



ARE WE JUST TALKING TO OURSELVES
A Prayer Series for Non-Prayers - Part 4
Senior Pastor Keith Stewart
November 13, 2022

The greater the clarity, the greater the accountability.

The clearer God's voice and direction, the more that's at stake.

**1. JUST BECAUSE SOMEONE SAYS "GOD TOLD ME"
DOESN'T MEAN HE DID**

Instead of claiming to know what God says, ask questions of one another, such as "How do we understand God in this?" But don't go around pretending to know it all, saying "God told me this... God told me that..." I don't want to hear it anymore. Only the person I authorize speaks for me. Otherwise, my Message gets twisted, the Message of the living God-

of-the-Angel-Armies. Jeremiah 23.35-36 (The Message)

❑ The message-a-minute view

The issue is not what God can do. The issue is what God does do.

❑ The God-told-me-to-tell-you view

This truth was given to me in secret, as though whispered in my ear. It came to me in a disturbing vision at night, when people are in a deep sleep. Job 4.12-13 (NLT)

When your heart is so hard and your understanding so darkened that you are not listening to God.

Encouragement to confirm leadership and direction He has already given you.

Now you too have proved to be of no help; you see something dreadful and are afraid. Job 6.21



- The I-told-me but I-think-God-told-me view

Before you can know how God speaks to you, you have to first know how you speak to you.

GOD'S VOICE

Stills you

Leads you

Reassures you

Enlightens you

Encourages you

Comfort's you

Calms you

Convicts you

INNER CRITIC

Rushes you

Pushes you

Frightens you

Confuses you

Discourages you

Worries you

Obsesses you

Condemns you

2. ARE YOU HEARING GOD'S VOICE?

- Learn to discern.



I am the Good Shepherd, and I know those who are mine and my sheep know me...and they hear my voice. John 10.14,16 (Phillips)

❑ The nature of God's voice

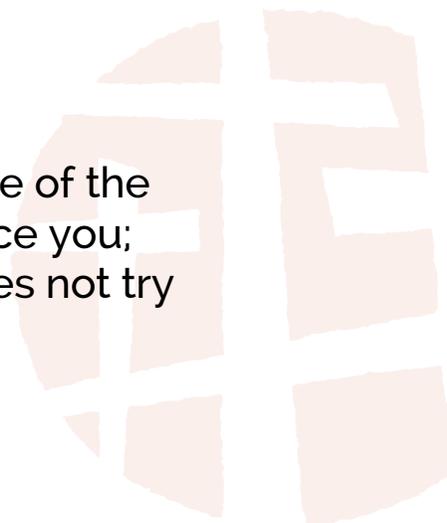
For God does speak - now one way, then another - though a man may not perceive it. Job 33.14

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55.8-9

There are three characteristics to voice; quality, spirit and content.

- You will know God's voice by its quality.

"Perhaps the rough distinction is this: The voice of the subconscious argues with you, tries to convince you; but the inner voice of God does not argue, does not try to convince you." - E. Stanley Jones



"That still small voice will never shout." – Dr. Charles Swindoll

"The sheepdog forcibly maneuvers the sheep, whereas the biblical shepherd simply calls as he calmly walks ahead of the sheep." – Dallas Willard

- You will know God's voice by its spirit
- You will know God's voice by its content

1. Does it agree with the Bible?

Do you think I'd withdraw my holy promise or take back words I'd already spoken? Psalm 89.34

The more we read God's Word, the easier it is to recognize His voice. So the more familiar you are with how God has spoken, the better you'll understand how God speaks.

2. Does it make me more like Christ?



3. Does my church family confirm it?

Five signs you are hearing God's voice (and not your ego).

1. They are short.

2. They are surprising.

3. They make sense.

"[God's voice has] the ring of truth." - Vinita Hampton Wright

4. They get to the point.

5. They leave their mark.

3. PRACTICAL WAYS OF HEARING GOD'S VOICE

Ignatius' Method



"I ought to find myself indifferent... to such an extent that I am not more inclined or emotionally disposed toward taking the matter proposed rather than relinquishing it..." - Ignatius of Loyola

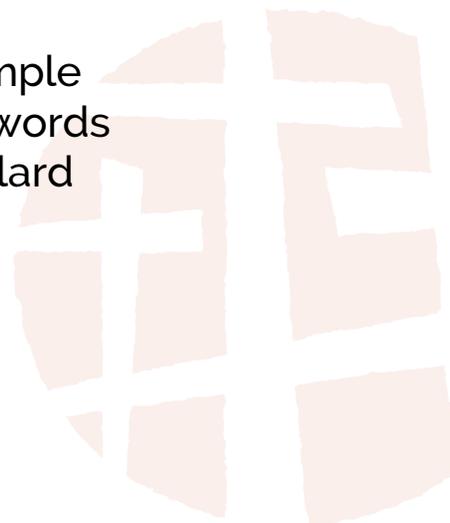
"Lord, I want your will, your way, your time."

Dr. James Dobson's Method

"I get down on my knees and say, 'Lord, I need to know what you want me to do, and I am listening. Please speak to me through my friends, books, magazines I pick up and read, and through circumstances.'" - James Dobson

"I have followed this simple method of listening for God's voice in many situations — in university teaching, research and administration; in family and business affairs, in writing and conducting sessions in conferences and seminars... God also takes ample occasion to slip up on me by speaking to me words that I am not seeking in this way." - Dallas Willard

Dallas Willard's Paradoxical Method



"I devote the next hour or so to some kind of activity that neither engrosses my attention with other things nor allows me to be intensely focused on the matter in question. Housework, gardening, driving about on errands, or paying bills will generally do. I have learned not to worry about whether or not this is going to work. I know that it does not have to work, but I am sure that it will work if God has something He really wants me to know or do." – Dallas Willard

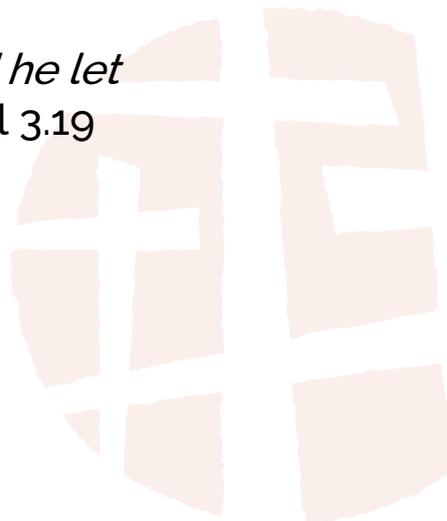
❑ The Eli Method

Samuel's name in Hebrew means "the one who listens to God."

The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions. 1 Samuel 3.1

The Lord was with Samuel as he grew up and he let none of his words fall to the ground. 1 Samuel 3.19

My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me.
John 10.27



- LIE DOWN

- LISTEN UP

You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29.13

“We find God to the degree we want to find Him.”
– Larry Crabb, Finding God

“God will manifest himself in direct proportion to our passion for Him.” - Jim Cymbala, Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire

“God waits to be wanted.” – A.W. Tozer

- TALK BACK



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1.) How have you seen preachers or believers abuse hearing “messages from God”? What didn't set right with you when you heard someone make a statement like that?

2.) Learning to distinguish how we talk to ourselves from how God talks to us is so essential when it comes to learning to hear the voice of God. Take some time to discuss how you talk to yourself. What are some things you know you say to yourself regularly? Besides the content or substance of what you say to yourself, how would you describe the tone, the spirit or intensity with which you speak to yourself?

3.) What did you learn today in the message that was most helpful when it comes to the things that make God's voice unique in your spirit? Why was that helpful? How will make use of it in the future?

4.) Take some time as a group and discuss the following chart and how it applies to your own walk with God...



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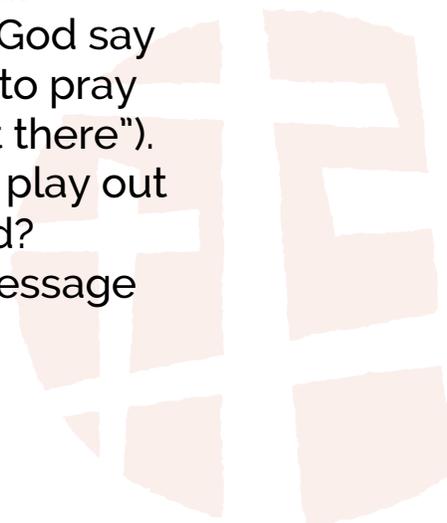
Worries you

Obsesses you

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5.) How has your church family or Christian friends helped you with discerning the voice of God or getting clarity on what God might be saying to you?

6.) As Pastor Keith described the 5 signs you are hearing God's voice (and not your ego), he shared a couple of illustrations about how these general guidelines have worked in his life (i.e. hearing God say "match my pace" and his prayer to know how to pray for the sick woman "you'll know when you get there"). Have you seen any of the following principles play out in regard to a message you received from God? Explain to the group how you received that message and what you did with it.



1. They are short.
2. They are surprising.
3. They make sense.
4. They get to the point.
5. They leave their mark.

7.) As Pastor Keith wrapped up the message, he offered several practical ways for hearing the voice of God; Ignatius' method, Dr. James Dobson's method, Dallas Willard's Paradoxical method and Eli's method. What, if anything useful, did you get from these various methods to hear from God? Have you used any of them yourself? Have you found a way that works well for you to put yourself in a position to receive from God?

