

## A Voice You Can Trust

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Week 1, January 7, 2024

When I get an impression, prompting, or thought - how do I know it is from God? Is this really God, or just me?

God speaks to us through nudging's, impressions, promptings, thoughts, and whispers. But how do we know it is from God?

To a child, a parent's voice is a source of comfort, correction, direction, and alertness. What is true of the parent child relationship, is equally illustrated in John 10. Here we see the most familiar and famous biblical illustration of how to experience - a Voice you can trust.

Successful shepherds and parents understand the value and great importance of the voice in a relationship.

Think about falling in love. You would talk for hours on the phone, and say almost nothing, but the sweetness of the voice was intoxicating. When someone you love greets you in a voice of pleasure, who does not melt with those words?

And let's even go one step further, before we read the text, and let me say, "many of the relational, emotional, financial, and spiritual problems are really hearing problems." Ok, let's read our text in full voice.

*<sup>2</sup> The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. (John 10-NIV)*

Our son Joseph is waiting to return to Australia, his only hold up, is his Visa. He is stuck in limbo. Well, he is really stuck in Wichita, and for some of you, Wichita might be limbo.

I am asking you to join Danice and me in prayer, asking God to put some pressure on the government to grant the approval of his student Visa for the next year. Well, maybe not to put pressure on the government, how about putting prayers on the government officials who have the authority to approve his Visa.

Now, over a 150 years ago, in Australia I might add, some ranchers heard what sounded like gunfire. The ranchers were not the only ones to hear this mysterious sound. The same mysterious sound was heard in over 50 other geographical locations spanning planet earth. The sound was heard 1000's of miles away.

What was the mysterious sound? It was the eruption of one of the most famous volcanos in the world. On a small remote island in Indonesia, called Krakatoa, some 2,233 miles away an eruption, possibly the loudest sound ever measured, 310 decibels produced sound waves that circumnavigated the globe, science tells us at least four times.

The results? 3000-foot tidal waves threw rocks, a distance of over 34 miles. One-foot-thick concrete was cracked 300 miles away. On the opposite side of the globe, from Krakatoa was Columbia, South America, which experienced a considerable spike in the atmosphere. In other words, the air in Columbia became tense. It tensed up.

While the sound was not heard, it was certainly felt, all the way around the world. In other words, just because you can't hear a sound, doesn't mean it is not there.

At low levels sound is **imperceptible**.

At high levels (some would say, like the sound in our band), sound is **unignorable**.

You look like you are in the mood for a little science about sound. Blood pressure changes at about 110 decibels. Just for your comfort, the sound level of worship at Bethel are at about 90 decibels.

At 141 decibels, you become nauseous.

At 145 decibels, your vision becomes blurry, because your eyeballs vibrate.

At 195 decibels, your eardrums are in danger of rupturing.

At 202 decibels, is the range where sound can literally cause someone to die.

The act of hearing is the process of detecting vibrations against the ear drums that are caused by sound waves. The intensity of those sound waves is measured by decibels.

What is the loudest animal sound on earth? The sperm whale produces sounds that can hit 200 decibels and travel as whale song up to 10,000 miles underwater.

Maybe you have experienced the sound of jet engines (150 decibels), air horns, (129 decibels), the clap of thunder (120), and even jack hammer can reach a decibel range of 100.

On the other end of the range, is the whisper which is measured at 15 decibels.

And after the fire came a gentle whisper. (1 Kings 19:12-NIV)

God does not make it a habit to shout. He never raises his voice. The inner voice of God does not argue, does not try to convince you, it just speaks **in a self-authenticating volume**.

If you have lost your way, perhaps his gentle voice has been drowned out by negative self-talk.

If you are emotionally broken perhaps God wants to speak, but he cannot get a word in edge wise, because of your constant bellyaching.

If you are impatient and too busy, it can be hard to hear God's voice when you have already decided what you want him to say.

If you are sliding deeper into addiction, financial hardship, or uncontrollable bouts of anger, perhaps God's voice has been silenced by the enemy's voice of condemnation, guilt, or shame.

If you fail to silence competing voices, you will seldom be able to hear God's voice. Perhaps, all of the effort and work to find your voice, should be shifted to finding God's voice. Hearing God's voice. Listening to God's voice.

Is it possible that finding your voice, starts by hearing God's voice?

How about that to start 2024, **God has more in '24**. And the more, starts with learning how to listen to God. How to trust his promptings. How to enjoy - a Voice you can trust.

When you learn to hear God's voice, he will do everything from the simple to the supernatural. God is about to rock your world. For some of you, turn it upside down. For others right size, a wrong size faith practice.

Do you want God to do the incredible and impossible in 2024 through your life? Hearing from God and responding to his promptings and impressions, nudging, thoughts, and whispers is the first step.

What would your life really look like, if it were directed daily by divine whispers, Holy Spirit nudging's, Christ centered impressions and heaven-sent promptings and even eternally originating thoughts?

After 40 years of faith and ministry, I am convinced when a Christ follower learns to live with one ear always in tune to divine whispers and heaven-sent promptings, and a deep-seated conviction to obey those whispers and promptings your life takes on new meaning and fulfillment.

I am suggesting if you open up to - a Voice you can trust, discerning and hearing God will become the norm, if you have the courage to respond. The will to obey. And the sensitivity to listen.

You can't have a relationship with God if you don't hear His voice. Hello. The clue phone is ringing. McFly. McFly. Many a spouse is frustrated because of silence from their spouse. Many parents are frustrated because all they get from their teenager is shrug.

The question a series like this asks and answers is, "How do I know it is God?"

When I get an idea, a thought, a premonition how do I know what the source is?

Did that come from the bad burrito I ate last night?

Is that my parents' tapes playing in my brain?

Perhaps, it is my own thoughts. I just thought it up.

You talk to yourself all of the time. You are your own best friend. You are having a running conversation of thoughts that are constantly speaking, "How do I look; Oh, I don't like that; what is going on; how should I handle that."

It is very easy to be confused, is this God or just something I want to do? Is this my idea or God's idea? Did this come from the devil? **If you do not know if it is God talking to you, it could be fatal.**

How serious is this priority? How about letting God's word, speak. Making a mistake about which voice is speaking, can be fatal (Prov 14:12-GN)

*<sup>12</sup> What you think is the right road may lead to death. A lot of evil gets placed on the devil's doorstep. Look at 1 John. Dearly loved friends, don't always believe everything you hear just because someone says it is a message from God: test it first to see if it really is.*

Every message is not from God-test it. (1 John 4:1-LB)

Every message is not from God. If I had accepted messages from God because people told me it was God, here is what my life would have been like.

I would have a different wife.

I would have a different vocation.

I would have a different church to pastor.

I would be living in a different place.

In our serious, I am going to help you learn 7 ways to test if God is speaking to you. I plan to give you some filters, to strain out non-sense, and respond to God's sense. God's promptings. God's whispers. God's thoughts.

Unfortunately, tell me if this is not what often happens on your road to hear God's voice. Anybody besides me, get tripped up by this?

How can heaven-sent words, not get lost in my worry?

In other words, how can I hear God, when I am stuck in patterns of anxiety and worry?

How can promptings from God, not become silenced by my pain?

In other words, my pain is shouting so loud, I cannot hear anything else.

How can impressions from God, make it to my intellect?

In other words, there are so many voices, all claiming to have the truth, be the truth, be the absolute truth, I am now confused in my intellect, about what is true.

I think the first thing, you can do to right size your thinking about this matter, is regularly read and listen to God's word. In fact, one minute you can get an idea from God and the next minute you can get an idea from the devil. Let me show you from the life of Peter, Jesus's disciple who has more biblical text written about him, than any other disciple.

*<sup>17</sup> Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you that you are Peter,<sup>[b]</sup> and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades<sup>[c]</sup> will not overcome it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be<sup>[d]</sup> bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be<sup>[e]</sup> loosed in heaven." <sup>20</sup> Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.*

*<sup>21</sup> From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.*

*<sup>22</sup> Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" <sup>23</sup> Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." (Matt 16:NIV)*

Now, many of you are not even aware, God has already been speaking to you. If you spend your 15 min in a chair, or more and listen to the bible consistently on audio, you will hear with more consistency -a Voice you can trust.

So let me suggest some of the promises or encouragements God has spoken. Who has heard this?

Who hasn't heard, "I will fight for you?"

Others will hear God say, "you no longer have to be controlled by that past, pain or person."

Many of you have heard God say, "I've got this."

Who hasn't heard, "Stop, bad plan?"

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Sheep/babies expect the voice and the person to be together.

Sheep/babies worlds are hard wired for language.

Sheep/babies get upset if they hear a voice and can't see the source.

## Filters to Hearing God's Voice

The confidence of the voice, content of the voice, and character of the voice.

**Confidence**, the more you surrender to God's work on the inside, the less influence you will surrender to on the outside-confidence of the voice.

**Content**, the more you align your life with God's word, the less likely you will be deceived. Content of the voice. (Story in Joshua)

**Character**, the more you seek after wisdom from above, the less like worldliness, the devil and self will damage and destroy you from below. Character of the voice.

*<sup>17</sup> But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. (James 3:17-NIV)*

More than a half century ago, an ear, nose and throat specialist, Dr Alfred Tomatis, was stumped by a diagnosis he could not figure out. A world-famous opera singer lost his ability to hit certain notes in a vocal range, even though that had once been easy and normal. The opera singer searched for answers from those who specialized in ear, nose and throat medical treatments and care.

Every one of the ear, nose and throat specialists who did a medical examination were convinced it was a vocal problem. Dr. Tomatis thought otherwise.

Using a sonometer, Dr Tomatis discovered that even an average opera singer produces a range of volume that often peaks at 140 decibels. The sonometer registered the opera singers' sound waves. That is slightly louder than a military jet taking off an aircraft carrier.

If I were to tell you the sound is even louder, inside one's skull, even a layperson would know that fact. The discovery by the doctor and the sonometer produced the following diagnosis:

The opera singer had been deafened by the sound of their own voice. Certain ranges of notes, that had gone mute, was caused by ranges of volume, that exceeded healthy levels. When you are trying to hear God's voice but are exposed to sounds that are outside the range God permits, desires or is pleased with, you are left with selective deafness to God's voice.

The voice can only produce what the ear can hear, as Mark Batterson reminds us.

The French world of medicine, called this the Tomatis effect. So back to an earlier proposition, suggestion, and insight I proposed:

Is it possible that what we perceive as relational, marital, emotional, financial, and spiritual problems are really hearing problems? Perhaps the moral of the story is:

Is it possible that finding your voice, starts by hearing God's voice?

So, let me suggest you raise your voice, in prayer using the following outline, and see if God does not honor that prayer, by raising his voice to you.

Father, I know you want to speak to me. I start by surrendering my life to your purpose. I also ask you to forgive my sins, so nothing sinful in me will block your voice.

First, God speak to me about my sinful ways. I am listening.

Next, I am asking out of desperation, speak to me through your whisper, impressions, thoughts, nudging's, and promptings.

Finally, God I will exercise faith to obey and yield to whatever you are asking of me.

Thank you, Father, You are - a Voice I Can Trust. In Jesus Name. Amen.