

"Taking you beyond the veil to find God's Presence"

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Open My Ears To Hear

As a young Christian in the 1970s, I came across a book titled, *God Calling*, written by two anonymous "listeners" and edited by A.J. Russell. The original publishing date was 1932. The words of this book are the writings from these two listeners as they prayed together seeking the Lord's provision, comfort, and wisdom. The amazing thing is that the Spirit of the Lord began to speak to them in response to their requests. The Lord's responses fill the pages of this little book.

God Calling had a major impact on my life. It created a longing in me to hear the Lord's whispers. My heart had been awakened to His love through my salvation, but as I drew closer to Him, I desired to grow deep roots of faith through bible study and prayer, and, because of this little book, I wanted to know His voice.

Satan made me feel as though that was just *too* weird and difficult. For many years he deceived me and caused me to bury this longing. *Who was I to think I could hear the Lord's voice?* But the desire wouldn't leave me.

I began to search the scriptures and discovered several verses where Jesus clearly tells us we will know His voice. Here are two examples: John 10:27 reads, *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me"*. In John 18:37 Jesus said, *"...Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice"*. As I applied this knowledge to my life experience, I began thinking about my husband. We've been married forever. I *know* this man. I love this man. I spend time with this man. And I know his voice. When he calls me on the phone I recognize his voice even though I can't see him. He doesn't have to explain to me that he is my husband of 30+ years who fathered our three children and drives a white Subaru. No! I know his voice. In fact, many times I know it's him on the phone before I even answer it. So, if I can recognize my husband's voice because of our intimate relationship, how much more should I recognize the voice of the One who made me and dwells within me? It makes sense, doesn't it? Recognizing the Lord's voice comes through relationship—not acquaintance. Intimate relationship.

Another application of this knowledge was applied in reference to the relationship I have with our children. When they were young and still at

home we gave them certain expectations and boundaries. We didn't make things complicated—we wanted them to understand what we were saying. We didn't speak in riddles, neither did we confuse them by disguising the things we wanted them to know. No. We spoke clearly and the things we said lined up with our family values. The Lord is the same way. He is not going to tell you something contrary to His Word. The things that He whispers within your spirit will direct you to Him—His love, His mercy, His redemptive work. Your spirit will bear witness with His (Romans 8:16). He will not drive you—He will lead you as a Shepherd. But. There must be the relationship and then, I believe, there must be the recognition and expectation that He will, indeed, speak to His child.

One of my favorite stories about the tender mercies of God is found in I Kings 19. Elijah is running for his life trying to escape the wrath of Jezebel. The Angel of the Lord found him hiding in a cave. *"Then He said [to Elijah], 'Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord.'* And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a delicate whispering voice (1 Kings 19:11-13). Oh my goodness. Isn't that beautiful? The Lord spoke in a delicate whispering voice to His weary servant.

How did that happen? Two things come to mind. First, relationship. Elijah knew the Lord. He served the Lord wholeheartedly. He knew God's power and His tender mercies, devoting his life to telling others the same. Second, is obedience. Obviously Elijah was an obedient servant of God, but I'm referring to his obedience when the Angel of the Lord told Elijah to "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord." Elijah had a choice—he could stay snuggled in his cave or he could respond to the Lord's call. Elijah chose obedience. Because of his choice, the Lord ministered to His child tenderly, with a delicate whispering voice.

We have choices to make also. It's difficult to hear a whisper above all the noise of television, cell phones, computers, etc. It's hard to hear a whisper above the noise of our busy lives. I've learned that if I want to hear the Lord, I must get alone with Him, seeking Him as my first love. I need to worship Him for who He is, not for what He can do for me. When I set myself apart for the purpose of loving and knowing the Lord, He always meets me there. Sounds too good to be true, doesn't it? But it also makes sense. The Lord clearly tells us that when we seek Him, He will be found; to draw near to Him and He will draw near to us.

This is what I would love for you to do: When you get away—alone—with the Lord, I would like for you to keep pen and paper nearby. Spend time praising Him, thanking Him for who He is. He promises to inhabit the praises of His people. When praise escapes your lips, the Lord is drawn like a magnet to your side. Open your bible and begin reading. If you find that you're not hungry for the Word, then confess that to the Lord. Ask Him to stir up a hunger and thirst within you and then, through obedience, open the pages of this sacred book and watch the hunger overtake you. Get to know what's in the Word, become familiar with it because this is how you will discern the Spirit. When you pray, remember that the Lord desires conversation—relationship. He desires dialogue which means speaking *and* listening. I encourage you to listen with expectation in your heart. The Lord wants to reveal Himself to us—expect Him to do so. As you sit quietly in His Presence, become aware of Him with you, then listen. I usually hear one word at first. If I'm faithful to write that one word on my paper it's as if a dam bursts and the words flow like a swollen river. I wonder if it's because once I "accept" that first word, I stop trying to analyze and intellectualize the moment. Perhaps writing the first word is the step of faith the Lord responds too. It amazes me.

The Lord doesn't give me a "word" every time I sit with Him, but He does speak to me often. There are times that I need only to rest quietly in Him. On the occasions that He speaks, I am always thankful that my paper and pen were ready. The words I write down will always line up with God's Word. He will not tell you something contrary to His Word. Another interesting observation is that these words seem to not be bound by time. I can flip through the pages of my prayer journal at any given time and the words written there will still pertain to me and my life. I believe you will find the same to be true.

Sweet friend, I'm excited for you to step out in faith to know the Lord more. His whispers are delicate, comforting, full of wisdom and grace. Sometimes there is correction, but it is discipline born of love. I'll be praying for you as you seek Him more and as you open your ears to hear.