



H E A R I N G

His

V O I C E

90 DEVOTIONS TO DEEPEN
YOUR CONNECTION
WITH GOD

CHRIS TIEGREEN

HEARING HIS VOICE

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Hearing His Voice: 90 Devotions to Deepen Your Connection with God

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INTRODUCTION

I once heard a very prominent pastor scoff at Christians who “think they can actually hear God directly.” But isn’t it true that the entire Christian faith is based on the belief that God wants a personal relationship with His people? If so, it seems natural to ask ourselves what kind of relationship He wants. One without conversation? Surely not. That would hardly be a relationship. No, God speaks, and His people listen. That’s what following Him is all about.

Though many in the Western church insist that God doesn’t speak directly to us today—because our hearing is too subjective, or He has already said everything He has to say in the Bible—Christians in less rigidly analytical and skeptical cultures are hearing God daily and doing mighty works in the power of His Spirit, simply by following what they hear. Yes, we can find examples of abuses and stories of people who misheard God, but

there are far more testimonies of people who have heard God clearly and have borne much fruit from what they have heard.

Anyone can learn to recognize God's voice. And God doesn't mind the skeptics. He simply speaks to people who will listen and believe.

What does God say to us? How does He say it? How can we know when we've heard Him? What can we do to hear Him better? We could spend the rest of our lives learning how to recognize God's voice, but if we seek Him, we can be confident that He will make Himself available to us. If we listen, He will speak. And if we believe what we have heard, He will show us even more. God always seeks to take us deeper into His will and draw us closer to Himself.

This book includes ninety devotional readings that cover many issues related to hearing God. One of every nine devotions is written as a first-person perspective from the heart of God—things I have sensed Him saying and that I believe He wants to share with those who will listen. Sometimes people are uncomfortable with this approach, but it fits well with New Testament practice (see 1 Corinthians 14:1 and 1 Peter 4:11). God is not bothered by our efforts to express His thoughts.

Each devotion ends with a brief prayer. Some people—like me, sometimes—tend to skip over guided prayers in books, but I encourage you not to do that here. Some of the prayers may seem simple or superfluous, but there is a point to them. When we ask from God, we receive. He responds when we express our desires to Him. If your desire is to hear God's voice, then asking to hear Him better, no matter how basic the request, is an

invaluable practice. If some of the prayers seem repetitive, that's okay. We're told in Scripture to keep asking, to persist until God answers. Over the course of ninety days, He will answer—often in surprising ways.

Listening to God is a process, a journey, and an adventure. It may take time, but it's worth the effort. He promises that those who seek Him will be rewarded with His presence and His voice. The words of the living God are powerful and life-changing. May He bless your desire to hear Him.

DAY 1

In the beginning the Word already existed.

The Word was with God, and the Word was God.

JOHN 1:1

From the first pages of Scripture, God speaks. Every time He utters a word, things happen. He says, “Let there be light,” and light comes into being—and He keeps talking until our entire universe is filled with order and life. He calls out a people from among the nations and reveals His purposes through them. He chooses prophets to deliver His messages when those people are in danger and need to return to Him. And when He sends His own Son to live among us, the Son is called “the Word.” Clearly, we do not serve a silent God.

Many people can't say with any certainty that God still speaks today, much less to them personally. They can accept His written Word as His voice—generalized for all who read it, of course—but for personal conversations and direction, they strive and strain to hear. Our theology tells us that God is quite vocal, even if our experience tells us He isn't. The result of this paradox is a lot of theory, little practice, and a considerable amount of frustration.

Step one in hearing God is acknowledging that He still speaks. We must be convinced of that in order to press through the frustrations on the way to hearing Him. Low expectations will undermine our efforts. If we know He's the Word who always has something to say, we won't give up easily in our attempts to hear Him. Most of all, we'll *believe*—a prerequisite to receiving anything from God. Faith opens our ears.

Believe not only that God still speaks, but that He's speaking *to you*. He calls you into a relationship, and relationships are based on communication. Conversations with God are normal—you were designed for them. Believe and listen—and know that you will hear.

*Living Word, I invite You to speak to me. I know You have been;
please open my ears to hear. I want to learn the sound of Your voice
and know Your thoughts. In faith, I'm listening.*

DAY 2

[John], leaning back against Jesus, said to him, “Lord, who is it?”

*Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I will give this morsel
of bread when I have dipped it.”*

JOHN 13:25-26, ESV

*A*cquaintances share pleasantries. Close friends share personal information. We would be surprised and somewhat offended if an acquaintance tried to pry personal information out of us before getting to know us and establishing a relationship of trust. Yet this is what many of us do with God; we come with frequent prayer requests and ask Him to speak about things concerning our own small spheres of interest. Few of us take time to ask Him what’s on His heart, to be good listeners, and to show real interest in the aspects of His will that don’t pertain to us. We can assume God doesn’t *need* to be surrounded with good listeners, as if He would want to get something off His chest or seek counsel. But God created us for relationship—deep, personal interaction—and though He doesn’t need our counsel, He seeks our interest. He wants to connect with those who share His heart.

There’s a reason John was leaning back against Jesus at the Last Supper and was thus privy to inside information about the

betrayer. John was “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23, NIV), one of the men who had developed a real friendship with the Messiah. This was no mere acquaintance probing Jesus for personal secrets. This was a follower who was truly interested in the heart of his friend and who interacted with Him on multiple levels—not just when he needed something, but at any time and for any reason. John did not relate to Jesus as a servant under orders. He related as a friend with quite a few interests in common. And that put him in a position to hear.

That’s how it is with us, too. When we relate to Jesus as a friend, truly interested in what’s on His heart, He shares His heart with us. And we connect at a very personal level.

Jesus, what’s on Your heart today? I really want to know.

Please share it with me.

DAY 3

*It is God's privilege to conceal things and the king's
privilege to discover them.*

PROVERBS 25:2

God has a strange tendency to hide from those who are seeking Him and relentlessly pursue those who are not. Perhaps He enjoys the playful give-and-take of a spiritual hide-and-seek. Or maybe He simply insists on being found on His own terms. More likely, He is like a suitor who seeks out the object of His affection but won't overplay the intensity of His desire. There must be a genuine response from His beloved, not a forced one. Even so, He conceals Himself—His voice, His specific will, His reasons—in ways that are sometimes frustratingly obscure for us. He gives us a taste of His goodness, opens our ears to hear, and then steps back. He pursues us and then withdraws, provoking an intensity in our desire that drives us deeper into His heart. He conceals things and waits for us to seek them out.

The proverb above specifically mentions kings, but it reveals God's nature as it applies to all of us. He doesn't normally thunder His voice from the heavens; He hides it in secret places and waits to see who is hungry for it. Who will persist in the search to hear Him? Who really wants to feel His heartbeat and

understand His will? Who desires a relationship, rather than a set of principles to live by? These are questions that are answered only in the searching. Those who are content with religious practices will give up early in the quest. Those who can be satisfied only with God will persist until they really encounter Him. That's the way it works.

God conceals deep secrets and then subtly provokes us to discover them. Will we continue in that search without losing heart? At times, that's the very issue for the one who wants to hear Him speak. And the response must always drive us closer.

*Lord, I'll never give up my desire for more of You—
more closeness, better hearing, a deeper connection.
Draw me closer and show me the secrets of Your heart.*

DAY 4

We are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him. And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for.

I JOHN 5:14-15

For most of us, the normal pattern of prayer is to ask God to accomplish certain things and then wait to see what He does with our requests. There's nothing wrong with that approach; any kind of conversation with God qualifies as prayer. But those petitions are almost like shooting an arrow in the dark and hoping it hits the bull's-eye. Is it His will, or isn't it? We'll have to see when—and if—the results come in.

According to biblical promises, God means for our prayers to be more confident than that. His Word tells us that a prayer of faith often is answered when a tentative prayer would not be. But for us to pray in faith, we must know up front whether our petitions are consistent with God's will. When we pray and only hope He will answer if the request happens to fit within His will, it's hard to pray in faith. We trust God, of course, but we don't have much confidence that our prayer will be answered. In order to have specific faith for what we ask, we need to know that what we ask fits God's purposes.

This is one of the areas in which it is crucial for us to hear God's voice. We know His general purposes through His Word—clearly, we can be confident about some requests that further His Kingdom. But the personal requests about direction, provision, healing, and more—not to mention the deep longings of our hearts—are always tentative unless we've heard from Him. He invites us to ask what His will is—and then, when we've heard, to pray that His will be done. Confidently.

*Father, if you tell me my prayer is consistent with Your will,
I will maintain unwavering faith until the answer shows up.
Help me pray Your desires and mine with confidence.*

DAY 5

Whenever the cloud lifted from the Tabernacle, the people of Israel would set out on their journey, following it. But if the cloud did not rise, they remained where they were until it lifted.

EXODUS 40:36-37

We have decisions to make, so we ask for guidance. We wait for it. We remind God of His promises to give wisdom to those who seek it. And when He lingers . . . well, very often we don't let Him linger. We assume that if He hasn't spoken quickly, He must be leaving us to our own discernment to make the best decision we can. We go ahead and move forward, not because we've heard His voice but because moving forward seems to be the only option. We use our best judgment and trust that it fits with His will.

Sometimes God wants us to move forward in the wisdom and discernment we already have, but our decision-making process should never be reduced to that alone. We are in such a rush to make decisions that we act as if meeting a deadline is more important than hearing specific direction from God. When He lingers, He is waiting to see if we will fill the vacuum by seeking Him or by using our own logic and sense of urgency. Far too

often, we fill the gaps with our own assumptions. We make decisions before we've heard God's directions.

When the Israelites were following God in the wilderness, they waited until the cloud rose and led them. If the cloud didn't rise, the people didn't either. They stayed, sometimes long beyond their own comfort level, until God led them. That isn't easy to do, but it's an essential exercise in faith and listening. In most significant decisions, God wants us to ask and wait. And wait some more. And wait even more—until we've heard. No time is wasted in this process; when we follow the “cloud” of direction, God gives us a direct path into His will.

Lord, You direct my paths, sometimes much more methodically than I want. Give me a patient spirit; help me not rush to judgment; undo my assumptions. And when I've heard from You, I'll follow with confidence.