upon the Lord. Again, this is quite easily accomplished by quietly worshiping and adoring the King, and then 'receiving' out of the stillness that follows.

**Key 3 - As you pray, fix the 'eyes of your heart' upon Jesus, seeing in the spirit the dreams and impressions of Almighty God.** We have already alluded to this principle in the previous paragraphs; however, we need to develop it a bit further. Habakkuk said, *"I will keep watch to see,"* and God said, *"Record the vision"*. It is very interesting that Habakkuk was going to actually start looking for *vision* the moment he prayed. He was going to open the eyes of his heart, and look into the spirit to see what God wanted to show him. This is an intriguing idea.

God has given us eyes "in the heart" through which we can see. And He wants us to use them! They are to be used to see in the spirit the intentions and movement of Almighty God. I believe there is an active spirit world functioning all around us. This awesome world is full of angels (as well as demons), the Holy Spirit, the omnipresent God, and His Son Jesus. There is no reason for me not to "see" it, other than my rational culture, which tells me not to believe it is even there, yet provides no instructions on how to become open to "seeing" this spirit realm. But note, this "seeing" is not an open vision.

An open vision, where you actually see into the spirit realm, is a Gift of the Holy Spirit, and therefore, it operates as He wills (and not as we will). The most obvious prerequisite to “seeing” is that you need to look intently! Daniel was seeing a vision in his mind and he said, ***“I was looking...I kept looking...I kept looking”*** (Daniel 7:1,9,13). Now as you pray, you look for Jesus (who is present with you), and you watch Him as He speaks to you, doing and saying the things that are on His heart. Many of you will find that if you will only look, you will see. Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us. It is as simple as that!

You will see a spontaneous inner “impression” in a manner similar to receiving spontaneous inner thoughts. Actually, you will probably discover that inner “impression” comes so easily you will have a tendency to reject it, thinking that it is just you. (Doubt is satan’s most effective weapon against the Church.) However, if you persist in discovering these divine impressions of the heart, your doubt will soon be overcome by faith, and you will recognise that the content of them could only be birthed in Almighty God.

Jesus, our perfect example, said that He did nothing on His own initiative, but only that which He saw the Father doing, and heard the Father saying (**John 5:19,20,30**). What an incredible way to live! But is it actually possible for you to live out of the divine initiative as Jesus did? A major purpose of Jesus’ death and resurrection was that the veil be torn from top to bottom, giving us access into the immediate presence of God, whom we are commanded to draw near (**Hebrews 10:19-22**).

Therefore, even though what you are doing seems a bit unusual to a rational twentieth century culture, it is demonstrated and described as being a central biblical experience.

**Key 4 - Writing down your prayers, and then God’s answers, provides a great new freedom in hearing God’s voice.** God told Habakkuk to record the vision and inscribe it on tablets. It has probably never crossed your mind to write out your prayers and God’s answers as Habakkuk did. If you begin to search Scripture for this idea, you will find hundreds of chapters demonstrating it (*Psalms, many of the prophets, Revelation*). Why then haven’t we ever thought of it?

This process is called “journaling,” and you should begin experimenting with it. Many have discovered it to be a good facilitator to clearly discerning God’s inner, spontaneous flow, because as they “journalled” they were able to write in faith, simply believing that it was God. Notice, you will not have to test it as you receive it, (which jams one’s receiver), because you are aware that when the flow is over you can go back and test and examine it carefully, making sure that it lines up with Scripture.

You will be amazed when you attempt journaling. Doubt may hinder you at first, but throw it off, reminding yourself that it is a biblical concept, and that God is ever-present, speaking to His children. Don’t take yourself too seriously. When you do, you become tense and get in the way of the Holy Spirit’s prompting and movement. It is when you cease your labours and enter His rest that God is free to flow (**Hebrews 4:10**).

Therefore, put a smile on your face, sit back comfortably, get out your pen and paper, and turn your attention toward God in praise and worship, seeking His face. As you write out your question to God and become still, fixing your gaze on Jesus, who is present with you, you will suddenly have a very good thought in response to your question. Don't doubt it, simply write it down. Later, as you read your journaling, you, too, will be amazed to discover that you are indeed dialoguing with God. And you will know it's God because it lines up with His word.

Some final notes: No one should attempt this unless he/she is submitted to solid, spiritual leadership. All major directional moves that come through "journaling" should first be judged by God's word and then submitted to leadership before being acted upon. Be safe and certain - not sorry!