

Hearing God Learning To Listen

Monday:

The purpose of this series, is to learn how to hear from God. Part of the reason we can have a hard time hearing from God, is because we don't take time with God in prayer. Maybe our prayer life is nonexistent because we believe we are too busy to pray. Maybe our muted prayer life develops from one sided prayer check lists rather than our seeking God in relationship. It could be that our prayer time maintains a focus of what we think God should do and as we spend time with Him we simply give directives on how we think He should act.

Please read Matthew 6:5-15. In these verses, Jesus teaches us how to pray.

Please pray verses 9-13 slowly several times. What do you learn from Jesus about prayer?

Spend some time in reflection on your own prayer life. Ask yourself these challenging questions:

- ◇ Do I pray? If not, why don't I make prayer a priority in my life?
- ◇ Do I pray each day? If not, why don't I? Do I feel my life is too busy? Do I find myself praying only when things are going wrong and I need God's help?
- ◇ If I pray, do I pray with a heart seeking God, or a heart seeking my own way?

The truth is, it is difficult to maintain a relationship with God when we lack time with Him in prayer. If we want to hear from Him, we need to spend time with Him. As we develop a prayer life, we have a life that is attentive to God. How is God speaking to you today through this time with Him? Be encouraged! God loves you and is at work in you as you seek Him in Sabbath and prayer. Doing devotions puts you on the right path. Ask God what step you can take to begin a life of prayer if this is a step you need to take.

Tuesday:

As we discussed yesterday, to be people who hear from God, prayer is an essential piece. Our attitude in prayer is also key. We seek Him with a humble disposition, letting our will and pride fall away as we pray. We have an inner life that listens and is responsive to Him. We believe He will show us His will and His way, and then we follow Him as He does.

Please read Jeremiah 29:12-14. In this Scripture, the prophet Jeremiah sends a letter from Jerusalem to the surviving exiles in Babylon. In Jeremiah's letter, God explains to those in exile, that as they seek Him with all their heart, they will find Him. In this Scripture God reminds us, as He reminded the Israelites, we need to seek Him with all of our heart.

Ask yourself this very question. Are you seeking God with all of your heart? One way to discover if we are seeking Him with our whole heart is by how we prioritize prayer. If prayer is a priority, then it is an indication we are seeking God with all we have.

As we pray, our focus to discover more of God, His character, His ways, and the life of His Son Jesus will change us from the inside out. We ask God to work in us and through us. We remain open and receptive to His love as well as His correction. In your life, what does prayer reveal about your relationship with God? Talk with God about these revelations. How is God speaking to you today? If you are struggling, ask God for His wisdom and His help. Ask God how to seek Him with your whole heart.

Wednesday:

In relationship with God in prayer and in His Word, God speaks to us by His Holy Spirit and through the life of His Son Jesus. In our pursuit of God, we can be certain that in hearing God He will not contradict what Scripture says. If we feel God is telling us something contradictory to His Word, we understand that we are not on the right path.

Has there been a time that you felt you heard from God, but you realized that what you believed contradicted the Scriptures? If so, how did you proceed? What happened? It is important to recognize our mistake by bringing our decisions alongside God's Word for confirmation. **Please read 2 Timothy 3:16-17.** God will speak to us through His Word if we seek Him with an open and honest heart. We must lay aside our own agendas.

The other step we can take as we seek to understand God's direction, is to look to those whose lives represent a strong faith in God. If you have seen God's wisdom lived out in someone, you can trust they will pray for you and seek God's Word on your behalf, alongside you, as you work to understanding what God is saying to you.

In all this, it is important to understand we won't always like what we hear. When God speaks conviction, discipline and His Will, sometimes it is hard for us to hear. In those moments we have to surrender our wants and desires in exchange for God's. It can be hard, but the beautiful thing to remember, is that eventually we will experience God's peace through our obedience.

Is God speaking something difficult to you in your life right now? What is going through your heart and mind as you look to God's Word for direction? Have you asked those you know follow Jesus to pray for you? Spend some time in prayer. Ask God to help you trust Him knowing that He will continue to work even when what He shares with you is difficult and hard.



Thursday:

As we desire to be people who hear from God, one of the biggest questions we might have is “How Do I really know God is speaking to me?” If we are not certain, the best thing to do is slow down. Our best course of action is to wait on God as we continue to seek Him in prayer and through His Word. Thankfully, we understand that God knows what we need to know. We can also trust that He knows when we need to have our answers.

As you wait, a good step is to go back to the last time and place you were confident you knew God was speaking. What did God share with you at that time? Take what you know and what you have understood Him to say in the past, and continue to move in this knowledge. Most importantly, check your steps with Scripture. God will not go against His Word or His character. God does not change. He is the same yesterday, today and always.

Are you waiting on God for answers? What do you know up to this point? God’s timing is perfect. As God’s children, we can be impatient people. In our rush to make a decision, sometimes we will force an answer rather than waiting on God to reveal His plans. Can you think of a time this has been true in the past? What did you learn from this experience? How can this experience help you wait on God now?

God wants us to follow Him. He wants us to know Him and know His will. It is best to wait, trusting God will work in His time and in His way. He loves us and wants what is best for us.

Please read 2 Samuel 22: 31, Psalm 18:30, and Proverbs 30:5. God’s Word tells us His ways are perfect, and as we take refuge in Him, waiting for Him to work, He will speak to us regarding our lives. Spend time in prayer. Ask God for His wisdom, direction and clarity. Ask Him for His peace as you wait on Him to reveal His will.

Friday:

Please read two chapters of the Gospel of John 19 and 20. As you read, think about Jesus’ life, and His last days. Remind yourself why He came and what His life means for us. As we look for God to speak to us, we know that the greatest, most clearly communicated message we have ever received from God, is Jesus. Jesus’ life, death, burial, and resurrection show God’s deep love. Jesus’ sacrifice communicates God’s amazing grace and forgiveness. When we feel lost, alone and fearful, we look to Jesus. His life brings the reminders we need. As we wait on God for His direction, we think of Jesus, knowing God loves us and has not abandon us. In every way, God gives us reassurance through Jesus.

How do you need reassurance today? How do you need to be reminded of God’s love?

In Jesus, we feel God’s embrace. Sit in this embrace today. Talk to God about where you are on your journey. Ask Him to speak and show you His next steps. Ask Him to prepare your heart as we seek to take steps to better know and become like Jesus as we Pursue Him together in the Gospel of Mark starting next weekend.

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