

Session 1. How to hear from God

Introduction

We are **God's ambassadors**, children of God, temples of the Holy Spirit. *"He who belongs to God hears what God says"* (John 8:47a). <https://johnfergussonbooks.com/tyrannus/>

Expect to hear!

Revelation: We cannot know anything of God, or from God without revelation (*"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him* **Matthew 11:27.**)

We only know what we know of him, because he has chosen to show us. Jesus shared all of Scripture to Cleopas and friend, but they still didn't know who he was, without revelation. See also Matt 16:17.

God speaks: It is his nature, what he does. Bible depends on it! Christianity is a relationship with a speaking God. (Hence tongues!) Compare dumb idols. Speaking pointless unless someone/something hears! Therefore we should expect to hear!

Word first: God does nothing without speaking (Amos 3:7). So he has exalted his name and his word above all things (Ps 138:2b). Jesus IS the Word (John 1:1) = the means by which the Father does what he does!

The creative power of words: (Gen 1:2-3);

Woman with issue of blood (Mat 9:21 *I will be healed*) = +ve confession

'Just say the word' Mat 8:8 = great faith

Role of Scripture: Scripture is foundational, but alone is not enough (see Pharisees in John 5:39; *'without faith...'* in Heb 4:2). No one came to Jesus through Scripture alone – when born, Mary/shepherds needed angels, Joseph needed dreams, Magi needed a star. All supernatural. Holy Spirit/Angels/Jesus spoke to disciples.

Hindrances:

For God does speak--now one way, now another-- though man may not perceive it. **Job 33:14**
Why not?

Pride: (Luke 7:29-35 *'we played the flute for you...'*) produces criticism, cynicism; worst is religious pride (John 5:39-40 *You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.*)

Complacency: (parable of sower Luke 8, *'though hearing, they may not understand.'* Word lost due to downtrodden/weak/distracted.)

Doubts: (James 1:5-8) "God doesn't speak today." "God won't use me." "I am bound to muck it up!" "What will people think?" "What if I get it wrong?" "I am sure it's just me, and not God." "What if it's the devil?"

Helps to hearing:

Faith; humility; righteousness (Gen 18:17; Luke 8:15 – but remember it is imputed); prayer (*But if they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people and would have turned them from their evil ways and from their evil deeds.* **Jeremiah 23:22**)

Study 1 Samuel 3: What did Samuel have that enabled him to hear? What did he still need? What had Eli lost, that meant ‘the word of the Lord was rare’?

When Samuel thought it was Eli, he went to the wrong place. When taught, he expected to hear from God, and responded appropriately, acting accordingly.

Expectation changes things. Prophecy builds expectation. Training releases prophecy.

- Eli had lost vision. He was allowing the lamp to go out (3:3; cf Ex 7:20-21).
- Eli lost relationship, not by ark. Samuel by ark = hungry for God (see also 2:21)
- Eli lost any enthusiasm (3:18); Samuel ran (3:5).
- Eli wanted comfort and convenience (2:29; 3:2). Samuel servant-hearted, willing, faithful, obedient, submitted.
- All good, and he heard from God, but didn't realise it, until taught! Now he expects it to be God!

Expect to hear: ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.’ (1 Sam 3:9)

We're hearing all the time!

The conversation in our head is between our mind (soul) and our spirit. Both speak, and both hear (see 1 Cor 2:11). When we're saved, the Holy Spirit resides in our spirit. Therefore the conversation is now between you and the Holy Spirit – i.e. God.

How to know it's God!

- His sheep know his voice (it's all about relationship)
- Compatible with God's character
- Compatible with his word (e.g. 2 Tim 4:3-4; Titus 1:12-13)
- It will come to pass! (Deut 18:22)
- Glorifies God and Jesus (Deut 13:1-5; 1 John 4:1; 2:22; 4:15)
- Encouraging, edifying, comforting, etc (1 Cor 14:3,26,31)
- No manipulation or control. Leave results to God.
- You won't – take a punt, it's called 'faith'!

The alternatives are that it's the world (cultural mindset/peer pressure), the flesh = you (but your spirit is yielded to HS, so 'you' probably also means HS!) or the devil (but you told him to scam!)

We'll look at this in more detail next time.

Practical

How to begin? **Usual way for us: Ask. Step out! Often don't get much until we start.**

TIPS:

- **Go with your first impressions** – don't try to process it.
- **Don't need to understand** – it's not meant for you, but for the other person.
- **Say/describe only what you have**, and then stop!
- **If only one word, begin**, and the rest will come.
- I find it helps to keep my eyes open and look at the other person.

Homework: Begin a prophecy journal. Ask God to give you words, pictures, etc. Write them down during the week. Keep it by your bed to record dreams.