

# Hearing from God: *Get the Conversation Started!*

Have you ever longed to hear the voice of God, but didn't think you could? Maybe you thought hearing from God was only reserved for pastors, those in ministry, or the "super spiritual"? I have good news for you! God is constantly speaking, and He yearns to be in conversation with each of us! That means He wants us to hear His voice and has made it easy for us.

Having a conversation with God isn't really all that different than conversations between friends on earth. Admittedly, we don't see God in the same way we see our friends, but that doesn't make Him any less real. Psalm 139 gives us a beautiful picture of God's presence always being with us everywhere we go. We also see how deeply we're known and loved by God, having been intricately created by Him within our mother's womb.

David was the author of Psalm 139. He was known as a "man after God's own heart." (1 Samuel 13:14, Acts 13:22). I love his heart's cry in verses 17-18 in the English Standard Version:

*How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you.*

This same longing that David had to know God's thoughts contains keys to hearing God's voice. When His voice is precious to us, we make the time to connect with His heart, remain in His presence, and listen for Him to share the thoughts of His heart with us. It's really that simple.

The question I'm asked most often isn't *how* to hear the voice of God, but how to know if the voice someone is hearing is actually *God's* voice. The more you practice hearing God's voice, the easier it will become to identify it.

John 10:4-5 talks about the shepherd knowing each of his sheep by name. When the sheep hear his voice, they follow him because they recognize the sound of his voice. Jesus gave us that illustration to help us understand we recognize God's voice because we've become used to hearing Him speak.

That passage of scripture also explains the sheep won't follow a stranger because they don't recognize the stranger's voice. What distinguishes the voice of God from the voice of a "stranger?" There are some easily recognizable differences that will help you identify the voice you hear.

Anything that comes from the heart of God will always be filled with love, peace, hope, kindness, and goodness – even when He's bringing conviction to our hearts or correction in our lives. He's a *loving* Father, so His words will always be affirming and encouraging. Often, He'll confirm what you've already been sensing in your spirit or reading in His word. You can be certain it also won't ever violate scripture.

If you hear anything that doesn't line up with His Word or the Fruit of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23, then it's an easy way to know it's not from the heart of God. For instance, if what you hear is condemning, shaming, fear or anxiety-producing, that's not God's voice. In that case, recognize the thought that came to you wasn't from the heart of your loving Father and let it go. Then ask God the question again and listen for a new answer that reflects His heart.

Keep in mind that while God does speak audibly at times, it's rare. When you hear His voice, don't be surprised when it sounds a lot like your own voice in your head. You'll learn to recognize when what you're hearing is or isn't coming from your own thoughts.

When God is speaking, He'll often say things you would never say to yourself because He thinks more highly of you than you do! You may suddenly have greater understanding or revelation, may see things from a different perspective, or have strategy for decisions, situations, and circumstances.

There may be times when you don't hear answers to your questions or God seems silent. There's nothing the enemy would like more than to take advantage of those moments to plant seeds of doubt and uncertainty within your mind. While the enemy would love to make you believe you're not able to hear God's voice, God doesn't love you, or He's abandoned you, don't let him! Those are absolute lies!

Pursue God's heart and you'll hear Him again. An easy way to connect heart to heart with God is through worship, so try worshipping before engaging God in conversation. I love playing music by artists like Bethel Music, Maverick City Music, Jesus Culture, Brandon Lake, Misty Edwards, and Rick Pino, just to name a few if you need some suggestions. Also, keep in mind sometimes we hear God immediately, but sometimes His response comes at the oddest times during our day. For instance, we may be driving, making dinner, or showering, and begin to hear Him speak.

If you have offense or anger in your heart toward God or someone else, or you're acting in a way you know is hurting God's heart, you may feel separated from Him because you've created some distance between the two of you. Adam hid from God in the garden when he made a mistake, so it makes sense we might do similarly. God's Word says to, "draw near to God and He will draw near to you." (James 4:8, NKJV) If you're dealing with sin (as we all do), ask God's forgiveness and let Him wrap you up in His welcoming, redeeming arms of unconditional love.

God's word says, "to be anxious for nothing" (Philippians 4:6, NKJV), so don't become anxious about your ability to hear from God or if you experience times of silence. Let being in His presence be a time of peace and joy, not striving. Sometimes just being with the person you love is enough. Words aren't always needed. In those quieter times, press into His peace and love, and know with certainty His voice will soon be heard again.

Here are some simple questions you can use to help you start a conversation with God. He never tires of us asking Him questions! He actually loves answering them, so it's a great way to engage with Him.

Rather than asking all twelve questions in a row, take your time with them. Savor the time in God's presence. Asking one of these questions in your time with Him is perfect. Save the others for other days.

Consider journaling what you hear. Not only will you love looking back on your entries, it will also help you process what you're hearing, as well as enable you to see how you've grown in hearing from God over time.

When you get an answer to a question, then ask Him a logical follow-up question to keep the conversation going. For instance, you may ask Him a question and only get a one-word answer, such as "Red." Why not follow what you heard with a question like, "Why red, Lord? What significance does that have?" Wouldn't you do the same in a conversation with a friend, asking them additional questions for clarification and to

continue the conversation? Of course, you would! It makes sense then to do it in a conversation with God since He's the Friend you're chatting with.

You'll be amazed at the conversations you can have with the God of the Universe – the One who loves you infinitely more than you can begin to imagine!

*Let the adventure begin!*

1. What's on Your heart today, God?
2. What gives You joy?
3. What do You love about me?
4. What do You see in me that's brave?
5. Why do You pursue people's heart with Your love?
6. What makes Your heart sad? How can I partner with You to change that?
7. What do You love about rainy days? Why do You love that?
8. What's an animal You particularly enjoyed creating and why? What's unique about that animal that you see as a special feature in me?
9. If You and I could take a journey together anywhere, where would You want to go and why?
10. Picture God giving you a present. Open it up and see inside. Ask Him, "Why did You give me that as a gift?"
11. Think of a country somewhere in the world. Think of three things that make that country unique. Then ask God, "How do those three things describe what's unique about me?"
12. Close your eyes. Ask God, "Where's a special place You'd like to meet with me?" Then imagine yourself in that place with Him. How do you want to spend your time there with Him? Picture yourself doing it and continue the conversation with Him from there.

I would love to hear about your conversations with God and the experiences you had in His presence! If you have any stories you'd like to share, please email me or reach out via our social media outlets.

***Would you like more opportunities to engage God in conversation and grow in your faith?***

Check out my book, *The One Who Moves Mountains*, available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble.