

How to Hear God's Voice

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Hearing from God is easy. Since you are reading this section, you may not quite believe that. First, we must embrace one simple truth: God wants to speak to you.

Some are afraid to look for a spiritual answer from God—afraid that they are not worthy, afraid of what He might say, afraid He will punish them. The truth is God is big. Jesus said, *"If [your child] asks for a fish, will [you] give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"*²⁸ He is inviting us to ask Him. Others are afraid they will be deceived. I encourage you to have more faith that God can speak to you than the devil has the power to deceive you. We must believe that God will speak to us.

The process of hearing from God is described in the Bible. King David, the prophets, Jesus, and the apostles heard from God very clearly and lived in constant communication with their Heavenly Father. The setting for hearing God did differ from person to person. Jesus would draw away from the crowd where He could be alone. King David used to go to the temple and sit before the Lord. Elisha called for a minstrel to play so he could hear from God. Although in different settings, they all used the same four keys to hear from God. These keys were:

1. **Stillness:** They chose to hear, to listen, to see and would draw away and become quiet.
2. **Vision:** They would focus the eyes of their hearts on the Lord, look for vision and listen to His flow of thoughts.
3. **Spontaneity:** They recognized that God speaks to them in their mind and thoughts and tune into the flow of thoughts from God.
4. **Journaling:** They would write down what they saw or heard to share it with others.

God speaks to us in our thoughts. These thoughts may be words or images; however, this is not the only way God speaks to us. Just as we have five physical senses, we have five spiritual senses, and God can speak to us using any of those senses. To learn how to hear God, we will start with the basics and look at the Biblical accounts of how King David and the prophet Habakkuk

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heard from God.

King David provides us with an excellent example of how he heard from God. He asked God about building His temple, and the Lord gave him specific directions. Let's look at how he heard God.

King David rose to his feet and said: "Listen to me, my brothers and my people. I had it in my heart to build a house as a place of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD... Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the portico of the temple, its buildings, its storerooms, its upper parts, its inner rooms and the place of atonement. He gave him the plans of all that the Spirit had put in his mind for the courts of the temple of the LORD and all the surrounding rooms, for the treasuries of the temple of God and for the treasuries for the dedicated things. He gave him instructions for the divisions of the priests and Levites, and for all the work of serving in the temple of the LORD, as well as for all the articles to be used in its service. He designated the weight of gold for all the gold articles to be used in various kinds of service, and the weight of silver for all the silver articles to be used in various kinds of service... He also gave him the plan for the chariot, that is, the cherubim of gold that spread their wings and shelter the ark of the covenant of the LORD. "All this," David said, "I have in writing from the hand of the LORD upon me, and he gave me understanding in all the details of the plan." ²⁹

We can see the four keys that David followed to hear God.

1. David decided to inquire of the Lord about building the temple and quieted his heart by going to the temple and sitting before the Lord.
2. David knew God spoke to him in his mind, so he focused his heart on the Lord.
3. David tuned into the flow of God's voice, and the Lord began to speak to him. The Lord put the thoughts in David's mind. He told David how the temple should be built. He described how it should be organized, what it should look like, and how much gold and silver should be used for each item in the temple.
4. David wrote down what the Lord showed him and gave it to his son Solomon to build.

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As I read David's account of this experience, I was amazed at the level of detail in the revelation the Lord gave him. The plans were precise and all-encompassing. The process was not complex. King David simply asked God, heard God in his mind tell him what he was to do, and wrote it down.

I wanted to learn how to do that, to hear God's plans for me. I went to a man who prophesied in a church. When I asked him how he knew God was speaking to him, he told me that he "just knew in his knower." I thought *You were a big help*. I never did figure out how to hear God from him. Yet King David's approach was so simple. He just shared his heart with God, and God gave him specific thoughts in his mind. What could be easier? I could do that.

The prophet Habakkuk also heard from God the way King David did. Habakkuk recorded his experience. He said:

"I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me and what answer I will give to this complaint. Then the LORD replied: 'Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it.'" ³⁰

Again we see the four keys

1. Habakkuk chose to hear from God and drew himself away to a place of solitude. He would go up the defensive wall (his watch) around his town to listen to God. This is such an important first step. We have to be quiet to hear God. He doesn't yell at us. He speaks to us in a quiet voice in our minds.
2. Habakkuk knew God spoke to him in his mind, so he looked to see what God was saying. God speaks to us in words and pictures; He will often give us images because it is faster. The saying "a picture is worth a thousand words" is so true.
3. Habakkuk tuned into the flow of thoughts and images (the revelation) that the Lord put in his mind.
4. Habakkuk wrote them down.

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I have found that God is not in a hurry and will speak slowly enough for me to write down what He is saying. Sometimes He only gives me one word at a time, so I can write it down while He speaks.

Jesus said we must become little children to enter His kingdom. Little children are quite different from older children. Little children believe what their Father says, they believe that their Father knows everything, and they believe he can do everything. Little children find it easy to use their imagination when Mom or Dad read stories to them. For us to enter the kingdom of God and consistently hear from God, we must step back and retrieve these beliefs and abilities in our lives.

In the Hebrew language, the word meditate includes the meaning to imagine. Some believe that any use of their imagination to focus the eyes of their heart on the Lord is wrong, possibly new age or even idolatry. We must discard the false belief that we cannot use our imagination when meditating on the Lord. We must acknowledge that everything God made is good and can use that part of our mind to communicate with us.

Some believe that God doesn't talk directly to people anymore. They believe that this type of communication passed away with the apostles. This is not true. God has not changed. He loves to communicate with us, His children, and we must also break agreement with this false belief.

Personal Action

The truth is that God wants to talk to you and has made it easy to do it. Let's start by learning how to listen to the voice of God.

Most of us have experienced having a song in our hearts, and we find ourselves singing or humming along with the song. Try singing the song "Happy Birthday" in your mind.

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Happy Birthday to You
Happy Birthday to You
Happy Birthday, Happy Birthday
Happy Birthday to You

Keep doing this until you can do it easily. This is the place in our mind where God speaks to us. God speaks to us as a stream of thoughts.

It is often said that children have vivid imaginations. When you were a child, did you imagine the story your mom or dad read to you? I remember my mother reading me the novel *Mysterious Island* by Jules Verne. Each lunch hour, she read a chapter to me when I came home from school. I loved it. I could envision Captain Nemo, the Nautilus, and the giant creatures in the story.

God also uses visions when he speaks to us. Visions are simply images that He gives us. He often uses images because a simple picture can convey a lot of information. To start seeing visions, you have to know where to look. In your mind, there is an image screen. We use this screen when we imagine images and scenes. We use our minds to create images. When God gives us a vision, He uses this same screen. The difference is that He is the one who paints the picture, and our mind is not involved.

Let's do an exercise to practice using your imagination screen. I want you to imagine your home. Check off each item when you can see each scene.

1. Imagine the home you live
2. Walk through the front door.
3. Go into the kitchen.
4. Open the fridge.
5. Find the apples.
6. Choose a green one.
7. Bite into the apple.

You have just used your imagination screen. At first you may find it difficult to imagine in

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colour, but keep at it and it will get easier. This ability was given to us by God so we could bring new ideas into being.

Now that we know where to look and listen, let's try hearing from God. To start, we will focus the eyes of our hearts on the author of our faith, Jesus. We do this by simply imagining a Bible story. Children love to imagine a story. I want you to become a little child and imagine this paraphrased story of Jesus and His disciples (John 21).

Jesus looked over the Sea of Galilee. He stood on a grassy hill where the onshore breeze blew over the grass and caught His white robe and hair. He wanted to meet His disciples, who had gone fishing that morning. Jesus knew that they had had a rough couple of days, so He planned to prepare breakfast for them. He had some fish and bread and walked down along the beach. You could hear the waves lapping against the shore. He built a small fire, cooked fish, and warmed himself while waiting for His disciples to return.

As the disciples drew close to the shore, they could see a man on the beach, but they did not recognize who he was. Jesus called them and said, "Did you catch any fish?"

They replied, "No, we did not."

He called to them and said, "Let down your nets on the other side of your boat." The disciples did just as they were told, and a large number of fish jumped into the net. The water was alive with fish. The sun reflected off their scales, and the water was shaking violently as the fish fought to get into the net. Nathaniel looked at Peter with astonishment. The disciples had caught so many fish they could not pull the net into the boat.

Peter looked from the fish to the man on the beach. John said, "It is the Lord." Peter wrapped himself in his robe, jumped into the water, and swam towards the beach. Peter ran up to Jesus and fell on his face at His feet. Jesus saw him and began to speak to him. After a few moments, Peter went to help the other disciples bring in the net of fish, and Jesus went back and sat by the fire.

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1. Now sit beside Jesus at the fire and look him right in the face. Spend some time looking at Him. After a few moments of looking at Him, ask Him this question, "Do you love me?"
2. Write down what Jesus says or does.
 - a. You have just heard from the Lord. I gave you a question to which there is only one answer, "Yes." However, I want you to experience how the Lord says yes to you. In most cases, it is very personal.
2. The story you imagined was used to focus your eyes on the Lord and God's written word. It was used to help you transition from the written word of God to the spoken word. Let's do some more hearing and seeing.
3. Now go back to the scene of Jesus sitting at the fire and look at Him again. Ask Him, "Please tell me more."
4. Write down what Jesus says or does.

You have just heard from God. You have followed the four keys.

1. **Stillness:** You recognize God speaks to you in your mind.
2. **Vision:** You quieted your heart by imagining the Bible story.
3. **Spontaneity:** You focused the eyes and ears of your heart on the Lord and tuned into the flow of thoughts that come from God.
4. **Journaling:** You wrote it down.

Jesus wants to meet with you face to face. He is not restricted by time or space. He will meet with you in your mind since, according to King David, this is the realm of spiritual connection.

Let's do one final exercise. Please go back to where you saw Jesus by the fire and look at Him again.

1. Ask Him this question: "What would You like to say to me today?"
2. Write down what Jesus says or does.
3. Call a friend and tell them you are practicing hearing from God. Describe what you heard Jesus say or do and ask them if it sounds like God to them.

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After we have written down what God says, we can test it to ensure that it is God's word. There are several tests we can do.

1. First, we test it against the Bible. God will not contradict His written word
2. Second, we test it against the characteristics of our Heavenly Father: God is love, kind, and merciful. God will not say things that are harsh, mean-spirited, or cynical. All true prophetic words build up, encourage, and comfort. He says in I cor 14:3 “ *Prophetic word will build up, encourage and comfort*”
3. Third, we test it against the names of God. God will not contradict His names. Here are some of the names of God:
 - Jehovah Elohim—The Lord Is God
 - Jehovah Nissi—The Lord Is My Banner
 - Jehovah Rophi—The Lord Who Heals Me
 - Jehovah Jireh—The Lord Who Provides
 - Jehovah Tzadekenu—The Lord Our Righteousness
 - Jehovah Shalom—The Lord of Peace
 - Jehovah Rohi—The Lord Is My Shepherd
 - Jehovah Shammah—The Lord Is Here
4. We test it with others. The body of Christ will witness true words. There is great safety when you are accountable to someone else who will give you their honest opinion.

Now that you have heard God's voice, I invite you to daily journal and develop an intimate relationship with your Heavenly Father.

If you would like to learn more about Hearing God's voice I encourage you to watch Mark Virkler's "[How to Hear God videos](#)" produced by Community God ministries.