

Deny Yourself.

A six-week guided practice in laying down our lives and taking up our Christ

Lesson 3: Listen.

Introduction...

How often do you hear God? If you have trouble hearing the God who is always speaking to His people, the problem is likely not with God, but with your ability to hear, spiritually speaking. Do you take the time, create the space, and listen for God's voice? In this week's meditation **we'll learn to make a way for God's voice to be the one we tune into** above all the noise of this world.

Scripture Focus...

Jesus taught his disciples to know those who would join them in their obedience to the Way. He said that those who knew their shepherd would recognize his voice. In John 10: 2-5, Jesus says,

The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers."

Meditation...

(The following practice comes from RenewingAllThings.com)

The number one question I get is “**how can I hear from God**”. I think most people have a burning desire to hear God, to be touched, to feel his presence. The problem is, most of us were never taught how. That was definitely the case for me.

Scripture says God is always speaking, but we miss it. We don't notice his voice because we don't recognize it. We miss his voice because it is drowned out in the sea of other voices. Your task list that runs endlessly through your mind, that person who just upset you, and those bills that need to be payed.

1. Set aside at least 20 minutes a day to quiet yourself. No distractions at all.
2. Start by following your breath and thinking about everything you are grateful for. Do this for 2-4 minutes. This activates your body's healing systems and allows the part of your brain to activate that allows you to hear clearly and receive wisdom. In other words, it gets you into a state that allows you to hear clearly.
3. Then choose your anchor that you want to keep bringing your focus back to.
Examples include:
 - Ask the Holy Spirit what he has to say about. . . whatever you want to know. Notice any thoughts that come up.
 - Worship
 - A Bible verse
 - Your Prayers
4. When your mind drifts away- that is OKAY! Simply bring it back. The more you do this, the stronger your attention muscle becomes.
5. The more we quiet our minds and position ourselves and our focus on God, the more we will be able to hear from him and distinguish his voice.
6. At least take two minutes a day to scan the world for things you are grateful for- new things each day, as specific as possible. This physically rewires your brain, and sets the filter of what you notice each day. Since happiness is a learned skill, this is the #1 habit to pick up to completely change your life.

Prayer:

Holy God, let me be filled with the power of your presence, upheld by your strength, and set free from my own anxieties and worries. Let me be emptied of all that would stand in Your holy way. **Amen.**