

# **How to Listen to Hear God Talk**

**By Becky Harling**

 BETHANYHOUSE

*“Lord, heighten my spiritual senses to see that which is not visible  
hear that which is not audible  
sense that which is not tangible  
believe that which is unbelievable.  
Teach me to sort through the noises of this world  
to hear and discern Your powerful,  
wonderful, pure, precious voice.”*

PRISCILLA SHIRER

Listening to God is based on the assumption that God longs to have a conversation with us. He wants us to recognize and know His voice. Jesus said, “My sheep know my voice” (John 10:27).

For many of us, listening to God presents a challenge. It feels ethereal and intangible. We can’t see God so how do we know His voice? We’ve been taught to say our prayers, present our requests, and keep our lists. Yet prayer is a conversation. It begins with the assumption that God is always speaking and He’s always on the move. We need to shift our thinking about prayer. Prayer allows us to enjoy conversation with God as we would with a close friend or lover. Recently, I came across this statement, “Prayer is wonderful and sometimes it employs words.”

In our world, our minds are bombarded with stimulation and noise. God invites us to create the space for silence and wonder—times to simply breathe in His presence and soak in His thoughts.

Listening to God is learning to pay full attention to Him and welcoming Him into our every thought. The beauty is that those who learn to listen to God feel more accepted and loved by Him. Henri Nouwen wrote that prayer is “listening to the voice of the one who calls you ‘the beloved.’”

# How Do We Learn to Listen So That We Can Hear God's Voice?

Here are a few ideas:

## Create the Space for Silence

This is so contrary to the way we live our lives. We live in a technological age where cell phones, social media, Netflix, and Hulu all scream for our attention. Yet God longs to make His love known to us. But that means we need to take responsibility to create silence.

God doesn't usually scream over the chaos of our lives. In I Kings 19:12, we are reminded that when Elijah was desperate for God's voice, God spoke in a still, small whisper. The takeaway for you and I is that we need to create the space and silence to hear the small whisper of God's voice.

Here are a few tips to creating space for silence:

- **Start small.** Begin with five minutes of absolute silence per day. If you're still raising children, this may be a significant challenge. Perhaps it will happen after you drop the kids at school. While you're driving home, turn off the radio and don't pick up your cell phone; simply allow silence to fill your car. Or perhaps when you lay in bed at night or first wake in the morning. Maybe it's over the first cup of coffee you sip in silence.
- **Take a walk.** One of the most effective ways I create silence in my life is to take a walk and enjoy God's nature. Try taking a walk and turning off your cell phone. Simply walk in silence and ask God to speak to you.
- **Unplug for a day.** That might strike panic in some, but there is tremendous value in detoxing from constant stimulation. Fasting from electronics is to some a bigger challenge than fasting from food, but it's a great way to listen for God's voice.
- **Do mundane tasks in quiet.** We're so used to noise that when we do mundane tasks like folding laundry or washing dishes, we have the TV on or music playing or some other form of noise distracting us. Try doing some of the mundane tasks of life in quiet. While you are quiet, ask God to speak, and tell Him you're ready to listen.

## **Be Willing to Wait**

Often after we create the space to hear God's voice, we sit in silence and then feel disappointed when nothing happens. We wonder, *Did I miss it? Was it pointless to create the space for silence?* What I have discovered in my own life is that God is not in a rush. He values a person waiting in His presence as much as the revealing of His plan. In our waiting, He strengthens us and prepares us to do the very thing He calls us to do.

The Psalmist wrote, "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord" (Psalm 27:14).

*"If you want to hear God's voice clearly and you are uncertain,  
then remain in His presence until He changes this uncertainty.  
Often much can happen during this waiting for the Lord."*

CORRIE TEN BOOM

## **Enter His Presence with Worship**

God designed you for worship. It's not that He's an egocentric, insecure god who needs affirmation. It's that He knows you will become like what you worship, and when you worship, the Holy Spirit opens your hearts to His voice. I know because I've experienced it. As I began to grow in my personal worship journey I became better at discerning God's voice. It was as if the Holy Spirit opened my ears.

In Acts 13 we discover that while the believers were worshiping, the Holy Spirit spoke that they were to set apart Paul and Barnabas for missionary work. As a result of their worship and praise, the apostles' ears were opened to the Lord's voice and His desires. The same holds true for you: If you want to become more tuned in to the voice of God, spend some time each day intentionally worshiping and praising Him.

Here are some worship songs that have been helpful to me in my quest to hear God's voice.

"Speak to Me" by Kari Jobe

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFxOGd4P4JA>

"Tremble" by Mosaic

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PjdSqTA8hyY>

"What a Beautiful Name" by Hillsong Worship

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQWFzMvCfLE>

## **How to Discern God's Voice in Decision-Making**

When I'm trying to discern God's voice and make a decision, I ask myself the following questions:

1. What does God seem to be saying through His word?
2. What is the Holy Spirit prompting me to do?
3. Which option requires the most faith?
4. What are my mentors saying?

# Reflective Questions

These questions are designed to help you dig into the Word to discover what God says about how He speaks to us. Read the passages and then write your reflections in the space provided. Before you start, ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand what’s being said in each passage.

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**Read 1 Kings 19:1–9, 18.**

What did you learn from this passage about how God speaks? Write your observations and reflections in the space below.

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Do you think God still speaks today in a gentle whisper? What does that look like in your life?

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**Read 1 Samuel 3:1–19.**

Write your observations and reflections in the space below. What did you learn from this story?

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**Read John 14:16–17.**

What does this passage teach you about the Holy Spirit speaking to you?

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How have you experienced the guidance of the Holy Spirit in your life?

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**Read Proverbs 19:20.**

Do you think the Holy Spirit speaks to you through other people? If so, how have you experienced that?

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