

The Voice of God

So many times believers have difficulty in discerning the Voice of the Lord. Over the years I have noticed some fundamental principles that can prepare our hearts to hear His voice. There are many fine books and teachers that can offer deeper insights than outlined here, but I feel the following principles can be helpful in establishing a “pattern” or “grid” upon which we can build. May they prove beneficial to you!

1. PREPARING TO HEAR

- ◆ In order to clearly hear the Voice of God we must clean up our inner thoughts and take control over our mind. We need to **take captive our own thoughts** and imaginations. (2 Cor. 10:5).
- ◆ The best preparation to hear the Lord’s voice is to stop the **incessant chattering** away in our own mind first.
- ◆ This can be done by having a **single-minded focus** on the Lord and eternal things. Learn to “*prayer without ceasing*” (1 Thess 5: 17) and by “*beholding the Lord*”. This will quieten the wandering thoughts of the mind.
- ◆ Next, learn to act immediately on a convicting word from the Holy Spirit. Whenever you **feel a conviction of sin, deal with it** immediately. Do not allow it to fester into something worse – particularly apathy. Rebellion follows!
- ◆ We need to acquire the habit of allowing our actions to link up with our thoughts. **Harmony of spirit and soul** is an important step in clearly hearing the Voice of God.

2. IS THERE ANY PATTERN?

- ◆ Experience and history shows **a clear pattern** of how men and women through the centuries have come to know the voice of God without confusion, struggle or deceit.
- ◆ The most common denominator of all such mature Christians has been this: **spend at least one uninterrupted hour a day sitting in the presence of the Lord.**
- ◆ This is apart from a time of intercession or supplication when you might be asking God for something. And it’s apart from your time of devotional reading time or study time.

- ◆ Having given prime time to sitting in the presence of the Lord, these mature Christians then “practice” the art of “**on and off praying**“, speaking to the Lord throughout the day in short uncomplicated prayers (often called *arrow prayers*).
- ◆ This kind of prayer was used often by such men as Wesley, Moody and Finney. The fruit of living in the Spirit like this is seen in their lives and ministries even down to the present day.
- ◆ Doing this will make you very receptive to the Holy Spirit and you will begin to find the Voice of God to be much more distinct.
- ◆ This is a two-fold approach in preparing to hear His Voice. First, spend some time (perhaps one hour) in which you quietly focus in on the Lord and just learn to sit and relax at His feet. Second, learn to extend that “atmosphere” of being with Him into your daily life. This is done by continually keeping your focus God-directed. Both of these will gradually prepare your heart to clearly hear the Voice of the Lord. It does work!

3. LEARN TO IDENTIFY THE VOICE

- ◆ Think back on some occasion when you thought you heard God speak, and when you then saw the situation come to pass. Think now: what were you feeling at the time when you thought you heard God speak? Learn to pick up the sensations you were having when the voice came. Next time you think you hear God’s voice use this past experience as a kind of litmus test. Was the feeling or sensation similar to your previous experience? If it was it’s most probable God speaking again.
- ◆ I’m not saying you are to simply go by feelings but they can assist you to make a correct diagnosis when attempting to identify His voice. You know the past experience proved to be of God’s making thus validating the voice you had heard. So when that sensation comes again accompanied by a similar voice it may well be the Lord speaking to you.
- ◆ This might seem a strange way to identify His voice, but its surprisingly common. It’s just that a lot of people don’t link the two – God’s voice, and what they were feeling or sensing at the time. My own experience has proved this truth over and over.
- ◆ Eventually you become so fine-tuned to the Lord’s voice that you no longer pay attention to the sensation that accompanies it. This is a sign of spiritual growth. Identifying the sensation is solely to help you be confident about what voice you’re hearing.

Remember too that God’s voice might be urgent but never pushy. The Lord might *hasten* you to do something, but Satan will *drive* you! Learn to know the difference.

4. A RECEPTIVE HEART

- ◆ While there is no formula for hearing God's voice or making Him communicate with us, there are some basic ground rules that will make us more sensitive to His voice.

First, love Him more deeply and intimately.

Second, desire to know Him more intently and personally.

Third, seek Him above everything else.

- ◆ If we keep these 3 attitudes in our heart we'll become much more sensitive to the voice of the Spirit. Taste and see!

5. STEPS THAT WILL IMPROVE YOUR SENSITIVITY

- ◆ Approach Him with an open heart, willing to listen to whatever He might speak. Don't approach Him with your mind already imaging what He might say.
- ◆ Don't ask God to speak to you about something that's already quite clear in Scripture. He's already spoken.
- ◆ Don't limit God to your viewpoint. He's not confined to answer you according to your view. It might be quite different!
- ◆ When you do hear God speak, obey Him.
- ◆ Show your love to Him through worship and serving others.
- ◆ Work at deepening your trust and faith in the Lord, no matter what. A genuine Spirit-led lifestyle is the greatest asset in knowing His voice. (Gal. 5: 25 and 1 Cor. 10: 31)

**Honour and love God
above everything
and everyone else.**

Blessings and the Lord's favour upon you,

Peter McArthur

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then why not forward it onto someone
you know may benefit from it?**