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HEARING GOD

*Ten Ways to Hear God in Personal
Prayer and Prayer Ministry*

During times of crisis, especially when anxiety levels are high, emotions can distract us from hearing God's voice. In prayer ministry, as we are praying with people or for people, it is not only important to hear God's voice - but to know that he speaks in a variety of ways. With a heightened spiritual awareness, we can expect Him to speak to us every day and even all day.

Adapted from the book, *Highly Sensitive: Understanding Your Gift of Spiritual Sensitivity* by Carol Brown

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“For God does speak, perhaps once, or even twice, though one perceives it not.”

Job 33: 14

1. Tug on the Heart

God speaks through the tug on the heart. Salvation is evidence of "hearing his voice" in some way. Sometimes, it is an impression or feeling He inspires. Have you sung a song and it moved your heart, or conversely, have you sung a song and been convicted that you are in the spiritual place of which the song speaks? That may have been God's Spirit speaking to you.

2. Conscious Thoughts & Hunches

God also speaks through your conscious thoughts and hunches. Ex. Those thoughts you have, but that you ignore and later wish you had paid attention to. When I have definite thoughts on an unfamiliar subject, I listen. Since I no longer assume that a prompting is just "me", my hearing of the Lord continues to grow in clarity.

3. Pictures or Mental Images

You may receive a full-blown picture or a strong impression - or sometimes only a wisp of an impression. It could also be a sense of knowing when we have no reason to have that knowledge. At times I know I am carrying a burden but do not know whose or what it is. I ask the Lord to help me know how to pray, and for whom, if that is important.

4. Common Images

Jesus gives people certain scriptural images repeatedly. They are standing or kneeling at the cross or walking in a garden. Some people also have images of the Lord in a cave with them, a quiet, warm cave with a storm going on the outside. Teresa of Avila, who lived in the sixteenth century, said, "He never takes his eyes of you." Images inform, but you must not presume. In order to pray appropriately, ask God for whom and about what the picture or image is speaking.

5. The Lessons of Life

God also speaks through parables of everyday events, just as He did in biblical times. Many times when things go wrong, in frustration you blame Satan and forget that you have a God who is interested in every detail of your life. You may be giving credit to the wrong one! Your Father could be pointing to something that is "off" in your life. Or, He may be giving you a warning allowing things to go wrongly, by giving you an "off" day. "Behold, God does all these things often times with a man, to bring back his soul from going to the pit that he may be enlightened with the light of life." (Job 33:29-30 NASB)

6. Examples of Dark Speech

Sometimes the Lord corrects us by redirecting our motives toward some nobler end; other than the one we originally had in mind. For instance, we may be excited to share a new insight that God has inspired in us, not to glorify him but to impress others. The point is: look for God. Expect Him to communicate every day, all day. Look for His fingerprints on the ordinary affairs of life. If you expect Him, you will be alerted to see and hear Him. But do not be surprised if His purposes are not the same as yours. From time to time, He just might direct your gaze beyond your own motives.

7. Visions and Dreams

In Joel 2:28-29, God says: "I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and your daughters will prophecy; your old men will dream dreams; your young men will see visions. Even on My servants, both men and women, I will pour out My Spirit in those days." Here God is talking about ordinary people, not just prophetic types. He has no gender barrier. The testimony of the Holy Spirit is for the hearts of all of God's children.



8. Other People

Another way that God speaks is through other people. At times, someone says something that zings its way to your heart. Something in your spirit resonates, and you know that what the person says is wisdom and truth straight from God that you needed to hear.

9. Scriptures

God has spoken through Scriptures for centuries. As you read His Words, His letters to you, He can "highlight" a Scripture. You may say, "Hey, I've read this passage countless times, and I've never seen this before!" This kind of experience is a rhema word, the Scripture made alive by the Holy Spirit. Your eyes open, and you see. The Holy Spirit touches your spirit, and you comprehend in a new way that is appropriate for you at the time.

10. Physical Sensations

Just as some people take in data through visual or auditor means, some take in information kinesthetically through bodily sensations. While interceding for Israel, Jeremiah lamented, "From on high He sent fire into my bones...He has made me desolate, faint all day long." (Lamentations 1:13) The Lord allows some people to carry another person's burden for a period of time during intercession in the body. Bodily sensations are like feelings, in that they give you some information; but they are not the sum total of truth.