

Hearing God

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me... My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." John 10:14, 15a, 27

- Jesus speaks to us often, though we need to learn how to hear, sense, see, intuit, and recognize His voice.
- All Christians have some capacity to hear God, or we would not be saved. Gifting and personality shape the different ways that we "hear" God and it is not helpful to compare ourselves with others. As we make ourselves available our ability to hear grows.
- We do not need a prophet or teacher to know God or hear His voice, God is committed to making Himself known to us. We can relax and simply learn to be quiet and listen to God's Spirit who dwells within us. Hebrews 8:11

Some of the ways we hear (see, feel or sense) Jesus' "voice".

- Scripture – God breathes on scripture again to make it alive and personally relevant to us.
- Into our thoughts as "the still small voice of God."
- Into our imagination and creativity,
- Through intuitive knowing, prompting, impressions, senses.
- Through anointed music, teaching and preaching.
- Everyday life experiences, books, movies and art.
- Through nature and beauty.
- Through our relationship with others; the giving and receiving of encouragement, caution, correction, blessing and affirmation.
- As we serve others. In using our time, gift as and resources Jesus moves and empowers us.
- Through journaling.
- Through dreams and visions, and even God's audible voice or angelic visitation.
- Into and through our emotions. We experience and feel God's love, our hearts are stirred by His compassion, mercy and goodness, we feel godly sorrow when convicted of sin, zeal to pursue what is right, comfort in pain, encouragement in difficulty, joy in His goodness, reverence in His presence.

When we hear His voice in the here and now of today, we need to respond.

"Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." Hebrews 4:7

If what we are hearing, seeing, feeling or sensing is from Jesus it will....

- Be consistent with what is revealed in scripture. *2 Timothy 3:16-17*
- Be affirmed within community with others who follow Jesus. *Proverbs 15:22*
- Be consistent with love in patience, kindness, humility, seeking what is best, rejoicing in the truth, protective, never condemning or accusing. *1 Corinthians 13:4-8*

- Stir and move us in ways consistent with the fruit of His Spirit. *Galatians 5:22, 23a*
- If corrective, Jesus' voice will bring conviction and an invitation to His forgiveness and change without shame or condemnation. He never devalues or disqualifies us. *Romans 8:1*
- Be simple and clear and not confusing or convoluted. *Matthew 18:3*
- Affirm hope and a future for us, never fear, worry, anxiety despair or hopelessness. *Philippians 4:6*

Blocks to Hearing God

As followers of Jesus, it is vitally important we are growing in our capacity to hear God and are resolving any blocks to our hearing such as;

1. We are too busy or distracted. *Psalms 46:10*
2. Doubt and unbelief that God will speak and make a way for us. *James 1:5, 6a*
3. We look to ourselves and our own understanding and miss seeking and listening to God. *Proverbs 3:5-6*
4. We do not recognize all the creative and varied ways God speaks to us. *Job 33:14*
5. When we are in difficulty or crisis our anxiety and worry get in the way. *Philippians 4:6-7*
6. Our striving and self-effort to hear and get it right interferes. *Galatians 3:3*
7. We avoid hearing His voice in conviction and invitation to change as our sinful nature wants to rule over us in the pursuit of a particular wrong. *1 John 1:8-9 CSB*
8. Our brokenness and wounding cause us to be afraid of what He will speak to us. *1 John 4:18*
9. The demonic will attempt to deceive us with lies that are contrary to the character and purposes of God. *John 8:44b*