My Sheep Really Do Hear My Voice!

Discover four keys to consistent, powerful, life-giving conversations with God

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Communion With God Ministries

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Communing with God in your everyday experiences

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I tossed and turned in bed, unable to fall asleep. The thought kept going through my mind: "What if I died tonight? I’m not ready to go to heaven." Since I could not shake the thought, I got up, went downstairs and waited for my parents to come home from their meeting. When they did, I announced that I wanted to get saved, and they took me straightway to the pastor’s home where he explained the plan of salvation, led me in the sinner’s prayer. I was 15 years old when I accepted Jesus Christ into my heart as my Lord and Savior.

It was God’s voice that was speaking to me that night, calling me into His kingdom. His voice came as a spontaneous thought inside my head. However, I didn’t define this as the primary way God’s voice is heard until I had completed a desperate 10 year search to hear Him clearly. Christianity is unique among religions, for it alone offers a personal relationship with the Creator beginning here and now, and lasting throughout eternity. Jesus declared, "This is eternal life – that they may know God." (Jn. 17:3). Unfortunately, many in the Church miss the great blessing of fellowship with our Lord because we have lost the ability to recognize His voice. Though John 10:27 promises us that "My sheep hear My voice," too many believers are starved for that intimate relationship that alone can satisfy the desire of their hearts.

I was one of those sheep who was unable to identify the voice of my Shepherd. I hungered for deeper spiritual intimacy with God, but I could not find it. Then on the eleventh year of my Christian life I had the spontaneous thought that “I should take a year of focused effort, learning to hear His voice.” Unbeknown to me, it was the Lord calling me to invest that time. That year the Lord revealed four simple keys, all found in Habakkuk 2:1, 2, which unlocked the treasure of His voice. Using the four keys together allowed me to easily hear God’s voice on a daily basis. It was the most transforming step I have taken in the 45 years of my Christian life! I would like to share them with you so you can try them and see if they do the same for you.

Key: God’s voice in your heart often sounds like a flow of spontaneous thoughts.

Habakkuk knew the sound of God speaking to him (Hab. 2:2). Elijah described it as a still, small voice (1 Kings 19:12). I had always listened for an inner audible voice, and God did speak to me at times. However, I have found that usually, God’s voice comes as spontaneous thoughts, or flowing thoughts.

For example, haven’t you ever been driving down the road and had a thought come to you to pray for a certain person? Didn’t you believe it was God telling you to pray? What did God’s voice sound like? Was it an audible voice, or was it a spontaneous thought that lit upon your mind?

Experience indicates that we perceive spirit-level communication as spontaneous thoughts, impressions and visions, and Scripture confirms this in many ways. For example, one definition of paga, a Hebrew word for intercession, is “a chance encounter or an accidental intersecting.” When God lays people on our hearts, He does it through paga, a chance-encounter thought “accidentally” intersecting our minds. We consider it chance encounter in that we didn’t reason it up, however it is purposeful, because God sent it to us.

Therefore, when you want to hear God’s voice, you tune to chance-encounter, spontaneous or flowing thoughts. Even Satan’s thoughts come to us as spontaneous thoughts, which is why we are commanded to “take every thought captive” (2 Cor. 10:5). I am sure all of us have experienced spontaneous evil thoughts coming to us, even attacking right in the middle of our prayer and worship times. So I conclude that analytical thoughts are mine, spontaneous good thoughts come from the Holy Spirit, and spontaneous evil thoughts come from evil spirits.

God’s thoughts line up with Scripture and with His various names: Comforter, Counselor, Teacher, Giver of Life, Healer and Deliverer. His thoughts edify, exhort, and comfort.

Satan’s thoughts line up with his various names: accuser, adversary, thief who comes to kill, steal and destroy. His thoughts condemn and bring despair, rejection, fear, doubt, unbelief and in general, misery.
Key: Become still so you can sense God's flow of thoughts.

Habakkuk said, "I will stand on my guard post..." (Hab. 2:1). Habakkuk knew that to hear God's quiet, inner, spontaneous thoughts, he had to first go to a quiet place and still his own thoughts and emotions. Psalm 62:5 encourages us to silence our souls before God. There is a deep inner knowing (spontaneous flow) in our spirits that each of us can experience when we quiet our flesh and our minds. If we are not still, we will sense only our own thoughts.

Loving God through a quiet worship song is one very effective way to become still. (Note 2 Kings 3:15.) After I worship and become silent within, I open myself for that spontaneous flow. If thoughts come of things I have forgotten to do, I write them down so I can do them later. If thoughts of guilt or unworthiness come, I repent thoroughly, receive the washing of the blood of the Lamb, putting on His robe of righteousness, seeing repent thoroughly, receive the washing of the blood of the Lamb, putting on His robe of righteousness, seeing both sides of her protecting her and watching over her.

Fix your eyes upon Jesus and ask to receive visions.

Habakkuk said, "I will keep watch to see," (Hab. 2:1,2). Habakkuk was actually looking for a vision as he prayed. Since I believe the Bible is meant to be lived, I decided that I, too, would begin looking with the eyes of my heart into the Spirit world to see what I could see.

Do what King David did! A good way to begin using the eyes of your heart is by doing what King David did: "For David says of Him, I SAW THE LORD ALWAYS IN MY PRESENCE FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, SO THAT I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN" (Acts 2:25 NASB). The original Psalm makes it clear that this was a decision of David's, not a constant supernatural visitation: "I have set (literally, I have placed) the Lord continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken" (Ps. 16:8). Because David knew that the Lord was always with him, he determined in his spirit to see that truth with the eyes of his heart as he went through life, knowing that this would keep his faith strong.

We say, "A picture is worth 1000 words," I believe that is because pictures are the language of the heart. We notice that Jesus used pictures constantly as He taught (Matt. 13:34). When I use pictures in my prayer time, fixing my eyes on Jesus, I am speaking the language of my heart and that moves me quickly into heart/spirit realities getting me beyond my mind.

Use godly imagination: So I choose to do what King David did and I choose to be led by God's imagination, which I define as "picturing things God says are so." Obviously if I am picturing that Jesus is NOT with me, that would be picturing a lie, which is unwise. I can't imagine any reason I would want to picture unscriptural things. So I see Jesus at my right hand, always. I add to this Paul's prayer for God to enlighten the eyes of my heart (Eph. 1:17,18). Then I tune to the flow of the Holy Spirit, and He brings the scene alive. I find I can step from these godly imaginations, into a divine vision.

It is amazing, simple and child-like! Of course it would need to be, as we are told that to enter the kingdom we must become as little children. My 6-year-old daughter can do this and she shares with me her journaling and the visions of the angels standing on both sides of her protecting her and watching over her. You will find your young children can do these four keys easier than you can! Try it with them and see.

Key: Fix your eyes upon Jesus and ask to receive visions.

God told Habakkuk to record the vision (Hab. 2:2). This was not an isolated command. The Scriptures record many examples of individual's prayers and God's replies (e.g. the Psalms, many of the prophets, Revelation).

I call the process "two-way journaling," and I have found it to be a fabulous catalyst for clearly discerning God's inner, spontaneous flow, because as I journal I am able to write in God's words long periods of time, simply believing it is God. I know that what I believe I have received from God must be tested. However, testing involves doubt and double blocks divine communication, so I do not want to test while I am trying to receive. I wish journaling, I can receive in faith, knowing that when the flow has ended I can test and examine it carefully, making sure that it lines up with Scripture (1 Thess. 5:21).

Remove doubt: Doubt may hinder you at first, but throw it off, reminding yourself that recording God's words and visions is a biblical concept, and that God is present, speaking to His children. In the Bible, satan is constantly casting doubt by saying, "Did God really tell you...?" (Gen. 3:1 BNK).

Learn to relax: When we cease our labors and enter His rest, God is free to flow (Heb. 4:10). Sit back comfortably, take out your pen and paper (or computer or iPad), smile, and turn your attention toward the Lord in praise and worship, seeking His face. Write down, "Good morning, Lord! I love You. What do You want to say to me?" Then become still, fix your gaze on Jesus. You will suddenly have a very good thought. Don't doubt it; simply write it down. Later, as you read over your journaling, you will be blessed to discover that the content is amazing and that you are indeed dialoguing with God!

Hear God through illumined Scripture: Knowing God through the Bible is a vital foundation to hearing His voice in your heart, so you must have a solid commitment to knowing and obeying God's written Word. We are commanded to meditate on Scriptures (Josh. 1:8). As we pray over Scripture, we find verses leap off the page and hit us between the eyes. This is another very powerful way that God speaks to us. Regular scriptural meditation is commanded by God and is a must for the effective Christian life.

Utilize spiritual advisors: It is also very important for your growth and safety that you be related to solid, spiritual counselors. All major directional moves that come through journaling should be confirmed by your counselors before you act upon them. The Bible says in the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact is to...