

Welcome to transformed by the word, a podcast about discovering how to live your life with gratifying purpose. God created you for a reason and the Bible contains the keys to unlock your transformed life. Now, here's your host, Debora Barr

Thanks for joining me for Episode Five of transformed by the word.

Today we will explore the topic of hearing God's voice. God speaks in a variety of ways, and it's very important that we have the ability to hear him. So knowing some of the ways that he speaks will make us more receptive to being able to hear his voice.

One of my favorite stories in the Bible is when young Samuel heard the voice of God for the very first time. This story is recorded in First Samuel chapter three.

To give you a little bit of background about this encounter we have to go back to First Samuel chapter one. Before Samuel was even born. His mother, Hannah was barren for many years, and she desperately wanted a child, but was unable to have one. One year when she traveled to Jerusalem with her husband, she prayed earnestly at the temple for a male child.

And in her prayer, she promised God that if he would grant her request, then she would give this child back to him all of the days of his life and set him apart for the Lord.

Now, Eli, the high priest, was watching Hannah when she was praying, and he thought that she was drunk. Now when she told him about her prayer, That she was actually seeking the Lord for a child. Eli answered her and said, Go in peace, and the God of Israel, grant your petition, which you now have asked of him.

Well, that's exactly what happened. she conceived and gave birth to Samuel.

And when the child was old enough to leave his mother, she took him back to the temple and placed him in the care of Eli the priest, as she had promised God.

In chapter three, we learned that the word of the Lord was rare in those days, there was no widespread revelation. One night when Samuel was lying down, the Lord called him and he answered, here I am, and he ran to Eli and said, here I am. You called me.

Eli said to him, I did not call, go lie back down.

Then the Lord called again saying, Samuel.

Samuel ran to Eli again and he said, Here I am for you called me.

Eli once again said to the boy, that he had not called him and told him to go lie back down.

Now it happened a third time. Samuel ran to Eli once again. This time, Eli realized that it was the Lord calling Samuel, so he told the boy, if he calls you again, say to him, speak, Lord, for your servant hears.

Once more. The Lord said, Samuel Samuel. And this time he answered, speak for Servant hears.

Now this is an amazing story of God's grace and persistence in communicating with a person that he loves. Samuel ended up to be a prophet for the nation of Israel. And God used him in mighty ways over the course of his entire life. Now you may wonder, what does God's voice even sound like?

Well, the Bible describes the voice of God in different ways. In Psalm 29, verses three and four, it is described as a powerful funder full of majesty.

Ezekiel describes God's voice as being like the sound of many waters.

John describes God's voice as sounding like a trumpet in the Book of Revelation. And Elijah heard the voice of God in a whisper through a still small voice in First Kings, chapter 19, verse 12.

In the New Testament, Jesus said to his followers, that his sheep, hear his voice, and follow Him.

Now one of the ways that God speaks to people is through an audible voice. He spoke this way to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. You can find these dialogues in the first three chapters of Genesis.

God also spoke to Moses with an audible voice from the midst of a burning bush, in Exodus chapter three.

When God commissioned Moses to go to Egypt and bring the Israelites out from their slavery and bondage.

God also spoke to a man named Gideon, in Judges chapter six, when he commissioned him to save Israel from the Midianites, who had them in bondage for seven years, stealing their crops and livestock and destroying their land.

And in Matthew, chapter three, verses 16 and 17, we read that God spoke with an audible voice from heaven, to a whole group of people. When John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, the scripture says, When Jesus came up from the water, of voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Those are just a few examples of Gods speaking audibly to People that have been recorded in the Scriptures for us to read.

Now I too have heard the audible voice of God. It happened in 1999. I was in a relationship that was pretty bad at that time. And I was very distraught. I decided to take my dog for a walk around a lake near my home, when out of the blue, I heard what can only be described as a booming voice behind me that said, Sit child and rest and know that I am God. Well, I immediately looked behind me and at my dog to see if he had heard what I just heard. Apparently, I was the only one that heard it.

I was shaken. And I wrote about it in my journal that day. Now what I didn't know at the time, and only learned some months later, is that there is a scripture in the Bible that says, Be still and know that I am God. That is in Psalm 46, verse 10.

God was speaking to me. He was trying to get my attention. Now another way that God speaks is through other people. We see a number of examples of this in the Bible.

Quite often, God uses prophets to speak to individuals, and to groups of people.

One example of this can be found in Second Samuel chapter 12. When God had the prophet Nathan, speak to King David,

For a little bit of background on this and counter. King David had sinned greatly against the Lord, by enticing Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, one of David's soldiers to sleep with him when her husband was away at war. Well, she became pregnant and she let the king know about it. So David called Uriah back from the frontlines of the battle, and wined and dined him, and then said he should go home to his wife.

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All the while hoping that when the child was born, Uriah would not know that the child was not his own. But Uriah refused to go home to his wife, when his fellow soldiers were still in the battle. And eventually King David plotted to have him killed in the frontlines of the battle to cover His own sin.

Then God sent the prophet Nathan to King David, to confront him about this sin through a parable, which was a story about a rich man who had a poor man's lamb killed to provide food for a traveler.

King David realized that God was confronting him about his own sin against Bathsheba and Uriah and David immediately repented, confessing that he had sinned against the Lord.

Another example, where God spoke through a person to speak his word to a group of people, occurs in the book of Jonah. Jonah was a prophet that God had commissioned to go to Nineveh. Jonah's entire message was short and to the point, here it is, in 40 days, Nineveh shall be overthrown. Now this is a fascinating story, in that Jonah did not want to deliver this message to the corrupt and cruel Ninevites. So he initially went in the opposite direction.

He got on a ship to get away from God, and from his assignment. He ended up being thrown overboard into a raging sea. And if that weren't bad enough, he got swallowed by a huge fish, where he remained in the belly of that fish for three days before being barked up onto dry land.

I'm not making this up! If you thought the Bible was boring and dry. I challenge you to read it for yourself as a result of Jonah finally doing what God wanted him to do.

The Ninevites responded by humbling themselves through prayer and fasting. And God responded to that by not bringing the disaster that he had planned against these people.

Now, if the Ninevites would not have been able to hear the message that Jonah delivered, they would have been destroyed.

That is why it's critically important that we learn to hear from God through the various ways that he is speaking to us.

Now, one way that God spoke to me through another person, happened when he confirmed something that I privately spoke to him only in prayer.

To give you a little bit of context around this communication, I lived my life for 18 years as a lesbian. During those years, I dressed and acted in a very masculine manner. Then I encountered the love of Jesus, through a women's Bible Study Group at a church that I was going to. And the Lord eventually convicted me in my sin. I was not living in accordance with his will. So I repented, and I walked away from a life of homosexuality. If you're interested in reading my story, you can go to the [TBTWpodcast.com](https://otter.ai) website and download the episode five extras.

And I will be unpacking this story a little bit more in upcoming podcast episodes. But for now, I will tell you how God spoke confirmation to me through someone from that women's group.

One morning I was walking by the river near my home, silently praying to God, telling him that I wanted my outside to look like my inside. Since I had surrendered my heart to Jesus, he was transforming me from the inside out. The wounds that had led me to embrace a life of homosexuality were being healed. And I was beginning to feel like the beautiful woman that God created me to be.

But I had a problem. I was still dressing like a man, because that is what I had known for so many years. I felt in my spirit that God wanted to answer that prayer. Now when I got back home from my walk that day, there was a voicemail message on my telephone. One of the women from the women's Bible study group had called to let me know that she had been cleaning out her closet, and she had clothes that she believed would fit me. And she wanted to know if I wanted to see them.

I was astonished. God spoke a message of confirmation regarding the desire of my heart in a private prayer that I had prayed that morning through another person.

God speaks to us through others. Are you listening?

So far, we have seen how God speaks through an audible voice or through others.

Another way that he speaks to us is through his written word. God's word was recorded so that people in all generations would have access to his word. The Bible, in whole or in part, has been translated into over 3000 languages, and efforts are currently underway to continue to translate the word into all of the languages of the world.

Now today we have easier access to the Bible than in all generations that came before us. There are apps that can be downloaded to our phones and tablets like YouVersion, Faith Life Logos, and the blue letter Bible. Links to these resources are available for download in the TBTWPodcast website.

The Word of God that had been written down generations earlier also had a profound impact on King Josiah of Judah. His story is recorded in Second Kings chapter 22.

Now Josiah was only eight years old when he became king. And according to the Bible, he did what was right in the sight of the Lord. When he was 18 years old, the king sent shaft fan, the scribe to the temple, to speak to the high priest about using money brought to the temple to perform renovations.

Well, the high priest told Shaphan that he found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. So the book was taken and read to King Josiah. When he heard the words, written in the Word of God, he tore his clothes in grief because he realized that the wrath of the Lord was aroused against them, because their fathers had not obeyed the words of the book. To do according to all that was written their desire heard the message of the Lord through God's written word, and he immediately responded. So God responded to Josiah, letting him know that because he responded to the Word of God, he would be spared from seeing the calamity that would come upon Judah as a result of their sin and disobedience to his word.

That should also be our posture. When we read the Word of God and see that we're not living our lives in accordance with its wisdom, laws and precepts, that our hearts are grieved, and we have a resolve to repent obey God's word.

One thing that I do know is that when we have a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, and we regularly spend time in his word and in communication with him through prayer, our ability to hear and discern the voice of God increases. As we listen and respond to his voice, he uniquely communicates his unconditional love for us. He guides and directs our lives and he uses other people to bless us and us to bless others.

Is the Lord speaking to you right now?

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Have you surrendered your heart to Him?

If you've never surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, you can do that right now. It is by faith that we believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sins. If you are ready to place your trust in the Lordship of Jesus Christ, why don't you pray this prayer with me right now?

God, I confess that I'm a sinner, and I need Jesus in my life.

I repent of my sins and I turned to you.

I believe that Jesus died on the cross for my sins. He was buried and rose from the dead.

I accept this by faith and invite Jesus to be Lord of my life, to reign and rule in my heart.

Thank you for forgiving me and saving me Amen.

If you just prayed that prayer with sincerity, you are saved.

Now if you surrender your life to Jesus at some point in the past, but you've gotten off track is he asking you to recommit your life to him right now?

The Bible tells us in first John, chapter one, verse nine, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness if you repent of your rebellion, and confess your sins to Him, He will forgive you and bring you back into right standing with God.

None of us know if we will even see tomorrow. Today is a great day to get right with God.

If you just accepted Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior, or you re committed your life to the Lord, I want to hear from you.

Please visit my website at TBTWPodcast.com and let me know about your decision for Christ so I can encourage you and support you with the next steps for your faith.

My prayer for you today is that you would be attentive to God's voice. read his word daily and keep your heart and mind open to receive what he wants to communicate to you.

Stay tuned for our next episode of transformed by the word where we will explore communicating with God.

Thank you for listening to transformed by the word with your host Debora Barr Be sure Subscribe to our podcast on iTunes or Google Play and connect with us at TBTWPodcast.com. Until next time, be blessed.