



SERIES: MY PRAYER LIFE

Hearing the Voice of God

Life Reference: John 10:1-5

**"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me"
(John 10:27).**

I looked in the mirror this morning. Did I see a sweet young thing looking back at me? No—I saw my mother. No silver threads among the gold, just a liberal helping of salt among the pepper. The same laugh lines around the eyes. I gave my hair a cursory comb, then heard her words—"If it's worth doing, it's worth doing right."

No, she's no longer with me, but I still hear her voice. The time we spent working in the kitchen together, I heard much of my mother's thoughts. Someone said lately that they wonder how mothers and daughters get to know each other, now that we have dishwashers. I could never win. If she cooked, it was, "I made the dinner, now you can do the dishes." If I cooked, it was, "You made the mess, you clean it up."



But her *piece de resistance* was at weddings. As the vows progressed to "With all my worldly goods I thee endow" she could not help herself. She leaned over with that droll look in her eyes and whispered in my ear "There go his pop bottles." Of course all the reasons I couldn't laugh made me behave, but even now I'm in grave danger of laughing out loud at weddings. I'm afraid that people look around and see this supposed-to-be-dignified pastor's wife smiling and making a great effort not to laugh as the vows progress and wonder if there are a few dots missing from my dominoes.



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Life Reflection:

Have you ever heard your mother's words coming out of your mouth? What are some of the things you find yourself saying?

Why do you think we begin to sound like our mothers?

Jesus told us to "take My yoke upon you and learn of Me" (Matthew 11:29, NKJV). As we pull in the yoke together and live side by side with Him, we learn to know Him. No, it's not hours in the kitchen, learning recipes and washing dishes—it's through prayer and learning His Word. The more time we spend with Jesus, the more we know Him.

"Hear instruction and be wise, And do not disdain it. Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at the posts of my doors" (Proverbs 8:33-34).

One way to know the voice of God is to read what He has written. Something about having His Words in black and white gives us the stability to know what He would say, and solidifies His eternal stand on a subject for us. We don't need to wonder if His voice would tell us it is all right to help ourselves to something that is not ours because we are told, "thou shalt not steal." We are also told that "my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." No, no question here. We already know how God feels about this; we don't need to pray for His voice to tell us yes or no.

Life Reflection:

Think of a time in your life when the Word of God gave you the wisdom you needed to choose right over wrong.

What would the consequences have been had you not followed the instructions in God's Word?



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We have the privilege to learn of Jesus, read His Word, and find out how He looks at things. In James we read, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6, NKJV). When our feelings are hurt and we are tempted to take offense, we can know that our mental dialogue is not God telling us it is all right to get even. If we humble ourselves, God will give us grace. If not, our pride swells up and God holds us at arm's length—a condition definitely not to be desired.

Jesus told His disciples:

John 10:4-5, NKJV "And the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."

John 10:27, NKJV "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

He could have used other illustrations, but He used sheep. One notable thing about sheep is that they are followers. They follow the shepherd, learn the sound of his voice, his habits, and learn to trust in his ability to care for them.

Life Response:

Many times folks worry about hearing God's voice as they face a life-changing decision. What career should I pursue? What major should I follow at university? Does God see this man would be the right one for me to marry? Is he the right one for me? The sleepless nights and "should I" or "what if I don't and miss it?" come to all of us. Even now when sleep evades me as I ponder over major decisions, I hear a motherly voice in my memory saying, "The Bible says God neither slumbers nor sleeps, so there's no use for the both of you to stay awake. Go to sleep."

There is comfort in this: If we follow His voice every day, we will already know how He sounds. If we listen to His voice that leads us to prayer and service, every day, then when the big life choices come, we'll hear Him. We don't just wake up perfect one fine day—we work towards it. We don't wake up knowing all about God's voice one fine day—we listen to Him day by day.

The voice of God will never say anything to us that is not in agreement with the Bible. He will never tell us the opposite of what He said in His Word. The human brain is a marvelous creation; but since it is human, it can be subject to human problems, worries, and mental fixations. We can even "hear" things in our thoughts which, of course, become bigger the more attention we devote to them. If you are



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hearing things that don't add up with God's eternal Word, don't listen. Instead, fill in your thoughts with reading His Word. Rather than trying to just get rid of troublesome thoughts, replace them with the Word of God!

During my two pregnancies, the possibilities of birth defects would pop up in my thoughts. In today's world, women start their families after the first blush of youth and think nothing of it. But twenty-five years ago, not so. They were quick to warn older mothers of the possibility of Down's syndrome and other genetic dangers. But every time these worries would voice their presence, I quoted from James 1:17, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" (NKJV). "Dear Lord, this life is a gift from You, and Your gifts are perfect. Thank You for the gift of this child." What a blessing to hear God's voice.

Life Reflection:

Do you feel you have spent enough time with the Lord that you recognize His voice when faced with decisions?

Does this knowledge take away your anxiety and give you comfort?

It has been said that when flocks graze on a common meadow, all the shepherds have to do is whistle their own certain whistle and the sheep will make their way out from the other flocks, and return to their shepherd. How do they know the sound? They hear it day in and day out, during sunshine or rain, chaotic conditions or uneventful sameness.

Since we have the stability of God's Word to give us a firm foundation, we can weed out unsuitable choices for our daily lives. God in His wisdom lets us know Him and His principles. No need for the uncertainty of relativity—God gives us absolutes that will never let us down.



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John 10:10 gives us a guideline to use as our measure. Jesus said:

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they might have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”

My Prayer:

Thank you, Lord, that You speak to me and I recognize Your voice. Your Word directs me in the paths I take. Let me never turn aside at the voice of another, for You guide me into safety and care for me. With You I enjoy abundant life.

More Prayer References:

I Kings 19:12
John 8:47
John 14:26
Romans 8:14
II Timothy 3:16

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